

Peoria City-County Commission on Racial Justice and Equity Charter

Article 1: Name

This Commission, being duly and officially established by joint resolution of the County of Peoria and the City of Peoria, shall be known as the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity.

Article 2: Goals, Mission, Vision

The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity agrees to operate and conduct business to achieve these goals, this mission statement, and the vision statement, which may be amended periodically.

- A. Goals:** The goals of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity are:
1. *To establish racially inclusive leadership*
 2. *Promotion of focused discussions on racial equity*
 3. *Creation of a racial justice and equity strategic plan*
 4. *Formation of focused work groups that advance pro-equity policies, procedures, and systems in various areas where racial inequities exist (including, but not limited to, the justice system, housing, economic development and jobs, child and youth development, health and human services, information technology, mobility and transportation, environment and climate)*
 5. *Delivery of annual and periodic progress reports*
- B. Mission:** The mission of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity is to:
Accelerate Efforts to Institutionalize Racial Justice and Equity within County and City Government and to Advance its Adoption Throughout the Region.
- C. Vision:** The vision of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity is:
To End Racism in City and County Government and To Achieve Racial Equity and Justice Across Our Community.

Article 3: Definitions

The following definitions pertain to the Commission, its activities, and the awareness of Racial Justice and Equity within our community:

“Commission” means the Joint Committee on Racial Justice and Equity consisting of Members

“Equity” means fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.

“Equity assessment” means a systematic process of identifying policies and practices that may be implemented to identify and redress disparate outcomes on the basis of race or social justice issues.

“Individual racism” means explicit or implicit pre-judgment bias or discrimination by an individual based on race.

“Inequity” means systematic and patterned differences in well-being that disadvantage one group in favor of another caused by past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, and policies.

“Institutional racism” means policies, practices, and procedures that work better for some members of a community than others based on race.

“Race” means a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (including color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period.

“Racial justice and equity” means changes in policy, practice and allocation of resources so that race or social justice constructs do not predict one’s success, while also improving opportunities and outcomes for all people.

“Racial justice and equity impact” means an estimate of changes in racial equity and social justice attributable to a change City and County practices, ordinances, or legal construct.

“Social justice” means that everyone deserves to benefit from the same economic, political and social rights and opportunities, free from health disparities, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, age, sex – including on the basis of gender identity or orientation, religion, disability, or other characteristics.

“Structural racism” means the history and current reality of institutional racism across public and private institutions which combine to create a system that negatively impacts certain groups based on race.

Article 4: Responsibilities

The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity has the responsibility to accelerate efforts to institutionalize Racial Justice and Equity within Peoria County and the City of Peoria.

A. Commission Responsibilities: It is the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity’s responsibility to:

1. Develop and distribute information about racial justice and equity in the City and County;
2. Promote educational activities that increase the understanding of racial justice and equity in the City and County;
3. Recommend coordinated strategies for reducing inequity in racial justice and equity in the City and County;
4. Develop a performance management platform for communicating progress towards achieving racial justice and equity;
5. Advise the Peoria City Council and Peoria County Board, their executives, and City and County agencies about racial justice and equity in the County, and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity;
6. Subject Matter Experts: Engage select subject matter experts to obtain the best possible data and obtain the best possible evaluations of racial justice and equity impact;
7. Citizen Engagement: Engage a variety of citizen groups for the purpose of soliciting community feedback using a variety of techniques including, but not limited to, surveying, town hall meetings, and public forums;
8. Submit an annual report by December 1 of each year to the Peoria City Council and Peoria County Board on the activities of the Committee. This shall include a workplan for the upcoming year.

B. City and County Responsibilities. It is the City and County’s responsibility to:

1. Training – The City and County will provide Commissioners with appropriate racial justice and equity training to carry out their responsibilities.
2. Administrative Support – The City Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer will provide the administrative support to the Commission and may participate in the discussion and deliberation of the Commission.
3. Clerical Support – Clerical support shall be provided by the County.
4. Legal Support – Legal support shall be provided by the City.

Article 5: Administrative

The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity shall function and be governed under the following policies.

