

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2024-1**

### **BLACK REPARATIONS AGENDA**

**WHEREAS**, from 1619 to 1865, the 13 colonies that became the United States and the United States government that formed thereafter upheld and sanctioned the enslavement of approximately four million Africans and their descendants; and

**WHEREAS**, the system of chattel slavery relegated enslaved Africans to property, deeming them not fully human, and was an immoral, inhumane, and brutally violent act that deprived individuals of life, freedom, dignity, citizenship, and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago was founded by Jean Baptiste Point du Sable in 1780 on traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago was incorporated as a city in 1837 and perpetuated, condoned, profited, and benefitted from the system of chattel slavery in both direct and indirect ways; and

**WHEREAS**, the legal institution of chattel slavery was followed by the Jim Crow era (1877-1963) that consisted of a series of laws and cultural practices that legalized and perpetuated racial segregation and discrimination; and

**WHEREAS**, Black Chicagoans were impacted by a series of Jim Crow laws and other racially discriminatory laws, including:

- **Black Laws** – These laws, also known as Black Codes, limited Black Americans’ freedom, including limiting their right to vote, reside, socialize, and travel freely,
- **Federal Highway Construction** – The construction of U.S. Interstates 55, 57, 90, 94 and 290 in the 1940s and 50s harmed dozens of densely populated neighborhoods throughout Chicago, displacing families and often separating white neighborhoods from black ones,
- **Urban Renewal** – The federally funded urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 60s incentivized the demolition of designated slums and blighted blocks with plans for modern multifamily homes, institutions and other large facilities,
- **Public Housing** – From the 1950s through the ‘60s, the construction of high-rise public housing projects for thousands of low-income Chicagoans and residents displaced by highway construction and urban renewal resulted in buildings that were detached from the street grid which contributed to deferred maintenance and obsolescence in the decades that followed,
- **Redlining** - Starting in the 1940s and continuing into the ‘70s, the coordinated effort by financial organizations, government, and other entities to prohibit Black people from securing federally backed mortgage loans for home purchases in select neighborhoods,

- **Contract Sales** - In the 1950s and '60s, the use of predatory housing contracts to rob Black families in Chicago of an estimated \$3 billion to \$4 billion, according to a 2019 Duke University analysis,
- **Housing Covenants** – The Great Migration of southern Black people to Chicago in the first half of the 20th century fueled segregationist sentiments that led to the establishment of race-restricted covenants that legally prevented homeowners in predominantly White neighborhoods from selling or renting to Black people; and

**WHEREAS**, in a post-Civil Rights era, Black Chicagoans continued to bear the harms of slavery and its vestiges in the form of systemic racism, including but not limited to:

- **Vacant Lots** - The demolition of thousands of abandoned, vacant homes in West and Southside neighborhoods weakened neighborhood vitality and contributed to neighborhood blight,
- **School Closures** - Following decades of neighborhood disinvestment and depopulation, the 2013 closure of 49 public elementary and high schools left hundreds of West and South side families without convenient education options, with 88 percent of those affected being Black according to reports,
- **Policing** - While the City in recent years has committed to reforms to ensure that police services are provided to all individuals consistent with state and federal law and to build a foundation of trust between CPD and the communities they serve, the use of law enforcement, rather than supportive services, to address community problems that can result in disturbances or violence as well as other social ills have led to deep mistrust of the police, allegations of abuse, and corruption, and fundamentally has not led to lasting peace, according to Chicago Citywide Plan (2023),
- **Industrial Pollution** - The evolution of last-mile delivery facilities near area interstate highways in the 2010s, coupled with the continued environmental burden of the concentration of industrial facilities, continue to contribute to health disparities for majority Black communities,
- **Downtown Development** - The investment of public dollars in the central area district often came at the expense of investments in South and West side neighborhoods, prioritizing the economic growth and vibrancy of downtown over that of Black neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the following cited sources, the legacy of these policies and more have resulted in generational systemic inequities in education, employment, wealth, housing, health, safety, and more, which include but are not limited to the following:

- There is a life expectancy gap of 11.4 years between Black and non-Black Chicagoans. 80% of premature mortality among Black Chicagoans is attributed to social, economic, and community disinvestment. (Chicago Health Atlas, 2022)
- The largest homeownership rate gap exists between White and Black households. The average Chicago homeownership rate is 54% for White households and 35% for Black

households. The average homeownership value is \$275,000 for White households and \$145,000 for Black households in Chicago. (Urban Institute, 2021)

- For every \$1 banks loaned in Chicago's White neighborhoods for home purchasing, 12 cents was invested in the city's Black neighborhoods. (WBEZ, 2020)
- The value of the average White-owned business in Chicago is more than 12x that of the average Black-owned business. (Prosperity Now, 2020)
- Black people make up only 14% of Illinois' population, but 55% of the prison population, and are convicted at nearly twice the rate of White people for low-level possession offenses despite similar rates of drug use. (ACLU IL, 2022)
- Despite the addition of 170,000 jobs to Chicago's economy between 2011 and 2019, the city's unemployment rate remains uneven by race; Black unemployment rates are 4 times higher than White unemployment rates. (Chicago Citywide Plan, 2023)
- Nearly half of all Black Chicagoans (46%) live in neighborhoods with high levels of cumulative burden of environmental, health and socio-demographic stressors (Chicago Cumulative Impact Assessment Report, 2023).
- Rates of hospitalization for a behavioral health reason are consistently highest among Black Chicagoans who are at least two times more likely to be hospitalized for a behavioral health reason than any other racial group; and
- Chicago's Black population has declined steadily from 1,187,905 in 1980 to 797,253 in 2017, a decrease of 390,652 or 32.9%. (UIC Great Cities Institute, 2019)

