

The Umoja Village
Aiken, SC 29803

November 14, 2020

On August 14, 2020, the first “Responses to Umoja Village Action Plan” was issued, which included responses received to date from Aiken and North Aiken elected officials and community leaders, as requested. This package is revision two, which includes more responses and updates.

As previously stated, the Umoja Village Action Plan is fluid and subject to changes, as deemed necessary, by Umoja Village and the responsible parties. Since the first version was issued, more responses have been received from Solicitor Bill Weeks, the Aiken County Legislative Delegation, and the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce.

The original plan was issued early June 2020 with a request for responses by July 30, 2020. We have yet to receive formal written responses from:

1. Aiken County Sheriff’s Office
2. North Augusta City Mayor/City Council
3. Aiken Regional Medical Centers
4. Midland Valley Chamber of Commerce

Umoja Village is encouraged to report that since the distribution of this action plan along with the efforts of other groups, considerable work is currently being performed to address concerns listed in this action plan, thanks to the commitment from several responsible parties to meet with Umoja Village representatives. Progress has been made in several areas as we unite to eradicate systemic racism. While Umoja Village still believes we have considerable work remaining, we are grateful to those community leaders who are willing to address inequities in the areas we identified unfavorable toward Blacks and African Americans.

Although this action plan addresses accountability of our elected officials and community leaders, extensive work is also in progress within the Black/African American community to hold itself accountable for improvements we can make to and for ourselves.

This document contains the following sections:

- A. Section One of this document reflects the "Umoja Village Action Plan" without responses.
- B. Section Two of this document reflects comprehensive responses from those who actually submitted responses.
- C. Section Three of this document outlines the path forward to ensure commitments made within this plan are tracked, addressed, updated, and/or resolved.

Sincerely,
Donna Moore Wesby
The Umoja Village
Waaw947donna@gmail.com
Umojavillage333@gmail.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Section One (Submitted Umoja Village Action Plan, without responses)	3
Section Two (Comprehensive responses to the submitted action plan)	11
Law Enforcement Category responses	11
Education Category responses	15
Economic/Community Development Category responses	26
Housing Category responses	27
Business/Commerce Category responses	28
Banking/Finance Category responses	32
Healthcare Category responses	35
City/County Government responses	36
Justice System Category responses	40
Section Three (Path Forward)	44

A. SECTION ONE (verbatim Umoja Village Action plan submitted, without responses)

THE UMOJA VILLAGE: A strategic alliance of Black and African Americans united with a common goal established as a cohesive network of its own resources.

ACTION PLAN

Preface: The following actions included in this plan represent the collective impression of The Umoja Village, which consists of over 5,000 Black and African Americans primarily living within the Aiken/North Augusta area, but also includes African Americans from neighboring cities within the Central Savannah River Area. Some of those participating groups include, but are not limited to, the Black Lives Matter (Aiken and North Augusta) movements, the NAACP of Aiken County, The Concerned Ministers Fellowship, Education Matters Nonprofit Corporation, The Imani Group, The Hankinson Boxing Club, The Sky Is The Limit Foundation, CHOICES, LLC., and hundreds of Black and African American owned businesses, churches, physicians, and concerned citizens.

It is the intent that this plan serves as a tool to represent the collective voices of many Blacks and African Americans to save city/county leaders from having to meet with each individual group, unless that's your desire. The Umoja Village believes that institutional racism, also referred to as systemic racism, exists within every aspect of our daily lives.

NOTE: Throughout this plan, wherever the terms Black(s)/African American(s) or Blacks, or African Americans are used, it will serve to mean Blacks and African Americans.

In case this reviewing body is unfamiliar with its definition, systemic racism is defined as, "The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people." The Umoja Village believes that until Caucasian Americans recognize and admit to the very existence and destructive evil of racism, then America will never truly be as great as it can be and thereby prove that all lives matter.

While this document represents a cohesive action plan of several focus areas, please understand that as The Umoja Village monitors progress and effectiveness of these actions, notwithstanding improvements made within itself as a body, The Umoja Village may amend this action plan. The Umoja Village consists of human beings, like anyone else, who desire to live in peace and harmony, succeed, and continue to be productive citizens in society.

