



DANIEL HORRIGAN, MAYOR

## City of Akron

# Ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

The City of Akron's efforts in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion and reducing unconscious bias and racial discrimination are continuous and ongoing. In recent years, Mayor Dan Horrigan and the City administration, with the support of Council President Margo Sommerville and Akron City Council, have taken consistent and targeted steps to review systems and processes within the City to prevent discrimination and reveal and dismantle structural racism. As the City moves forward, we will continue to be intentional about eradicating discriminatory policies and practices within our own City structure and holding other community organizations accountable for necessary reforms.

This document is intended to serve as a high level summary of many of these targeted efforts and other relevant policies, by category. The City will continue to strive to better reflect the values of diversity, equity and inclusion in all we do so that each and every program and service the City provides meets the needs of historically underserved populations, and particularly Akron's African American community.

## Akron Police Department

### APD Key Policies

- The Akron Police Department does not tolerate or permit racial profiling.
  - Within the last ten years, there has been a strong emphasis on this topic. All Akron officers have been trained to understand perceptions, prejudices and implicit bias. This training has been done with state-certified APD instructors and instructors that were independent of the department.
  - The Department has been collecting demographic information on officer stops for more than 20 years in a system called a Citizen Contact Log. The data is entered consistently into the Department's mobile computers and stored digitally. This process was self-initiated by the Akron Police Department and is used by department leadership to assess trends over time.
  - APD purchased a new records management system that allows improved opportunity for evaluation. The new programs will let the Department review the actions of individual officers, groups of officers (shift, unit, geographical areas assigned, even those officers that may work for a particular supervisor) and more. The system integration was delayed by another very large technology adoption and then further by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected to be in place in the third or fourth quarter of 2020.

- Searches of any citizen’s person or property must be supported by consent, reasonable suspicion, probable cause, or another constitutional basis.
  - The City of Akron recognizes the fundamental importance of upholding every individual’s constitutional rights and privileges. The foundation for Akron Police Department training is the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Searches of any citizen’s person or property must be supported by consent, reasonable suspicion or probable cause.
  - The Akron Police Department also trains officers on judicial exceptions to the probable cause requirement. These “exigent circumstances” come in differing forms where the immediacy of the search is warranted due to risk factors like a person’s physical safety, or the risk of evidence of a crime being lost.
  - The Akron Police Department also trains that consent searches should be limited to efforts that will justify further investigative action by the officer. All such “consent searches” can be lawfully denied by citizens, and our officers are trained to accept any denial of consent.
- Every reported use of force by a member of the Akron Police Department is investigated to determine if any use of force was “objectively reasonable under the circumstances” and complied with applicable law and procedure.
  - This includes instances that could vary as widely as tackling, all the way to use of deadly force. Additionally, any report of an alleged injury—whether the report is made by a suspect or a law enforcement officer— will be investigated as a potential use of force.
  - A unit supervisor is assigned to every use of force instance reported. When completed, the investigation report goes through a review process that includes a commander, a deputy chief, the Office of Professional Standards (previously called Internal Affairs) and then by the chief of police.
  - This investigative process works the same way for any complaint made against a member of Akron Police Department. These complaints cover a wide range, from rude behavior to an allegation of criminal activity.
  - The City of Akron also employs an [Independent Police Auditor](#) who has the power to review all investigations and complaints against APD officers. The Police Auditor works independently of the Akron Police Department command and performs the following functions:
    - conducts outreach about the complaint process and the services the office provides to the community;
    - serves as an alternative location for filing a complaint against an Akron police officer;
    - monitors and audits APD complaint investigations to ensure they are thorough, objective and fair and make policy recommendations to enhance and improve policies and procedures of the APD; and
    - responds to the scene of, and reviews officer-involved shooting investigations.
  - Officers are disciplined when their actions have been determined to be against the rules and regulations, policies and procedures, or the law. The penalties are guided by a discipline matrix that takes into account the seriousness of the violation and the officer’s prior disciplinary record. In more minor matters, an officer will be coached by a supervisor; other instances may result in verbal or written warnings. As the seriousness of the violation increases, so would the penalty. This could be the forfeiture of vacation hours, suspensions, reassignment within the department, demotion or dismissal.
  - Some have the perception that officers are using force on a daily basis or even on a majority of their calls for service. However, the truth is, APD averages one use of force for every 1100 calls for service. Calls that include fights, other disturbances, domestic violence, drunkenness or drug impairment, drug dealing, assaults, breaking & entering, stolen autos, other thefts, felonious assaults, shots fired, shootings, robberies, burglaries, rape and murder. Formal complaints against officers average 1 for every 1400 calls for service.

