

September 3, 2021

Dear Mayor Paula Devine, City Manager Roubik Golanian & Chief Carl Povalitis,

As you may remember, the Coalition for an Anti-Racist Glendale was formed following the murder of George Floyd to lay the groundwork for systemic change to address racial inequities in Glendale. We believe that a more just and equitable Glendale is possible when cross-sector civic society and government work together.

We express our support and gratitude for City Council taking action a year ago **on September 15th, 2020**, to pass a formal [resolution](#) that recognized the City's history as a former "sundown town," acknowledging and apologizing for the century-long exclusionary practices that prohibited African Americans from residing and prospering in the City of Glendale. The Council's actions made history with Glendale becoming the first city in California and the third in the nation to formally acknowledge and apologize for these past injustices. We were honored to have had the opportunity to partner with you on such an important first step in our shared vision of building a Glendale that fosters equity, diversity and inclusion and unequivocally rejects racism in all its forms.

As part of our Coalition discussion around police reform, local civic organizations: Black in Glendale, Civic Sundays, and YWCA Glendale and Pasadena presented a formal request on June 16, 2020, to access the Glendale Police Department's arrest data, disaggregated by race and gender for the past ten years. We partnered with professors and students at Occidental College to assist us with analyzing the data and as a result they published a report: *Glendale Arrests: Prevalence, Racial Disparities, and Implications, An Analysis of Arrests From 2011 to 2019 in Glendale, CA*.

Attached you will find that report, the first of many to come that highlights trends in arrests, demographics of arrests and implications of those arrests on Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities. This report is authored by Seva Rodnyansky, Assistant Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy at Occidental College and Jorgen Harris, Assistant Professor of Economics at Occidental College, and Occidental College Students: Sara Yi, Alexis Martinez and Rayhon Choudhry. The disparate impact of arrests on communities of color in Glendale do not reflect our City's commitment to creating an equitable and just city that maximizes public safety and provides fair and equal treatment to all members of the community.

In response to the key findings in this report, the Coalition for an Anti-Racist Glendale is providing six actionable, data-informed recommendations to the City Council, City Manager and Glendale Police Department. We believe that it will be beneficial to share this information with the community at large and we urge the City Council to consider and discuss our recommendations with the Glendale Police Department in a public forum that promotes discussion between residents and City officials about what model of policing can best serve our community today, and in the future.

## **Background**

On June 16th, 2020, local civic organizations Black in Glendale, Civic Sundays, and YWCA

Glendale and Pasadena presented a formal request to access the Glendale Police Department's arrest data disaggregated by race and gender for at least the past ten years.

In July 2021, researchers at Occidental College produced the report *Glendale Arrests: Prevalence, Racial Disparities, and Implications. Analysis of Arrests from 2011 to 2019 in Glendale, CA*.

### Key Findings From Report

1. Glendale's arrest rate has not changed since 2011, despite changes in state law and local policing practices. During the same period, the Los Angeles Police Department reduced arrests by 46%. As a result, Glendale now conducts twice as many arrests per resident as does Los Angeles.
2. The enforcement of arrests for low-level offenses disproportionately impact Black and Latinx residents in Glendale. While the Black population is fewer than 2% of Glendale's residents and 4% of its workers, 8% of arrestees are Black. The Hispanic/Latinx population in Glendale is less than 18% of residents and 28% of the daytime population but represent 42% of arrestees.
3. Glendale's felony arrests have declined considerably, while arrests for misdemeanors have increased, and arrests for crimes under Prop. 47 for non-violent drug crimes have doubled.

### Recommendations For Key Findings

The report's findings raise serious concerns about current enforcement laws, policies and practices. **Specifically, the data signals that the enforcement of arrests for low-level offenses has a disparate impact on people of color.** These findings warrant a review of policies, practices and procedures as committed to in the Sundown Town Resolution: *The City of Glendale will review and revise its policies, procedures, ordinances, values, goals and missions, through an anti-racism lens to foster an unbiased and inclusive environment that is free from discrimination and harassment toward any person or group.* The sheer volume of arrests and significant racial disparities in those arrests warrant immediate action by the City Council. Specifically, we urge the Glendale City Council to follow the below recommendations:

- I. **Lessen the impact of enforcing arrests for low-level offenses that do not harm public safety and devote resources to community policing and crime prevention strategies.**

Over the past 10 years, the Glendale Police Department has exhibited remarkable stasis in patterns of arrest data, according to the report. Glendale has maintained high arrest rates for drug crimes, misdemeanor thefts, and traffic violations despite state and federal laws to adopt less punitive approaches to nonviolent crime. At a bare minimum, the Glendale Police Department should adopt formal policies making these offenses their lowest enforcement priorities. Coupled with periodic evaluation of arrest data, the shift in enforcement priorities will allow police to make better resource-allocation decisions and to pursue policies and practices that will both reduce racial disparities in arrest and maintain public safety.