It is the position of The Umoja Village that the following actions/expectations are to be met expeditiously by the person(s) and organizations responsible in order that the lives of African Americans can be improved inasmuch as the reviewers have control over their implementation. We respectfully request an email upon receipt of this action plan. Each person or group responsible for listed actions is humbly requested to provide your response to The Umoja Village by July 30, 2020. An email response can be sent to umojavillage333@gmail.com If stated actions are currently in place, please make note of such. If we have incorrectly noted who is the responsible party, please make those notations, as well.

LAW ENFORCEMENT (Responsible parties: City of Aiken Public Safety Police Chief, Aiken County Sheriff, North Augusta Chief of Police, and smaller municipalities) -- and Aiken County Legislative Delegation

A. Accountability and Transparency

1. Provide regular reporting of cold cases to the affected families upon request. NOTE: African American families report that many of their murder cases are unsolved and very little progress or communication is given;
2. Create a formal process for citizen complaints against law enforcement actions to include review by an independent board of citizens (Citizen Review Board consisting of at least 50 percent Black members);
3. Create an environment which supports continuous quality improvement by eliminating retaliation for law enforcement officers who speak out against unfair practices and individual incidents involving fellow officers;
4. Create a database that shows each officer's career record of complaints, serving precincts/districts, and reason for location change;
5. Provide the Umoja Village details on current and future community policing strategies; NOTE: Reinstitute the Safe Communities Approach to examine hiring and policing policies (include representatives from the Umoja Village);
6. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes;
7. Create a website (or add a page on the existing website), that at a minimum, lists the names, photos, command staff, hiring information, community and business relationships, crime maps, forms and documents, and a complaint process mechanism.

B. Training

1. Institute a mandatory annual diversity and anti-racism training and development program (from a certified diversity trainer or a nationally certified diversity program) for all law enforcement employees within the first month of being hired and annually thereafter; NOTE: Require this action to the South Carolina Academy, as well.
2. Institute mandatory annual de-escalation training for all law enforcement officers and all management levels;

3. Increase certification standards to require a minimum six months of training at the police academy to become a law enforcement officer;
4. Provide to The Umoja Village the requirements necessary to be promoted within the department along with statistics regarding the eligibility, application, and award of promotions within law enforcement. Also provide public announcements of promotions by utilizing local media.

C. Hiring

1. Deliberately hire a diverse workforce to include at least 50 percent Black and African Americans on each hiring slate within all levels of law enforcement that, at a minimum, reflect the demographics of jurisdictions where departments reside within Aiken County and compose a hiring panel that consists of at least 50 percent Black members (outside members of this hiring panel should be considered, as well);
2. Establish locally and/or join a national and state database where a law enforcement officer's track record of complaints made against him/her;
3. Absorb small municipal police departments within the geographic confines of Aiken County to support resource availability and ensure consistency in training content and quality;
4. Institute a process that includes mental health evaluations prior to an officer being hired, and conduct regular mental health evaluations by a certified mental health professional of every officer -- making those services available after every event involving death or dismemberment of a suspect, citizen, or fellow officer. NOTE: Mental health evaluations should include Black and African American certified mental health professionals.

THE JUSTICE SYSTEM (*Responsible parties: Mr. Bill Weeks and others with decision-making authority*) and Aiken County Legislative Delegation

1. Remove necessity for cash bonds for low-level nonviolent offenses;
2. Appoint prosecutors and public defenders who reflect the community and are familiar with the population they serve;
3. Ban no knock entry;
4. Ban knee and choke holds and make it a felony leading to termination for any law enforcement officer who is determined to have used this unauthorized procedure;
5. Uphold all laws that protect voters' rights;
6. Remove question(s) on employment applications that asks if the applicant has been charged of or convicted of a felony;
7. Ensure expungement programs are made available equitably to African American youth;
8. Enforce 100% mandatory usage of body cameras with disciplinary actions that reflect South Carolina Dash Cam policy, to include fines and up to termination;
9. Institute community and mentorship programs that promote building of positive relationships versus criminalizing youth who often make "youthful" mistakes in judgement. NOTE: Lack of sound judgement should not always result in ruining an individual's entire life; Give African Americans the same privileges and amenities as Caucasians;

10. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments, the school district, and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;
11. Develop deliberate reentry programs and job training programs (by working in conjunction with the city and county governments, employment agencies, and the business community) that promote second-chance opportunities for those who have paid their debt to society;
12. Develop a citizen's review board for the Aiken County Sheriff's Office, the University of South Carolina Aiken, and Aiken Technical College that consists of USC Aiken and Aiken Technical College students with Black and African American representation.