- Investigations of any instances of death or serious physical harm to a citizen while in APD custody are conducted by the Crimes Against Persons unit in conjunction with BCI and the Summit County Prosecutor's Office.

### APD Training

- APD procedure on [Bias Free Policing](#) was recently completed and will be added to department procedures. This procedure (P-2020-18) dictates the manner in which officers are to handle themselves and their interactions with the public. In addition, last year the department engaged in a review of every APD procedure, a project that is now near completion.
- Each newly promoted supervisor receives specific training on dealing with use of force issues, titled: Supervisors Use of Force Investigations and Policy. Each supervisor gets this training before or shortly after promotion. Additionally, they receive a week-long internal training covering all matters of supervision. Professional development opportunities also include Police Executive Leadership College (PELC), a three month course.
- The following are other courses that all APD officers have taken over the last several years:
  - Victim's Advocacy
  - Communication Skills
  - Crimes Against Seniors – fraud and exploitation
  - Autism – understanding and interacting for good outcomes
  - Office of Professional Standards – a two year review of cases and investigations
  - Legal Updates – search/seizure, pat downs arrests
  - Professional Standards of Conduct
  - Vicarious Trauma
  - Procedural Justice
  - Police Legitimacy
  - Focus on Stops and Frisks (Terry Pat-downs, when, how and the law that dictates)
  - Constitutional Use of Force
  - De-escalation
  - Mental Health Interactions
  - Confrontation Simulation
  - Implicit Bias
  - Trauma Informed Policing
  - Practical Applications of Force
  - Procedural Justice (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time)
  - Police Legitimacy (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time)
  - Subject Control

### APD Recruiting and Hiring Practices

- Updated hiring policies were implemented in 2019 and allowed for greater diversity
  - APD initiated a study and identified nine areas that were hurting recruitment and hiring, and provided recommendations to eliminate impediments or improve in each area.
  - In 2019, the City increased the maximum age for new hires in both the police and fire departments.
  - The City also brought the police academy back in-house, allowing recruits to be paid a starting wage of \$26.22/hour from the first day of training.

- The results of that effort allowed APD to hire a new class of 45 officers that were sworn in on Friday May 29, 2020, 22% of which were minorities. This representation in the class of 2020 more than doubled the minority hires from the most recent classes hired in 2017 and 2018.
- Of the 462 sworn officers in the Akron Police Department Department, 72 are African American and 44 are women.

### APD Community Policing Efforts

- In 2019 in total, APD participated in more than 300 community events. To strengthen APD relationships with the community, the department routinely attends planned events, most often to present or answer questions. APD attends Ward Meetings, block watch meetings and are a primary participant in the annual National Night out Against Crime, with 20 separate neighborhood events taking place that night alone.
- APD also hosts safety programs for kids and has developed emergency plans for businesses and schools. They annually host other leadership groups, including Leadership Akron and Mayor's Youth Leadership Council.
- APD reinstated the [Citizens' Police Academy](#) last year. The program allows participants an intimate look into the training, and more importantly, the department culture. Interested individuals can call Police Community Relations at 330-375-2390. More information about Police Community relations is available [here](#).
- In 2012, APD developed a new unit within the department, paid with federal grant dollars, called the Neighborhood Response Team. The grant was awarded to APD due to the creative nature of the work and its potential to build relationships, prevent minor incidents from escalating, and attaching greater ownership to officers and supervisors for their designated geographical area.

### APD Collaboration and Proactive Problem-Solving

- The APD sought out and deployed [body worn cameras](#) (BWC) prior to communities demanding them, with a great amount of diligence going to vetting products and procedures. APD was the first major city in Ohio to equip every patrol officer with a body camera, and is one of only a handful of departments in the state that has an audit process on videos that are generated in the field.
- During the 2010's, Ohio's Governor put together a board to develop guidelines for law enforcement in the state. APD voluntarily adopted the requirements and was certified. They will continue to look for recommendations and best practices from the collaborative and implement their policies.

