



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Melanie Harding, Chief Policy Analyst to the Mayor, City Manager's Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: A resolution affirming the City of Tacoma's commitment to equity in the wake of COVID-19
DATE: 5/28/2020

SUMMARY & PURPOSE:

A resolution affirming the City of Tacoma's commitment to equity, justice, and fairness in its response to the novel Coronavirus; affirming that the City intends to utilize its resources, platforms, and authority to identify and work to address the ways that COVID-19 is exacerbating existing inequities in our communities; and reaffirming the City's commitment to anti-racism in communications related to COVID-19.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Deputy Mayor Keith Blocker
Council Member Kristina Walker

BACKGROUND:

This recommendation is based on the many ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the disparities in both physical as well as financial health among communities of color.

Throughout this pandemic our community has relied heavily on the labor of frontline essential workers in fields such as agriculture, cleaning, delivery and warehousing, grocery, healthcare, and public transit. People of color are both over-represented in these sectors as well as being less likely to be able to work at home, putting them at greater risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Pierce County specifically is seeing disparities in who contracts the virus. Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders represent a disproportionate share of the COVID-19 cases across Pierce County, with these residents being impacted at rates two to five times greater than white residents.

Systemic racism and long-standing inequalities have resulted in communities of color being more likely to have risk factors that negatively affect their health, including the outcomes of cases of COVID-19. These same systemic factors have also resulted in communities of color being less likely to have medical insurance and access to adequate medical care during the time of this global pandemic.

COVID-19 impacts both the physical as well as the financial health of our residents, and communities of color – and Black and Hispanic families in particular – are over-represented in the percentage of asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) households. Nationally, labor statistics show that people of color are also more likely to be laid off. And those households that include immigrants may be ineligible for and/or reluctant to access many aid programs when facing financial hardship. Because of this, they are more likely to experience food insecurity and housing instability during this period of economic turmoil.

The City of Tacoma is an active member of the National League of Cities (NLC) and Mayor Woodards serves as a co-chair of NLC's Race, Equity, and Leadership Council, which encourages local leaders to introduce and adopt an equity resolution that publicly affirms the municipalities' commitment to equity, justice and fairness in its response



to the novel Coronavirus. In alignment with this, the Equity and Empowerment Framework adopted by the City Council in 2014, and the statement on Anti-Discrimination and COVID-19 approved by the City Council on April 3rd, Mayor Woodards brings forward this resolution affirming that the City of Tacoma is committed to equity in its service delivery, decision making and community engagement, including efforts related to the COVID-19 response.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):

The background data for this document was drawn from sources at Tacoma Public Health Department, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, United Way’s Pacific Northwest Study of Financial Hardship, and National League of Cities.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

This legislation is a direct action to reduce racial and other inequities, disparities, or discrimination to under-represented communities by ensuring that these issues are identified and addressed in the City of Tacoma’s COVID-19 response.

This legislation is related most closely to the following Tacoma 2025 strategic goals:

Livability: Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents
Decrease the percentage of individuals who are spending more than 45% of income on housing and transportation costs.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

The legislation affirms that the City will identify and address inequities in physical and financial health as part of its COVID-19 response.

ALTERNATIVES:

Presumably your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives actions for council or staff to take. Please use table below.

| Alternative | Positive Impacts | Negative Impacts |
|--|------------------|---|
| Take no action and rely on past guidance from the Council to ensure that existing and exacerbated inequities are addressed COVID-19 response | N/A | Tacoma will not be in position to serve as a national leader demonstrating best practices that can be adopted by other cities during the COVID-19 pandemic. |



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

The City Manager will ensure that planning and response efforts to COVID-19 will continue to demonstrate awareness of and seek means to address disparities and inequities in the City of Tacoma.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:

The sponsors recommend adoption of the resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

No attachments