

Guiding Principles – 2023 Clayton Community Equity Commission

The Clayton Equity Commission was formed by Bill No. 6759. The body provides guidance to the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and the Clayton community on the issues pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion. In June 2020, the CEC decided to begin its broader equity work by addressing racial equity with the goal of advising elected officials on how to prioritize and enact system change to reduce the impact of racism in our community. (see “Why are we leading with race?” below)

The CEC recognizes that racism is ingrained throughout all facets of life in our nation and region, and that racial disparities define Black St. Louisans’ quality of life across a range of indicators. Clayton is not immune to these problems, as both data and anecdotal evidence of Black residents’ and visitors’ experiences in our community makes clear. The CEC seeks to ensure Clayton is a community where St. Louisans of all backgrounds choose to live, work and play. To accomplish that purpose, CEC will focus on identifying policies and practices currently in place that reinforce inequities and propose solutions to close these gaps.

Why are we leading with race?

The CEC leads with race, with the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities are of urgent priority to our region and the nation at large. We further recognize that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. Racial segregation was intentionally built into the foundation of the St. Louis community. Now we must be equally intentional in our efforts to remove the injustices left in its wake.

It is also true that inequities exist across other identity factors, including those based on economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Prioritizing racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. In our formative meetings, we reviewed recommendations of the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity and several case studies of other cities who have used an equity commission to great effect. It became clear that when a local government makes policy and practice changes to reduce racial inequity, it improves the city’s functioning for residents and visitors of color, as well as, residents and visitors with other marginalized identities.

CEC Values

Impact, Community, Courage