

# NCEC Committee of the Whole

## Staff Report

**TO:** Members of NCEC Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Lance Marcus Knuckles, Access & Outreach Manager  
**Date:** February 20, 2013  
**Subject:** **Blueprint for Equity, Commitment Statement**

### Action Requested

This item is before the Committee of the Whole for purposes of discussion. No action is requested.

### Discussion

The new leadership within the Mayor's office and City Council all moving into their new roles with an eye on racial equity makes it imperative for the commission to establish how it will be in partnership with these new leaders. This presents an opportunity for the commission to reflect and determine how it sees itself within the landscape of leadership, its position on racial equity and community engagement.

Recognizing the severity of the racial disparities the City of Minneapolis department heads have crafted a statement of commitment to racial equity. After several months of conversation the department heads still are moving toward shared understanding of racial equity but this statement is designed to provide direction, context and accountability for departments head's to community, to the council directive to establish a racial equity toolkit and to be a leader of practice in addressing racial disparities. This commitment statement in conjunction with the implementation of the Racial Equity Toolkit creates a platform for strategic engagement on providing meaningful access to the decision making processes of the city.

NOTE: The Statement of Commitment crafted by department heads will be presented to City Council in early March 2014.

Included is the draft of the department head commitment statement for the commission to review and consider how it wants to come to a shared perspective on racial equity and the means on how racial equity will be realized in its work. The language that the commission considers should be focused on areas of influence and impact (e.g. racial equity within community engagement and access point to the decision making processes NOT focused on the broad spectrum of racial equity).

Intended Outcome:

Formally submit the NCEC's Statement of Commitment to the Health, Energy and Community Engagement Committee and the City Council for adoption.

## **Statement of Commitment**

**(FINAL DRAFT 1-28-14)**

We, the department leadership in the City of Minneapolis, believe that we have a responsibility to help overcome historic, persistent injustices that still affect members of our community. We are committed to changing the underlying system that creates race-based disparities in our community and we will work to achieve racial equity.

We recognize that racial disparities exist across key indicators of success in Minneapolis, including health, education, criminal justice, the environment, employment and the economy.

We understand that institutional racism occurs when organizational programs or policies work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally or inadvertently.

We understand that to challenge institutional racism, we have to look beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systemic biases that are built into our institutions. We know that we are not to blame for what happened in the past, but we are responsible for eliminating racism today.

We will work to address both present day and past patterns of bias and discrimination so that our efforts create equitable outcomes for all of the city's residents and service recipients.

We understand that the conduct of business in a fair and equitable manner takes into account critical issues of bias and discrimination and requires concerted and purposeful action.

We agree to use available tools to assist in the elimination of racial disparities across key indicators of success, and we agree to promote racial equity within the City workplace, procurement processes, community engagement activities and delivery of services.

We will hold ourselves accountable for ensuring that each and every policy recommendation and city program is reflective of our commitment to racial equity to achieve the following goals:

- To end racial disparities within City government, so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents.
- To strengthen outreach and public engagement, change existing services by using available tools and best practices, and improve access to City services.
- To lead a collaborative, community-wide effort to eliminate racial inequity in education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health and economic success.

We declare racism unjust and pledge to eliminate racial disparities; and, we commit to achieving equity in Minneapolis so that all – regardless of race, ethnicity or cultural background – will prosper.