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois, in 2022, established the African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission to provide reports and discuss and perform actions concerning:

- Preservation of African American neighborhoods and communities
- Building and developing vocational centers for People of African Descent-Citizens
- Ensuring proportional economic representation in all State contracts
- Creation and enforcement of an Illinois Slavery Era Disclosure Bill; and

**WHEREAS**, The U.S. House of Representatives, the State and California, the cities of Asheville, Detroit, San Francisco, and Evanston have issued legislation to establish a task force and/or fund to conduct a study and develop a plan of action to remedy past and present harms experienced by Black Americans as a result of slavery and/or the state's own policies; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago has made attempts to begin redressing the legacy of slavery and pervasiveness of systemic racism, which includes:

- A resolution urging Congress to consider payments to the descendants of slavery (2000),
- Introduction and passage of the Business, Corporate and Slavery Era Insurance Ordinance (2002),
- A reparations package for the survivors of the torture under Police Department Commander John Burge, resulting in a \$5.5 million reparations package (2015),
- A vote to start a committee to examine equity in the City (2020),

- A resolution declaring racism a public health crisis and establishing racial equity liaisons and the responsibility to set and publicly post an annual racial equity goal for each department and agency of the City of Chicago (2021),
- Codification of the Office of Equity & Racial Justice and the Office’s responsibility to provide oversight and guidance for systematic reform of processes, practices, and functions for the city, in addition to department responsibilities to develop Racial Equity Action Plans and account for progress in the annual budget process (2022),
- A citywide plan approved by the Chicago Plan Commission that acknowledges Chicago’s historical inequities and identifies policy goals and objectives to advance neighborhood growth and vibrancy, and ensure that all residents can live in healthy, safe communities and feel a sense of belonging and ownership of their neighborhood and the city (2023),
- The Chicago Monuments Project review of 500 sculptures, plaques, and artworks in the current collection of publicly owned monuments throughout the City of Chicago to identify inconsistencies with the City’s collective values and determine a plan to address findings (2022),
- The Office of Equity and Racial Justice’s Together We Heal initiative rooted in a three-pillar framework (Reflect on Our Past, Reclaim our Present, Reimagine the Future) and, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, issuance of a \$6 million grant program to invest in artists and arts organizations promoting healing through their work (2022),
- A grant allocation of \$6.8 million to build eight new public monuments, including a monument to the more than 100 Black men who were tortured by Chicago police officers trained by Jon Burge (2023),
- A \$500,000 investment towards studying Reparations and Restoration from Mayor Brandon Johnson’s 2024 fiscal year budget (2023); and

**WHEREAS**, the institution and legacy of slavery and Jim Crow laws, have created a pervasive culture that dehumanizes Black Americans and has denied Black Americans liberty, citizenship, rights, and the ability to benefit from the wealth generated from their labor; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has a responsibility to address the historic and present-day racial inequities by reflecting on laws, policies, and procedures, that have systemically contributed to and exacerbated racial inequalities and by identifying the appropriate remedies; and therefore

**I, Brandon Johnson, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby order as follows:**

**Section 1.** The above recitals are incorporated into and made an integral part of this Order.

**Section 2.** Acknowledge that the legacy of chattel slavery and Jim Crow are incompatible with the values and principles recognized in the City of Chicago’s Equity Statement of Principles, which names a vision for Chicago where race no longer predestines life outcomes and, instead, there is fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone with the ability to thrive.

**Section 3.** Apologize, on behalf of the City of Chicago, for the historical wrongs committed against Black Chicagoans and their ancestors who have and continue to bear injustices.

**Section 4.** The establishment of a Black Reparations Co-Governance Task Force (“Task Force”) coordinated by the Office of the Mayor under the leadership of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice (“OERJ”). The purpose of which shall be to support the strategy, implementation, and engagement of the Chicago Black Reparations Agenda.

**Section 5.** On or before 60 days after the effective date of this Order, OERJ shall invite participation from the Black Caucus under the leadership of Alderwoman Stephanie Coleman to work with the Office of Budget Management to identify and engage one or more consultants to support the creation of a Chicago Black Reparations Agenda.

**Section 6.** On or before 90 days after the effective date of this Order, the Office of the Mayor shall invite participation from the Chicago Aldermanic Black Caucus (“Black Caucus”) to co-design a framework and selection process for the Task Force, to include members from community.

**Section 7.** On or before 12 months after the date of the first meeting of the Task Force, OERJ (in partnership with the Black Caucus and the Task Force) shall produce a public report that does the following:

- Creates a City of Chicago definition and framework for Black reparations.
- Designs an educational and capacity building tool to advance the knowledge of City of Chicago Mayor’s Office, City Departments, and City Council staff on the topic of reparations.
- Identifies core issue areas for redress and reparative action – for example, housing, economic development, health, education, community safety, mass incarceration and over-policing, and more.
- Conducts a comprehensive study and examination of all policies that have harmed Black Chicagoans from slavery era to present day.
- Holds public hearings and a broader community engagement strategy to gather testimonials and personal narratives from Black people with lived experience of their harm.
- Makes a series of recommendations that will serve as appropriate remedies and restitution for past injustices and present harm consistent with international standards.
- Recommends appropriate ways to educate the Chicago public on the report.
- Identifies connections to existing City of Chicago reparative policies and programs.

**Section 8.** The Chief Equity Officer shall provide quarterly updates to the Mayor and his Executive Staff on all activities listed above in Section 7.

**Section 9.** This Executive Order shall take effect upon its execution and filing with the City Clerk.