

# Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice

*Improving Racial Equity in Kansas:  
Examining CREJ State and Agency Recommendations*

March 10, 2022

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Wyandotte County District Attorney's Office

# Agenda

- Introductions
- History and Background
- Process and Timeline
- Recommendations
- Questions

# History and Background

# About the Commission

- The Governor signed Executive Order 20-48 on June 24, 2020, forming the Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice.
- She asked the Commission to study issues of racial equity and justice across systems in Kansas, focusing first on policing and law enforcement.
- The Commission includes perspectives from the criminal justice system, education, healthcare, and advocacy organizations.
- This is **not** a commission on criminal justice reform – it is focused on broad issues of racial equity in Kansas, which includes some elements of the criminal justice system but is not tasked with a comprehensive study of that system.
- In 2021, the Commission focused on studying racial equity within economic systems, education, and healthcare.

# 2020 Report

- The Commission submitted its first report to the Governor on law enforcement and policing on December 1, 2020.
- The report included over 60 recommendations to state agencies, the legislature, and local governments on how to improve racial equity in Kansas around policing.

# 2021 Report

- In studying the initial topic, the Commission heard repeatedly about overlapping and connecting issues in communities of color across the state.
- These issues all connected to the Social Determinants of Health, which became the Commission's focus in 2021.
- Specifically, the Commission broke out into three subcommittees, studying and making recommendations on racial equity and justice in Kansas in:
  - *Economic Systems*
  - *Education*
  - *Healthcare*

# Process and Timeline



# The Commission's Work

- The Commission met every other week from July 2020 through December 2021, hearing from state and national experts, local leaders, and community members about topics important to Kansans.
- Meetings included learning sessions, presentations, and discussion.
- The Commission took information from these meetings and developed recommendations on improving racial equity for state agencies, the legislature, and local governments.
- The Commission also solicited feedback from Kansans via social media.

The Governor's  
Commission on  
Racial Equity and  
Justice wants to  
hear from

**YOU!**

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The Commission's first report includes over 60 recommendations for state agencies, the legislature, and local governments. The recommendations focus on:

- Law Enforcement Training
- Officer Certification and Standards
- Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion
- Accountability
- Data Collection
- Public Defense
- Justice System
- School Resource Officers
- Tribal Jurisdiction
- Immigration and Law Enforcement
- Behavioral Health
- Law Enforcement Funding

The Commission's 2021 report on the Social Determinants of Health includes 90 recommendations focused on the subcommittee subject areas of Education, Economic Systems, and Healthcare:

- Early Childhood and Child Care
- Maximizing Federal Funding
- Tax Policy
- Teacher Diversity
- Post-Secondary Education
- School Resource Officers
- School Mascots
- Maternal and Child Health
- Vaccine Equity
- Universal Equity Policies
- Housing and Homelessness
- Broadband
- Wages and Lending Practices
- Workforce
- Access to Healthcare
- Family Planning
- Behavioral Health
- ACEs and Interfamily Violence
- Juvenile Justice System

2020

Recommendations

# Initial Report: State/Agency Recommendations

## **Enhance ongoing social equity and anti-bias training curriculum.**

KLETC should ensure that anti-bias training is robust and that agencies are providing opportunities for more complex training over time. These efforts should incorporate advocacy groups that represent the viewpoints of communities that have adversarial relationships with law enforcement.

## **Create standards for ongoing officer training.**

KLETC should create standards for which training courses are acceptable in fulfillment of the 40 hours of training required per year. KLETC should set standards as to what must be included in trainings, based on specific subject areas, such that the trainings will count towards the 40 hours required. These standards should be updated yearly and be made available to law enforcement by the beginning of the last month of the training year. KLETC should also include and require training equivalent to or with similar learning objectives as Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) and basic mental health response training.

## **Expand public defender's offices.**

Kansas should require a public defender's office in any county with a population greater than 100,000. Public defenders cost less than court-appointed attorneys, are available for first appearances, provide continuity in case coverage, and have more accountability within the criminal justice system. Having organized offices rather than contract attorneys also allows for training, mentorship, and professional development within the organization, similar to prosecutor's offices in the same jurisdiction.

## **In coordination/consultation with Kansas Tribes, update/revise KLETC curriculum related to tribes and tribal sovereignty.**

While all certified law enforcement officers don't need to be experts in this complex area, KLETC should work with the tribes to develop a baseline standard for what all law enforcement officers in Kansas should be aware of when interacting with tribal members or near tribal land.

