

To: Councilor Ali Dieng
From: Jordan Redell, Chief of Staff
Date: May 17, 2022
Re: Update for Council REIB Committee meeting

As requested, this is a written update for tonight's REIB Committee meeting regarding Juneteenth planning, Racism as a Public Health Emergency, and efforts to hire a permanent Director.

Juneteenth

Next month the City will host our second annual Juneteenth celebration. This year the event involves events over three day weekend (June 17-19). Acting Director Phet Keomanyvanh will provide a verbal update in person at the meeting.

Hiring a permanent REIB Director

After addressing transition issues since Director Green's departure, the administration is now moving forward with a search for a permanent director. HR Director Kerin Durfee will lead REIB Director search process, and we plan to post the position in the next few weeks. Kerin is working to build a search committee that will conduct interviews.

Typically department head search processes result in an appointment in 2-4 months. Acting Director Keomanyvanh will continue to serve through this transition period.

Racism as a Public Health Emergency

In July 2020, the City, in collaboration with the Racial Justice Alliance, convened more than 30 partner organizations to declare racism a public health emergency. Since that declaration, the REIB budget has grown from \$100,000 to over \$1.7 million. We continue to commit resources to this work, including dedicating \$100,000 of ARPA dollars and \$50,000 of FY 23 General Fund dollars to Racism as a Public Health Emergency work.

The City has made progress on its commitments made as part of the declaration. We are now rehiring for the Public Health Equity Manager position as the initial manager left after less than one year in the role and City employees are continuing to participate in the 16-hour racial equity workshop conducted by REIB staff.

A major focus of the first year after the pledge was implementing 8-Point Plan to Ensure Racially Just Pandemic Response and Economic Recovery: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Press/mayor-miro-weinberger-announces%20eight-point-plan-to-protect-bipoc-communities-and-ensure-a>.

Other initiatives have included:

- Multiple outbreak responses with pop-ups in Old North End
- Launching the Trusted Community Voices program
- Partnering with the Vermont Professionals of Color Network and the Vermont Health Equity Initiative to stand up BIPOC vaccination clinics, building a warm, welcoming space with music and food.
- Using ARPA dollars to help fund the Vermont Health Equity Initiative expansion of its focus to address health disparities for BIPOC Vermonters beyond the impacts of Covid-19.

- Creating BIPOC grant programs and will soon be bringing forward a revolving loan fund using ARPA dollars.

As housing is one of the major social determinates of health, we have also been working for a year on a first generation home ownership initiative. While this initiative has been delayed as a result of the manager of this program leaving the City in March, Acting Director Keomanyvanh is committed to this work and will continue focus in this area following the hiring of a permanent director. Just last week legislature passed funding for first generation homeownership which we plan to seek and leverage with our local initiative.

Finally, we are working to update the Public Health Equity Manager position and will post it soon. That person will be primarily responsible for moving forward the Racism as a Public Health Emergency work using the multi-stakeholder Community Stat model.