## **Akron Fire Department**

### AFD Recruiting and Hiring Practices

- AFD created a Recruiting Taskforce to recognize and recruit within diverse populations. Current hiring practices continue to be evaluated for a more diverse department representation reflective of the City of Akron.
- The Akron Fire Cadet Class of 2019 included five females, the highest number of female recruits in AFD history.
- Of the 358 firefighters in the Akron Fire Dept., 52 are African American and 17 are women.
- The Human Relations Committee, in partnership with Local 330 and the IAFF, is committed to promoting positive human relations in all aspects of the fire service. Every fire fighter, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or reason of disability, has the right to a safe and respectful workplace that fosters professional and personal balance. The Akron Fire Department has selected a diverse group of individuals to participate on this committee with the IAFF.

## AFD Community Programming

- AFD created and sustains a number of community-wide initiatives to engage Akron citizens and provide vital education and services.
  - Cribs for Kids – A partnership with the Safe Kids Summit to provide safe sleep options for families when Akron Fire Personnel recognized homes without these capabilities for babies. This is in support of the Full-Term-First-Birthday, and preventive Infant Mortality initiative for the City of Akron. Akron Fire paramedics have cribs available on a limited basis to provide, free of charge, for home where an infant has no safe sleeping area. Cribs are provided by Safe Kids and minimal paperwork is required. No funds are accepted from the family.
  - [REACH Program](#) – Resources, Education, and Advocacy for Community Health is geared toward patients who use 9-1-1 when there is often a lack of access to primary care. This program address a diverse population of residents who lack other care options for instances of non-injury producing falls, access to medications and food, or transportation needs to basic medical care. This program is currently looking at fall hazards and hoarding conditions within the homes of Akron residents.
  - Akron Safety Town including the Fire Safety Smoke House – A partnership with the Akron Police Department and Akron Children’s Hospital to identify areas with the highest level of unintentional injuries. The programming allows parents and children to use safe practices to prevent injuries such as those caused in vehicle and bicycle accidents, animal bites, and more. Youth from each neighborhood of the City of Akron are also encouraged to attend to learn about gun safety and fire safety.

Fire Station Tours are available for agencies and organizations to get an idea of how firefighters live, train, and work together in a cohesive environment for a 24-hour period of time. Visitors are able to see how the men and women of the fire department can complete their job functions as a team by sharing living quarters and cooperative responsibilities. These tours are available to groups and organizations including schools, boy scouts, and girl scouts, and other community organizations for fire safety and fire prevention education purposes.

## **City Administration**

### City of Akron Trainings and Policies

- Mayor Horrigan and the City of Akron hosted Qualified Administrator training for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) in October 2019. By identifying hidden biases and providing guidance to deal with them effectively, the IDI tool helps leaders manage their employees and stakeholders fairly and without unconscious discrimination. Mayor, members of his Cabinet and senior staff participated in the program and are being coached on ways to further increase cultural competency.
- In 2017, Mayor Horrigan signed into law a comprehensive non-discrimination ordinance that established protections against discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations, and created the [Akron Civil Rights Commission](#) (ACRC) to hear complaints.
  - The ACRC provides residents with the opportunity to resolve discrimination issues at a local level. The Commission investigates complaints of unlawful discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, familial status, sex, gender, sexual orientation or military status in the following areas:
    - Housing, including home sales, leases, rentals, and financial transactions
    - Employment, including hiring, promotions, discipline, working conditions, salary
    - Public accommodations, including access to goods, services, business, and public spaces
    - City contracts

- The City of Akron hired its first full-time Diversity Training Manager, Myra Snipes, in 2019 to manage diversity initiatives. Cultural diversity training, both in person and online, is now offered citywide.
- As an Equal Opportunity Employer (EEO), the City of Akron adheres to [Federal laws](#) prohibiting employment discrimination. These laws protect employees and job applicants against employment discrimination. Every five years, the City of Akron updates their EEO Plan with the most recent demographic data, EEO best practices and employer goals.
- Mayor Horrigan and City Council deemed Akron a Welcoming City and created a [Strategic Welcome Plan Framework](#) with the County of Summit in 2017.