A. Membership:

1. Ex Officio Members: The City Council and County Board may each appoint Ex Officio Members of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity.
2. The City Manager and County Administrator shall be non-voting Ex Officio Members of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity.
3. General Members: The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity shall be no less than 15 members and no more than 20 members as follows:

- a. At least half and at most three-quarters of the members are racially diverse.
 - b. All members shall reside in Peoria County.
 - c. At least half and at most three-quarters of the members will reside in the City of Peoria.
 - d. To represent the youth of the community, at least two members shall be between the ages of 17 and 25 at the time of their appointment.
 - e. The Peoria County Board and the Peoria City Council shall appoint one voting member from each elected body.
 - f. The County Board and City Council shall jointly ratify the founding members of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity with half the initial members selected at random to serve an initial one (1) year term and the other half of initial members selected to serve an initial two (2) year term. Co-Chairs of the Commission shall serve an initial two (2) year term.
4. Nominating Committee:
- a. The Nominating Committee shall be a standing committee of six (6) members representing racially diverse members of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity.
 - b. The initial applicant screenings and recommendations to the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity will be made by volunteers from the Mayor's Coalition on Racial Justice and Equity. Thereafter, the Commission itself will recommend appointments to the Commission using the Nominating Committee process as described below..
 - c. Members of the initial and subsequent Nominating Committee shall serve a term of two (2) years unless reappointed to serve an additional term
 - d. As terms are set to expire or upon the creation of a vacancy the Nominating Committee shall recommend to the full Commission individuals or a slate of individuals to be elected by the Commission.
 - e. The Nominating Committee at its sole discretion may solicit recommendations for nominations from the County Board as a body or individual members, City Council as a body or individual members, or the Commission as a body or individual members.
 - f. The Nominating Committee shall adhere to the membership requirements identified herein when considering individuals that will be nominated.
5. Election: The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity shall elect Members from the nominations submitted by the Nominating Committee. The Commission shall have the right to reject a nomination submitted to it (in which event the Nominating Committee shall submit to the Commission a new nomination). The Commission shall not have the right to elect an individual that was not first nominated by the Nominating Committee.

6. Term: After the initial terms as appointed by the County Board and City Council, members shall serve two-year terms with a maximum of three terms consecutively. Any combination of terms may not exceed five (5) years.
7. Members of the Joint Commission and its Committees shall successfully complete the Illinois Attorney General's online Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act training certifications.

B. Meetings:

The Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity and its Committees are subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, as amended (5 ILCS 120), and notice shall be given by both governments pursuant to the Act.

C. Officers, Duties, Committees, and Agenda:

1. **Officers:** The initial appointment of Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity Co-Chairpersons shall be one (1) one-year term. The initial appointment shall be made by the Peoria County Board Chairman and by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the respective legislative bodies as may be required. Following the initial appointment of Co-Chairpersons, the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity shall elect from its membership two (2) Co-Chairpersons to serve one-year terms. The Officers shall be elected at the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity's first meeting in January of each year.
2. **Duties:** The Co-Chairpersons shall preside at all meetings.
3. **Committees:** The Commission may form committees as defined below to advance specific topics or purposes. Each committee shall have diverse Co-Chairpersons.
4. **Agenda:** The Co-Chairpersons shall set the agenda for each meeting. Any Commission member may request an item to be added to the agenda by contacting either Chairperson.

D. Committees:

1. The Commission shall establish committees to examine the condition of the County and City with respect to inequity and institutional and structural racism and to determine strategies for advancing racial justice and equity. The Committees include:
 - a. Child & youth development
 - b. Economic development & jobs
 - c. Environment & climate
 - d. Health & human services
 - e. Housing
 - f. Information & technology
 - g. Justice system
 - h. Transportation & mobility
2. Each Committee shall be co-chaired by members of the Commission representing racially diverse leadership.

3. The Committees shall develop a policy agenda pertaining to their defined area to advance racial justice and equity.
4. The Committees shall recommend coordinated strategies for reducing inequity in racial justice and equity to the full Commission.

E. Term:

To ensure that the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity serves a purposeful agenda that advances the community interests as identified in **Article 2: Goals, Mission, Vision**, the County of Peoria and the City of Peoria agree that this intergovernmental agreement shall be in force for an initial period of five (5) years ending December 2025. Six months prior to the end of said expiration, the parties agree to meet and decide whether or not the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity shall be extended for an additional five (5) year term, with adjustments to this agreement as mutually agreed upon. In any case the total approved term as contemplated to exist as described for a period not to exceed ten years in which time the parties shall endeavor to create a permanent Commission with similar responsibilities and motives as found in **Article 2: Goals, Mission, Vision**.

F. Adoption and Amendments to this Charter:

Immediately following adoption of the original Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity Charter, this Charter shall be submitted to the City Council and County Board to receive and file.

This Charter may be amended or repealed by an affirmative vote of the super-majority of the members of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity present at any meeting called for that purpose at which a quorum is present. Written notice of such proposed amendment and the nature thereof shall have been given to the membership of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity, the City Council, and the County Board at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting at which the amendments are to be considered. All amendments approved by the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity are subject the approval and ratification by the City Council and County Board.