



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-3166, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

COOK COUNTY RESOLUTION FOR A RACIALLY EQUITABLE AND THRIVING RECOVERY

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners is charged with responsibly distributing funds and resources in a way that equitably serves the felt needs of Cook County residents; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed a nearly unanimous Justice for Black Lives Resolution in June of 2020 to decrease investments in jails and policing and focus additional resources on housing, health care, mental health support, restorative justice, job creation, public transit, eviction and foreclosure support, and investment in Black and Brown and women owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, the reallocations pushed by this resolution were consistent with long-term efforts by County leadership and the Policy Roadmap created by the Offices Under the President after engagement with hundreds of key stakeholders in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the subsequent investments of \$100 million over two years into an Equity Fund that provides resources to the Justice Advisory Council, Bureau of Economic Development, broadband assistance, restorative justice, housing, and workforce development and more were important steps in the right direction and have the potential to deliver desperately needed benefits to residents of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, these investments were needed to begin to address decades of racist disinvestment, exploitation, mass incarceration and police violence in Black and Brown communities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and worsened a mental health crisis that has seen the highest suicide rate among Black Chicagoans in more than a decade; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the pressure on low-income and working-class people, especially Black and Brown people, who are burdened by high housing costs and low wages, and threatens an epidemic of evictions and foreclosures as soon as current temporary bans are lifted; and

WHEREAS many of the communities in Cook County with the highest numbers of people incarcerated by a racist criminal legal system are also, not coincidentally, the neighborhoods with unemployment rates that were above 10% before COVID and skyrocketed to 25% or even higher during COVID, which contributed to the rise in community violence; and

Whereas, COVID's devastating impact on Black and Brown and low-income communities in Cook County was exacerbated by the fact that these communities have long borne the brunt of polluted air and water, high home energy costs, and displacement from neighborhoods with the highest-quality public transportation; and

WHEREAS, the additional \$998 million in federal aid through the American Rescue Plan was given to Cook County with the express purpose of helping Americans who are in dire straits due to the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, these additional funds represent a critical opportunity to address historic disinvestment in Black, Brown and poor communities most heavily impacted by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the elected Cook County Board of Commissioners have been entrusted by their constituents to represent their best interests, especially in times of need; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners will deliver on the promise of the June 2020 Justice for Black Lives Resolution by investing its allocation of American Rescue Plan funding in public services in Black, Brown and poor communities not administered by law enforcement, and avoiding additional spending on policing and incarceration. Prioritized spending areas would include housing, health care, mental health support, restorative justice, job creation, public transit, eviction and foreclosure support, and investment in Black and Brown and women owned businesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County's goal in the expenditure of COVID relief and recovery resources should build on and expand the "Roadmap" for equity that directly confronts historical marginalization, institutional racism, segregation and economic dispossession; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board will work to significantly expand the County's mental health services in Black, Brown and poor communities, including areas of the County such as the far South Suburbs that are miles from any sites where County mental health services are provided; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners will work to expand the County's job creation efforts with a focus on adding public sector jobs that directly hire people as County workers to engage in public services that improve the lives of County residents and improve the County's mental and physical health, access to care, energy costs, housing quality, and climate impact; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County will explore opportunities to create jobs for Black, Brown and poor people in the growing green economy, especially jobs that would decrease home energy costs, improve air quality in Black and Brown communities, and address the health inequities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board calls on the Illinois Congressional Delegation to fight for trillions of dollars more in federal resources for housing, health care, jobs creation, and the green economy, and ensure that the jobs, care, and infrastructure plans currently being considered are just a down payment on the larger scale resources needed to transform our communities over the next decade.