### City of Akron Procurement Reform

- The City engaged in an 18-month review of other municipalities and governmental agencies to determine how to diversify the City’s vendor pool and be more inclusive in the procurement process. The result of that comparative study is the [City of Akron Procurement and Inclusion report](#). On site visits were conducted with the cities of Dayton and Grand Rapids and the Northeast Ohio Sewer District.
  - It was determined that one of the shortfalls is current language in the City Charter and ordinances, and that revisions were necessary. New Charter language was created and presented to the 2020 Charter Review Commission. Ordinance revisions are underway and will be presented to City Council this summer.
  - The proposed Charter changes include language directing that “The Director of Finance and the Purchasing Agent shall develop a small dollar purchasing policy to enhance opportunities for participation by certified entities in competitive procurements administered by the City’s Purchasing Division.” This program will be developed to mirror other municipalities that designate a preference system for small dollar procurement to assure local/small/diverse businesses are first given an opportunity to provide the City goods or services before the City approaches larger companies.
  - The City will be recruiting and hiring a Diversity and Inclusion Director to link with the Minority Contractor Capital Access Program (MCCAP) program and work with the Akron Urban League on increasing the inclusion of diverse businesses in the procurement and contracting processes, and provide outreach and education to the community.
  - The City has purchased and is implementing a comprehensive technology system (Workday) that will modernize the procurement process. All vendors will be able to electronically register for electronic notification of all opportunities associated with their selected commodity codes and will be able to compete for work on all opportunities offered by the City of Akron.
  - The City has contacted the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and is pursuing membership in the organization. The [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#) is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. The organization will assist the City in development and implementation of a Racial Equity Work Plan or Strategic Plan, integration of racial equity into other strategic or operational plans, use of a Racial Equity Tool in routine decision making, and/or adoption of legislation that describes the City’s commitment.
- Within the Akron Waterways Renewed program in 2015, the City implemented a goal-based program to assist certified minority firms in gaining better opportunities in engineering design and construction contracts. This program was developed in conjunction with the Workforce Program that seeks to provide construction opportunities for Akron residents who were being asked to pay for the \$1.2 Billion sewer improvement program. Due to this program, the City had 5% participation from certified firms in 2019 from projects residing with the Engineering department.

## City of Akron Economic Inclusion Programs

- [Elevate Greater Akron](#), a coordinated planning initiative of the City of Akron, Summit County and the Greater Akron Chamber, has identified multiple forms of racial exclusion in our community. Of the 100 largest U.S. metro areas from 2005 to 2015, Akron ranked among the 10 worst metro areas for decline in the African American employment rate, and among the five worst for the decline in African American earnings. Together, the partners are taking proactive steps to begin correcting generations of structural racism in our local economic framework.
  - Developing a comprehensive inclusion narrative for the region
  - Developing capacity to integrate inclusion into all strategies
  - Be highly intentional in ensuring Akron’s African American population is positioned to engage in, and share in the benefits of, regional growth and prosperity. Emphasis on digital skills and internship programs and adding staff capacity.
  - Both Akron and GAC are co-funding a full time position titled Vice President of Opportunity and Inclusion. Robert DeJournett currently holds this position.
- Mayor Horrigan created the [Great Streets](#) program, which focuses investments and programming into targeted neighborhood business districts, increasing the walkability and viability of the neighborhoods. Great Streets districts serve as hubs of business and social activity. In the same way that we are investing in a vibrant, walkable Main Street to reinvigorate Akron’s downtown neighborhood, we are equally committed to investing in our ‘mini-downtowns’ so business districts can grow and thrive in neighborhoods across the city.
- Mayor Horrigan founded [Bounce Innovation Hub](#) in January 2018, the region’s first open innovation hub serving northeast Ohio’s entrepreneurial and innovation community. Currently, 46.5% of Bounce’s clientele are black-owned businesses.
  - In 2020, Mayor Horrigan and Bounce announced the launch of [MORTAR](#), which is a 15-week accelerator course that helps both existing and aspiring non-tech entrepreneurs learn the nuances of business ownership and build a comprehensive business canvas. The program focuses on entrepreneurs who are often ignored. By targeting under-served and redeveloping communities, it offers non-traditional or historically marginalized entrepreneurs the opportunity to use their talents to not just make a dollar, but to positively participate in the rise of Northeast Ohio.
- The City launched the [Rubber City Match Program](#) to connect new and expanding businesses with vacant space in the city’s designated Great Streets districts. The program is designed to achieve two goals at once: boost Akron’s neighborhood retail zones and remove barriers for new and expanding businesses to thrive locally.
- In 2017, Mayor Horrigan released the “Planning to Grow Akron” report, which outlined a plan for increasing the city’s population to 250,000 by 2050. The plan included a 15-year tax abatement for new home construction or renovation.
  - The Office of Integrated Development has begun working on a second “Planning to Grow Akron” report. The plan will recommend ways to bridge disparities in investment across Akron’s neighborhoods and to encourage the private sector to assist property owners in rehabbing the city’s historic housing stock.
- The City is launching a [Minority Contractor Capital Access Program \(M-CCAP\)](#) to support minority and disadvantaged general contractors in growing their business.
- The City is launching the Akron Small Business Resiliency Fund (a revolving loan fund) to help locally-owned businesses recover from COVID-19. Eligibility includes business location within a low to moderate income area in the City, and minority and female-owned businesses given preference.