**II. Immediately investigate contributing factors in reported patterns of racial disparities in arrests, dispositions of arrest and adopt policies to eliminate racial disparities and improve equity across our community.**

Because the Glendale Police Department has some discretion over the status (book versus cite) of arrest, some of the racial differences may reflect the individual choices of law enforcement. The data revealed a clear pattern of Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities disproportionately bearing the brunt of policing practices that focus on a strict enforcement of low-level offenses and potentially differential treatment by race for the disposition and statues for arrestees. The racial disparities uncovered by this data analysis are deeply troubling and call for immediate action to identify their cause. Only then can the Glendale Police Department begin to understand the impact such arrests have on communities of color and implement appropriate changes.

**III. Increase transparency in the Glendale Police Department through monthly data reporting and by immediately opting into the data collecting and reporting requirements of AB953.**

As the findings show, the Glendale Police Department collects troves of data that show Glendale's posture toward nonviolent crimes that in turn, has a large impact on Glendale's Black and Hispanic residents. The City should make this data available on its website on a monthly basis to promote transparency and allow for easy tracking of policing trends. The vast majority of arrests in Glendale are for low-level offenses. Publicly available information will increase transparency, encourage accountability, and provide GPD with opportunities to evaluate and assess how their enforcement decisions may manifest themselves in a racially disparate manner. Furthermore, regular reporting would promote police accountability, fostering greater confidence in police work. Arrest data should not be in PDF format, but rather, the raw data should be made available in a form that is easy to download, search, and analyze (ex. Excel spreadsheets; .csv). Providing data in a user-friendly, accessible format increases police transparency and encourages public participation and engagement in government. GPD should also align its data collection and reporting practices with state law through early adoption of AB953. The California Department of Justice is available to consult with agencies who wish to collect this data ahead of schedule.

**IV. Institute strong, independent oversight of police departments, such as a Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) to review allegations of individual officers' misconduct and an Inspector General (IG) office to monitor police policies and practices.**

Effective civilian oversight of the police department is integral to ensuring a system of democratic and accountable policing. The City Council should establish an independent CCRB to investigate individual acts of police misconduct and discipline officers when necessary. The City of Burbank established an independent Police Commission in 2007 and the City of Pasadena established a Community Police Oversight Commission earlier this year. A strong CCRB with the authority to independently investigate and to discipline officers also can help change institutional practices that contribute to arrest disparities. Establishing an IG office to

review police policies and practices at the agency-wide level will allow the City of Glendale to identify and reform those practices that have a disparate impact on communities of color.

**V. Investigate if there are arrest quota policies in place or if the number of low-level arrests is a performance measure for evaluating officers.**

The study doesn't indicate whether or not GPD has arrest quotas in place or if arrests are used as a performance measure for evaluating officers. However, given the unchanged status of arrests over a decade and the sharp increase in citations, the data warrants further investigation in the use of arrest quota practices or arrest policies used to evaluate officers. Measuring police effectiveness by the number of arrests officers make incentivizes officers to make low-level arrests. This can lead to unconstitutional arrests if officers are pressured to generate arrest numbers. For this reason, City Council should be aware if any policies or practices are in place to ensure that GPD is not using low-level arrests as a performance measure.

**VI. Evaluate the effectiveness of current community policing strategies and encourage interactive partnerships with relevant stakeholders.**

Community policing consists of three components: community partnership, organizational transformation and problem solving. The community should be made aware of the effectiveness of current community policing strategies (i.e., Citizen Academy, Neighborhood Watch, School Partnerships and Youth Programs) and, in turn, decide to provide public input to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

## **Conclusion**

We understand that the City Council and the Glendale Police Department work together to protect and serve the community and maintain Glendale as a City to live, work, play and prosper. The Coalition asks that the City Council work to ensure that everyone in Glendale is equally and fairly protected and served.

We urge the City Council to implement all of the above recommendations. These recommendations are made with direct reference to the commitments laid out and unanimously approved by Council in the Sundown Town Resolution. Sundown Town Resolutions are entered into to acknowledge, apologize, and atone for the vestiges of racism that created cultural and institutionalized practices in which non-white residents and visitors were not safe and not granted the benefits of public safety for much of the 20th century. As the report data signals, the enforcement of arrests for low-level offenses has a disproportionate impact on people of color, the City Council needs to identify practical actions that address this issue. Black people and people of color should know that they are as safe as non-racialized groups in a Glendale that has committed to standing up to bigotry, hatred, intolerance, racism, and violence.

We are honored to continue this journey together with you in our shared vision of a more just and equitable Glendale. We urge the City to pay particular attention to the Glendale Police Department's significant racial disparities in arrests as you continue your conversation on public

safety in Glendale. In addition, we would like this data report to be an agenda item for a future City Council meeting, which can include a data presentation by the authors to facilitate further discussion and our recommendations for meaningful reform. We look forward to receiving a timely response to our request and we are happy to answer any questions you may have and connect you directly with the authors of this report.

Sincerely,

Coalition for An Anti-Racist Glendale Founding Members

Tara Peterson, CEO

YWCA Glendale & Pasadena

Tanita Harris-Lignons, Co-Founder

Black in Glendale

Elizabeth Vitanza, Co-Founder

Civic Sundays

Dr. Shane Kinnison, Senior Pastor

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Policing Committee, Coalition for an Anti-Racist Glendale

Cc: City Council Members