



Legislation Text

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REPORT

Department: Office of the General Superintendent

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Report Title: Annual Report from the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) REDI Committee

Report Period: 2020

Summary: In 2018, the Forest Preserves created a Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Committee to assess hiring, training and other Forest Preserves’ operations, policies and procedures. The catalyst for the creation of this committee was a well-publicized incident in which a Forest Preserves’ patron was harassed by another patron on the basis of race. One of the committee’s goals is to strengthen a work culture that embraces diversity and is inclusive and welcoming to all employees and to all the people of Cook County. In late 2018, a partnership was formed with Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton and the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to advise the REDI committee. On July 28, 2020, the Conservation and Policy Council submitted to the Board of Commissioners the position paper “Moving Towards Racial Equity.” (Agenda No. 20-0285). The work of the internal REDI committee is consistent with and complements the recommendations of the position paper.

This first annual report from the REDI committee reflects the tireless commitment and passion of the entire Forest Preserves to operationalize racial equity, improve Forest Preserves performance, and increase access and inclusion for all the lives touched by the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Since 2018, the REDI committee has completed in-depth training on how to operationalize racial equity within large public organizations, diversified hiring panels, conducted racial equity training for the senior team and for key stewards, and convened a series of racial identity caucuses following the murder of George Floyd.