

**City of Racine, Wisconsin
Office of the Mayor**



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Mayor Mason Announce Immediate Actions on Police Reform *City taking meaningful steps forward and calls for community engagement*

City of Racine – Today Mayor Cory Mason announced the first meaningful actions to reform the Racine Police Department to better build trust, transparency, and accountability to the people it serves.

“Across the nation, we are having a long overdue conversation about race and policing in America. Racism is structural and institutional, and it is incumbent on us to eliminate it in all its forms. As Mayor, when I say “Black Lives Matter,” I must also acknowledge the outcry we have heard from the community to act locally to reform our police department,” **said Mayor Cory Mason**. “Today, I am announcing a series of actions will improve the make-up of our police department, change our policing policies and procedures, and engage our residents so that reforms are significantly informed by the community.”

The Mayor announced that he is immediately taking the following actions:

- Signing President Barack Obama’s challenge to mayors across the country to review police use of force policies, engage city residents to seek their input and learn from their experiences, report out findings within 90 days, and reform of use of force policies based on those findings.
- Requiring all members of the Racine Police Department to go through implicit bias training.
- Directing the Racine Police Department to put all police department policies online and make them accessible to the public.
- Creating a new City website dedicated to reform in local policing.
- Hiring a new Human Resources Generalist to focus specifically on public safety employees.
- Directing the Affirmative Action and Human Rights Commission to work with the City’s HR Department and the Police Department to develop and publicly report on a strategy and timeline for increasing the number of our police officers who are people of color and city residents so that our police force more clearly reflects our community’s diversity.
- Directing the City to submit an application to join GARE, the Government Alliance on Race & Equity.

In addition, the Mayor announced that he is also:

- Creating the Mayor’s Task Force on Police Reform which will be charged with reviewing the police department’s use of force policies and deciding if and how we should create a Citizen Review Board to investigate complaints against the police department. This Task Force will have 90-days to report out their recommendations. The Mayor’s Task Force will be made up of 8 members of the community and the Mayor. The Mayor is appointing the following community members to serve on this Task Force:
 1. Carl Fields
 2. Danielle Johnson
 3. Chuck Tyler
 4. Pastor Earnest Ni’A
 5. County Board Supervisor Fabi Maldonado

6. State Representative Greta Neubauer
7. Wally Rendon
8. Yolanda Blair

- Directing the City's Affirmative Action and Human Rights Commission to engage the community and gather input and feedback about the community's experiences with the Racine Police Department, including what they appreciate about our police and what suggestions they have for reform.
- Entering into a partnership with Dr. Arletta Frazier and Kimberly Payne (Payne & Frazier Consultants, LLC) who will facilitate the work of both the Mayor's Task Force on Police Reforms and the community conversations and feedback, in partnership with the City's Affirmative Action and Human Rights Commission and members of the Common Council.
- Advocating, in partnership with any willing participant of our local state legislative delegation, to aggressively push the state legislature to take action on police reforms at a statewide level.
- Calling on our neighboring communities and the Racine County Sheriff's Department to also take action to gather community input about law enforcement in their respective jurisdictions and to reform their own law tactics, policies, and procedures.

"I am completely committed to working with the community on these reform efforts to ensure transparency, accountability, and justice, but the City cannot do this alone," **said Mayor Mason**. "The City's residents share a jurisdiction with the Sheriff's Department, and many residents work in neighboring jurisdictions. I hope all of our surrounding communities will join us in this reform effort, and that residents of those jurisdictions demand nothing less of their elected officials and police departments, just as the City's residents are demanding of me and our Racine Police Department."

"Let me be clear in stating that Racine begins this necessary and overdue reform effort from a strong foundation. The Racine Police Department has a long and important history of taking innovative approaches to policing that makes us different from many other police departments across the country. Our Community Oriented Policing (COP) model has been nationally recognized for building trust and collaboration between community members and police officers," **said Mayor Mason**. "However, I know that not everyone has that experience, and those negative experiences need to be named and addressed."

The Mayor wants to remind the community that the City has already implemented several measures that experts are recommending police departments do across the nation. These items include:

- Instituting the Community Oriented Policing (COP) Model. Racine instituted the COP model in 1992. There are 6 COP houses throughout the City (1 additional in Mt. Pleasant) that serve as community centers and safe places for kids to work on homework, receive tutoring, and which provide other services to their neighbors
- Requiring all officers to wear body cameras. In 2020, the Racine Police Department invested in state of the art body camera systems and requires all officers to have them while on duty
- Investing in wellness and mental health supports for officers to mitigate trauma they experience on the job
- Utilizing crisis intervention training so that an officer's first option is to de-escalate situations

"These steps we are taking today and in the immediate future are the beginning of a transformation. As City leaders and as a police department we must take a hard look in the mirror to examine who we are and what we want to be. I need and want the community to drive this conversation. In order to lead, I need to listen and learn before we act. The reform process we are beginning today will lead to meaningful reforms and will better inform how we craft future budgets and priorities. This is important work, and I look forward to working together to build a stronger, more united City," **concluded Mayor Mason**

About the City of Racine

With a population of 78,000, **Racine, Wisconsin** is the fifth largest municipality in the state of Wisconsin. It is home to manufacturing businesses that enjoy world-wide reputations, SC Johnson, CNH Industrial, Twin Disc, Modine, and In-Sink-Erator among them. Racine is also home to diverse cultures, a thriving downtown, and world-class beaches along the shores of Lake Michigan.

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