# Initial Report: State/Agency Recommendations

## **Create a position in state government to focus on diversity in law enforcement and assist in law enforcement efforts to increase diversity.**

The Governor's office should consider a position for an individual focused on diversity in law enforcement, who shall report annually to the Governor. This individual should be an experienced diversity leader to assist and collaborate with all law enforcement agencies, as well as CPOST and KLETC, on how to establish equity, diversity, & racial inclusion amongst all levels of the agency. This position will work directly with the Chief of Police or the head of each law enforcement agency to create strategies to implement and connect the dots between diversity and inclusion efforts across the State's law enforcement agencies. Each agency shall report their diversity hiring and recruitment plan and implementation of each plan will be reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis by the individual.



# Initial Report: State/Agency Recommendations

## **Select a state entity to analyze and publish law enforcement data for public use.**

Identify a state agency or regent university to analyze all law enforcement data and use of force and racial bias complaint data to identify trends and make an annual report available publicly.

## **Increase use of Mental Health First Aid Training, Crisis Intervention Training and other behavioral health trainings for new and existing officers.**

Increasingly, law enforcement officers are being asked to respond to mental health crisis situations. All officers should be equipped to de-escalate and safely resolve emergency mental health incidents.

2021

Recommendations

### *Universal Equity Policies*

**Encourage government policies and enact legislation that requires bias and equity analysis of policy decisions and legislation at all levels.**

Similar to the process of reviewing fiscal notes that inform policymakers about the financial impact of proposed legislation, or requesting economic impact statements on relevant bills, the legislature should adopt a procedure for developing and considering equity analysis and impacts of any policy change).

**Provide language interpretation and translation services so that Kansans have access to their government.**

All government entities in the state should take steps ensure that meetings, offices, and services are available to all of their constituents, regardless of their English language proficiency. This should include translation of documents as well as live interpretation for meetings or conversations, including American Sign Language (ASL).

## *Maximizing Federal Funding*

**Consider the perspectives of people of color and people from groups impacted by COVID-19 in the process of distributing federal relief funds.**

As entities look at implementing direct relief and allocating discretionary funds, they should create structures that bring people of color and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 to the table where decisions are being made and consider their perspectives.

**Ensure the lowest administrative burden possible for communities and individuals accessing funding and assistance. Application procedures should be as simplified and accessible as possible.**

Government entities should consider equity in program access. This includes offering both online and paper forms of applications; eliminating applications entirely where possible; providing navigators to help consumers access services; and providing resources to community groups who specialize in outreach and engagement to assist in connecting individuals to programs.

### *Tax Policy*

**Implement an equity assessment on tax distribution and consider how the state can collect future race and ethnicity data around tax collections and distribution.**

The Kansas Department of Revenue and local taxing authorities should develop a plan to collect race and ethnicity data on tax collections and distribution. That data should be assessed and analyzed to determine how Kansans of different races and ethnicities are impacted by the tax structure. Analysis should include both short-term and long-term impacts of tax policy.

### *Housing and Homelessness*

**Explore options to provide access to counsel for individuals involved in eviction cases.**

Property taxes and utility payments can fluctuate and create significant burdens for homeowners. Assistance programs can help bridge the gap for homeowners experiencing temporary need.

### *Teacher Diversity*

**Ensure policies can be adapted for education students who have outside jobs, families, and/or limited financial resources.**

State and district policy should allow institutions of higher education to offer a diversity of programs for teacher preparation, offer low-cost options for teacher preparation and certification, and support statewide programs to recruit and prepare minority teachers. Training institutions should provide individualized supports for education students and adjust to their needs.

### *Juvenile Justice System*

**Disaggregate statewide juvenile detention center data by race and county to further examine the pipeline and to invest supports and education efforts in schools in neighborhoods feeding the pipeline.**

In order to address the root cause of juvenile offending, the Kansas Department of Corrections should collect data on juveniles who are incarcerated by race and county. This will allow the state to target interventions in the regions that have the highest rates of juvenile incarceration.

## *Post-Secondary Education*

**Connect career and technical educational systems with workforce needs and develop public-private partnerships to provide learning opportunities to students.**

The state should invest in infrastructure that supports education for high-demand occupations. Schools and businesses can partner to provide on-the-job training opportunities in critical skills.

**Ensure we have accessible transfer pathways from two year to four year post-secondary educational institutions within the state.**

This includes updating KBOR policy to treat transfer credits from two year and four institutions equally, while maintaining upper level and residency requirements for bachelor's degrees. Students attending two-year schools are more racially and ethnically diverse than students at four-year colleges and universities. When we accept more transfer credits from four-year institutions and do not accept the same courses from two year institutions, we end up institutionalizing a disadvantage for students who are more likely to be students of color.

