



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Lonnie R. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer


Voice/Relay

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Subject: Testimony for Support of Resolution
Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)

To: Lonnie Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Dr. Denise Boston 
Equity and Restorative Practices Manager

Date: August 26, 2021

The Office of Human Rights and Equity and the Equity and Restorative Practices Unit supports Council Resolution _____ that endorses Howard County Executive's intent to join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

The Equity and Restorative Practices (ERP) Unit has been steadfast and detailed in their efforts to create a common language to address institutional racial inequities and create structures, tools, and training that enhances a racial equity lens to the County's work. In 2021, as part of its ongoing efforts to develop and guide the implementation of strategic initiatives to enhance diversity and equity, ERP is conducting an internal and external racial and social equity audit which included employee surveys, community data, and people's stories and experiences on perceptions of inclusion, belonging, valuation, and inequities. GARE membership will provide the ERP Unit with strategic planning support, cross-jurisdictional networking opportunities and resources that will ensure our achievement's serve as an equity-centered model for our County, the state, and the country.

The purpose of the Equity Strategic Plan has four primary purposes: 1) improve HoCo's racial equity policies and procedures, 2) promotes an inclusive and equity-minded work environment that ensures equitable employment opportunities for all, 3) encourage and uplifts employees so that they may contribute and participate to their fullest potential in support of the equity mission, and 4) develop innovative approaches and investments in community engagement in a sustainable and culturally responsive manner. The Local Children's Board has been working with ERP in the support of GARE membership and their efforts to address racial inequities and overall outcomes.

ERP highly recommends approval of the County Executive's resolution declaring his intent for Howard County Government to join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

Fiscal Impact

The ERP process aligns with the County's goal to advance equity in budgeting, community engagement, and service delivery. Integrating equity into the budget process will ensure that programs, projects, plans, and investments help to reduce disparities. The membership fee is based on the amount of employees employed by the County. Currently, the annual membership fee is \$5,000.00. The fee can be paid out of the Department of County Administration's FY22 operating budget and will be included in future budgets.