## City of Akron Community Support Programs

- Mayor Horrigan created the [Full Term First Birthday](#) initiative and appointed Tamiyka Rose as the City's first [Health Equity Ambassador](#) to help combat inequities and racial disparities associated with Akron's high infant mortality rates. Thanks to their work, Akron now has one of the lowest premature birth rates in Ohio, and the African American infant mortality rate has dropped 16% since 2017.
- Mayor Horrigan created the Office of Integrated Development (OID) to better align resources for equitable community development. Equity is the basis for the [OID Strategic Plan](#), and is the first core value of OID, as stated in the plan: "OID values diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our team utilizes an equity lens in place-making to ensure inclusive, healthy neighborhoods, where all have fair access to opportunities for economic opportunity and mobility....While equity is called out as a core value for OID, it important to note that it is foundational to every aspect of this strategy. For OID, equity is both a process and an outcome that involves fair treatment, access to opportunity, and advancement for all people. In pursuit of equity, OID will work to both identify and eliminate the barriers and root causes that prevent the full participation of some groups in Akron's growth and prosperity. OID understands that to improve equity there must be increased fairness within its own systems, processes, and procedures, as well as justice in the distribution of resources."
- Akron shows a reinvigorated commitment to recreation and parks, with reinvestments in community centers, pools and parks to assure every neighborhood has access to high-quality public spaces. In 2019, Mayor Horrigan [released the findings of a Community Needs survey](#), and quickly translated that into increased investment in those recreation resources most important to the community.
  - This was the first time the City of Akron has taken a comprehensive look at Recreation services since the 1969 report commissioned by then-Mayor John Ballard in response to civil unrest. "The 1969 report validated a universal truth, which remains true today: providing adequate public space and recreation is and will continue to be an essential service in the City of Akron," Mayor Dan Horrigan said. "The results of this new community needs assessment revealed that our community centers and pools continue to be important drivers of connection, safety, and quality of life in our neighborhoods. We will be focusing our capital investments and programming on those services the community values most, including aquatics and community events."
- Mayor Horrigan spearheaded the [Youth Violence Prevention Plan](#) which aims to reduce violent crimes committed by 15- to 24-year-olds in Akron by at least 20 percent by 2024.
  - The plan identifies recommended approaches to curb violence, including mentoring; recreation and discretionary time; re-entry support; police-youth relations; mental health and substance-abuse treatment; gun access reduction; and community awareness and involvement.

Mayor Horrigan launched the ["Late Night Basketball"](#) program as part of the Youth Violence Prevention Plan. Before each game, players listen to a motivational or educational speaker. Speakers discuss topics including parenting skills, job opportunities, higher education, health care and police relations.



## Mayor Horrigan's 2020 State of the City Address

- Mayor Horrigan's 2020 State of the City Address in February focused on diversity, equity and inclusion within City Hall and across town.
  - Excerpt: "It's going to take all of us, including me, becoming even more intentional about changing the systems that perpetuate inequality. Many of these systems took centuries to build, and while I fully realize we won't change them overnight, we cannot be afraid to face them head-on. Fear of uncomfortable conversations, and uncomfortable realities, cannot stop us from doing what is necessary, to assure our working families can save and get ahead, to see to it that every mother and child receives whatever they need to have a healthy start, to assure that any entrepreneur – no matter their background – gets the capital and support they need to go from idea, to open for business."
  - The full speech, including many other calls to action around equity, is available [here](#)

## Next Steps

- In June of 2020, both Akron City Council and Summit County Council passed legislation officially declaring racism as a public health crisis. It's important that the community as a whole coalesce around efforts to eradicate systemic racism. Community leadership is working towards setting up a Task Force specifically dedicated to these efforts. They will be working to develop a five-year "Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan" which will include specific goals and timelines for reaching quantitative benchmarks related to equity. The Task Force can do more than review best practices from around the state and country, but also engage directly with Akron's African American community to discuss intentional and innovative policies and efforts to institute real and lasting change.

For more information about any of these policies or initiatives, please visit [www.akronohio.gov](http://www.akronohio.gov) or contact the City of Akron Mayor's Action Center at (330) 375-2345.