### *Maternal and Child Health*

**Develop payment policies to reimburse community-based providers such as community health workers, home visitors, doulas, and lactation consultants.**

KDHE should adopt programs and payment policies that prioritize infant-early childhood mental health by paying for evidence-based dyadic care or family therapy and parenting programs. Additionally, KDHE should explore team-based primary care, high-performing medical homes, and comprehensive home visiting as strategies to support “two-generation” care.

### *Vaccine Equity*

**Utilize culturally competent messaging about vaccine efficacy and availability. Make sure materials and communications are available in a variety of languages.**

Communication from state and local governments about vaccines and vaccine availability should be clear, timely and culturally competent. In relation to the COVID-19 vaccine, messages should also highlight that the vaccines are safe, effective, and free, and that individuals who refuse to share personal data will not be turned away from getting a vaccine. Use a variety of media, including social media, ethnic media, traditional media, and mainstream media. States can also employ phone banking, door-to-door canvassing, and texting campaigns.



## *Behavioral Health*

### **Improve data tracking and coordination between systems within behavioral health.**

Support better collaboration between behavioral health system, legal system and law enforcement around behavioral health services, trainings and data tracking by race and ethnicity. Specifically, the state should maintain race and ethnicity data on behavioral health incidents involving parents and young children to inform necessary interventions.

## *ACEs and Interfamily Violence*

### **Improve coordination and partnerships to increase prevention services and guard against ACEs.**

Promote and fund partnerships between early childhood sector, behavioral health professionals, private sector, and law enforcement to improve access to services, use of preventive services, and reduce interaction with justice and child welfare system. This should include payment policies and funding for care coordination services, pediatric care coordinators, community health workers (CHWs) and other culturally competent professionals to coordinate services for young children and their caretakers.

## *Early Childhood*

### **Implement a DC:0-5 Crosswalk.**

DC: 0-5 is a manual for diagnostic classification of mental health and developmental disorders for children ages 0-5. Adopting this set of classifications enhances mental health professionals' ability to accurately diagnose and treat mental health disorders in the earliest years while also capable of being cross-walked with ICD 10 codes. DC: 0-5 provides a developmentally appropriate diagnostic assessment, allows identification of medically-necessary early childhood mental health conditions, and facilitates Medicaid reimbursement for appropriate treatments. DC: 0-5 has been adopted in state Medicaid policy by at least 10 states.



GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION  
ON  
RACIAL EQUITY & JUSTICE

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# 2021 REPORT

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH -  
FINAL REPORT

Both commission reports are  
available online at

<https://governor.kansas.gov/governors-commission-on-racial-equity-and-justice/>

Along with recordings of  
meetings and learning  
sessions held by the  
Commission, and documents  
used in development of the  
recommendations.

# Op-Ed Series

OPINION

## How Kansans can address racial equity in their criminal justice system

Examining recommendations from the governor's commission



TIFFANY ANDERSON

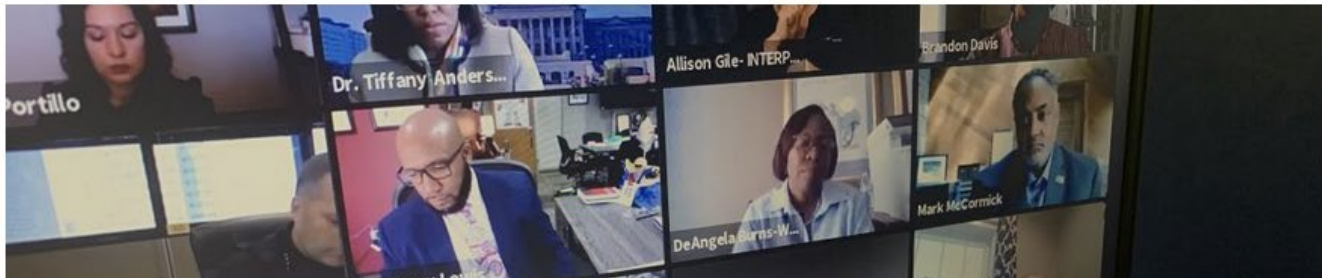


SHANNON PORTILLO



DAVID JORDAN

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A different topic from the recommendations will be highlighted monthly at [kansasreflector.com](https://kansasreflector.com).

# Questions?

To contact the Commission:

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