

## **CITY OF TOPEKA RESOLUTION TO DECLARE RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS WITH A COMMITMENT TO ACTION**

**WHEREAS**, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color face economic injustice, social deprivation, and health inequities because racist policies, regulations, and laws created opportunity for some and barriers for others; and

**WHEREAS**, structural racism refers to the totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, transportation, media, health care, and criminal justice that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources; and

**WHEREAS**, in Topeka, the average median household income is \$30,500 for Black households and \$41,830 for Latinx households, compared to \$48,950 for non-Latinx whites; (1) and

**WHEREAS**, 52% of Black and 36% of Latinx residents in Topeka cannot afford to rent a safe and decent quality two-bedroom unit. (2)

**WHEREAS**, in Topeka, 23.4% of Black and 16.9% of Latinx residents live in poverty, as compared to 9.1% of whites. (3)

**WHEREAS**, in Topeka, unemployment affects 10% of Black and 4.8% of Latinx residents compared to 3.4% of whites. (4)

**WHEREAS**, in Topeka, 9.5% of Black residents 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to 18.9% of whites. (5)

**WHEREAS**, the population of Topeka is 10.5% Black and 15.3% Latinx but are involved in 46% recorded incidents of officer use of force. (6) (7)

**WHEREAS**, more than 100 studies have linked racism to negative health outcomes, including research supporting that the cumulative experience of racism throughout one's life can induce chronic stress and increase susceptibility to chronic health conditions that lead to otherwise preventable deaths. The American College of Physicians has found that Black individuals in particular are at risk of being subjected to discrimination and violence against them because of their race, endangering them and even costing them their lives. The U.S. National Institutes of Health reports that multiple studies suggest that experiences of racism or discrimination raise the risk of emotional and physical health problems, including depression, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and even death. The American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians have declared hate crimes a public health concern. The Surgeon General of California found that racism is a risk factor for toxic stress, a root cause of some of the most harmful, persistent and expensive health challenges facing our nation; and

**WHEREAS**, experiencing racism can increase stress hormones and lead to activation of the immune and inflammatory systems; changes in brain structure; elevation of blood pressure and blood sugar; and changes in how genes are read, which are associated with increased risk for numerous mental and physical chronic health conditions, like heart disease, cancer, asthma, stroke, Alzheimer's, diabetes, and suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, in Shawnee County, 56.1/10,000 of Black adults were hospitalized with diabetes, as compared to 21.7/10,000 of white adults. City specific numbers are not readily accessible; (8) and

**WHEREAS**, in Topeka/Shawnee County, the infant mortality rate is 14.8 per 1,000 Black births, compared to 5.4 for white births; (9) and

**WHEREAS**, in Shawnee County, Black residents die prematurely with a total of 15,600 years of potential life lost compared to whites at 8,600 years of potential life lost. City specific numbers are not readily accessible. (10)

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that the Mayor of Topeka publicly asserts that racism is a public health crisis Topeka affecting all members of our Topeka and all of Kansas; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Topeka departments should prevent biased policy decision-making and implementation through protocols that require equity analysis through staff training on equity, bias, and cultural sensitivity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Topeka calls upon all Topeka elected officials and departments to continue, with urgency, the review of policies and procedures for the purposes of eradicating implicit and explicit racial bias and develop instead policies and procedures that build racial equity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Topeka departments should ensure equal and unbiased law enforcement and criminal justice through policies on policing practices, adequate accountability measures instilled in law enforcement contracts, through training, publishing data on arrests and use of force. Data on sentencing by municipal courts should be kept and published; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Topeka should always promote policies and grant funding opportunities, both in procurement and in distribution, that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color, and address at least one area of the social determinants of health.



## CITATIONS

- (1) Topeka Citywide Housing Market Study and Strategy, 2020, pg. 19:  
<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wpcontent/uploads/planning/HS/TopekaHousingStudy.pdf>
- (2) Topeka Citywide Housing Market Study and Strategy, 2020, pg. 24:  
<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wpcontent/uploads/planning/HS/TopekaHousingStudy.pdf>
- (3) U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=-01%20-%20All%20available%20basic%20races%20alone%3AIncome%20and%20Poverty&g=310XX00US45820>  
Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates S1701
- (4) U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=unemployment%20shawnee%20county%20kansas&t=-01%20-%20All%20available%20basic%20races%20alone%3AEmployment%20and%20Labor%20Force%20Status&g=310XX00US45820&tid=ACSS5Y2020.S2301>  
Employment Status in the Past 12 Months, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates S2301
- (5) U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=-01%20-%20All%20available%20basic%20races%20alone%3AEducational%20Attainment%3ASchool%20Enrollment&g=310XX00US45820&tid=ACSDP5YSPT2010.DP02>  
Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2010-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates DP02
- (6) Topeka Police Department 2021 Year End Use of Force Report:  
<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/police/2021+Year+End+Use+of+Force+Report.pdf>
- (7) U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, Topeka, Kansas  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/topekacitykansas>
- (8) Kansas Health Matters, Measurement Period 2015-2019, Shawnee County  
<https://www.kansashealthmatters.org/index.php?module=indicators&controller=index&action=dashboard&id=83319366815456082&card=0&localeId=1028>
- (9) Kansas Health Matters, Shawnee County, Nov. 2021  
<https://www.kansashealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=1364&periodId=6955&localeId=1028>  
\*66604 zip code in Topeka has the highest infant mortality rate by zip code in the state Kansas Infant Mortality & Stillbirth Report, 2019, pg. 21  
<https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10419/2019-Infant-Mortality-and-Stillbirth-Report-PDF>
- (10) County Health Rankings & Roadmap:  
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/kansas/2019/rankings/shawnee/county/outcomes/overall/snaps> Years of Potential Life Lost Before Age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted) 2015-2017

