DMPSJ Racial Equity Statement

The District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice (DMPSJ) is a small office that oversees the 12 public safety and justice agencies within the DC government, specifically: the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS), the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA), the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), the Office of Human Rights (OHR), the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE), the Office of Unified Communications (OUC), and the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG).

DMPSJ believes that all people are created equal; however, historically, not all have been treated equally or equitably, leading to disparities in life circumstances, most glaringly along racial lines. Though often most visible in unequal policing (policing, itself, has its roots in attempts of the White establishment to keep Blacks and other people of color oppressed), systemic racism is endemic to life in the United States in general and Washington, DC in particular. DMPSJ will strive to recognize and work to overcome the systemic inequities that consistently result in lower life expectancy and income and higher involvement in the criminal justice system for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). Specific to our role in the criminal justice and public safety ecosystems in the District, we will ensure that we and the agencies in our cluster are aware of the implicit biases we all hold and are prepared to work to overcome them every way we can. We are also committed to reflecting the racial and ethnic diversity of the District of Columbia, both among our small staff and within each of the cluster agencies we oversee. The historical trauma visited on non-White bodies has resulted in a multitude of negative outcomes, and we recognize that the systems and structures that uphold White supremacy were not created and internalized overnight; thus, making them visible and then dismantling them will also take time, possibly generations.

Racial equity is both a process and an outcome. As a process, we will analyze the data (disaggregated by race) collected about how our agencies perform, looking for inequities, then assist our agencies in planning ways to eliminate—or at least reduce—those inequities. As an outcome, we believe that we all deserve a District in which everyone, regardless of race, is healthy, feels safe, feels connected to the community, has their voices heard and valued in the community, and is able to thrive to the best of each of our abilities.