



The Commission for the Office of the Denver Municipal Public Defender applauds and stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. Black lives matter in our streets and black lives matter in our court rooms. On paper, our constitutional rights are inherent, and all people are created equally. It is past time for our laws, our courts, and our communities to truly treat people as equals. And the time is now for us to acknowledge the historical and institutional racism that exists in our country.

While forty-three percent of the city of Denver is ethnically diverse, approximately eighty percent of the municipal public defender clients are people of color. Denver can and must do better. A call to action must happen now.

We call on City Council, the Denver Police Department, the Denver City Attorney's Office, and the Mayor's Office to take action now.

To City Council - we call on you to thoroughly examine the disparate arrests, injuries, charges, and sentences of persons of color in Denver. The over policing of our clients' communities, the lack of access to social services and healthcare, the shortage of affordable housing, and the deficient educational opportunities for people of color are real problems that have resulted from systemic, institutional racism and discrimination.

To the Denver Police Department - although some police policy changes have started, we need more, and more intentional and impactful police reform. Avoiding some police brutality and some police murders will not suffice. The standard must be no police brutality and no police murders. Discriminatory and oppressive law enforcement tactics used against our brothers and sisters of color must end now. Black and brown people in our city are tired of being abused by the people who are sworn to serve and protect. We all deserve better.

To prosecutors at the City Attorney's Office - recognize the enormous discretion you have in doing your job. When people of color are arrested, charged, and sentenced at significantly higher rates than whites, there is a problem. We call on you to acknowledge this injustice and the systemic failings of the criminal legal system. We call on you to be change agents and to prosecute in a way that promotes fairness and transparency, not reinforces racial bias, inequities, and discrimination.

To the Mayor - we are calling on you to demand change. We ask you to insist that your employees do better and to take action to ensure they do better. The city of Denver has a \$1.5 billion annual budget and \$588 million is allotted to the police. Imagine a city where the public defender's office is funded with the same intention and dedication as its law-enforcement agencies and their counterparts. We should not have to imagine this; it should be a reality.

As a Commission, we pledge to do all we can to continue to fight against racial inequity in our communities and in our criminal legal system. We pledge to support our Denver municipal public defenders in their fight for equal treatment and just outcomes for the clients of color. We pledge that we will not be silent. We will stand up, we will act, we will say not one more. **Black Lives Matter.**

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