EDUCATION (Responsible parties: The Aiken County Public School District Board of Education and Superintendent King Laurence, USC Aiken Chancellor, and President of Aiken Technical College)

A. Teacher Recruitment

1. Increase recruitment of African American teachers 50 percent by December 2022 from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (i.e. Claflin University, South Carolina State University, Benedict College, Morris College, etc.) as well as from other colleges and universities;
2. Fully fund the Call Me MISTER Program for Aiken County Public Schools, USC Aiken, and Aiken Technical College;
3. Add incentives for African American teachers hired to teach in Aiken County;
4. Promote the PACE program and establish community programs to help teacher candidates get certified in their chosen field.

B. Curriculum

1. Select textbooks and other teaching resources that integrate Black/African American History into the basic history/social studies curriculum. NOTE: African American history should not be addressed as a history add-on. Not teaching African American history must not be an option;
2. Develop an annual review board consisting of African American educators, historians, concerned citizens, and students to review the African American history curriculum being considered in K-12 schools, at USC Aiken, and at Aiken Technical College. NOTE: The African American history curriculum must be comprehensive, including the African homeland, slavery, emancipation, reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, the post Civil Rights era, Black Wall Street, etc.;
3. Develop a marketing program (i.e. videos, radio/television commercials, etc.) aimed at helping students and the general public understand racism that can be communicated within the schools and communities (i.e. Racism, Prejudice, Institutional/Systemic Racism, White Supremacy,

Diversity, Diverse, Inclusion, etc.) and utilize a Black or African American owned production company to write and produce the program;

4. Develop a minor in African and African American Studies at USC Aiken and at Aiken Technical College;
5. Fully fund the Office of Diversity initiatives and increase funding to the Diversity Certificate Program, PEAK Mentoring Program, and STAR programs at USC Aiken;
6. In Aiken County Public Schools, fund field trips to the Center for African American History, Art, and Culture; the National African American Museum in Charleston and other museums within the state and surrounding areas (Atlanta) that amplify the Black and African American experience.

C. Training and Accountability

1. Institute mandatory annual diversity, anti-racism and cultural competency training for all teachers to include recognizing one's own biases, racial stereotypes and microaggressions, and systemic racism;
2. Incentivize teachers who visit homes and neighborhoods of the African American students they serve;
3. Invest funds in creating a Parent Advocacy Program for K-12 schools with Black or African American lead or co-lead;
4. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for educators and staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes towards staff, parents, students, contractors, etc.;
5. Institute a Bias Report System where students, staff, faculty, and parents can report incidents of bias on campus and in the classroom in a digital format; and create a policy for investigating and bringing action, where necessary; publicize data annually on bias incidents.

D. Title 1 Spending

1. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;
2. Utilize Title 1 funds to provide high-quality, results-oriented educational after school programs that can provide measurable results for each participating student;
3. Target 100 percent of Title 1 funds to meet the educational goals of its low-income students in school.

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (Responsible parties: Economic Development Partnership and City and County Governments)

1. Meet three times a year with members of The Umoja Village to discuss potential economic development projects (i.e. to include actual grocery stores) that would invest in the North side of Aiken and the underserved areas.

HOUSING (Responsible parties: City and County governments, local Housing Authority)

1. Work in conjunction with the local Housing Authority Department and city and county governments to develop more affordable and attractive housing developments that encourage keeping families together (landscaping, playgrounds, family floor plans, etc.).

BUSINESS/COMMERCE (Responsible parties: The Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce, North Augusta Chamber of Commerce, and Midland Valley Chamber of Commerce)

1. Ensure that banks/lending institutions spend, at a minimum, 33 percent of Community Reinvestment Act dollars in communities where African Americans primarily reside. NOTE: These expended funds must reflect the demographics of this city, at a minimum;
2. Create a Small Business Development program specifically for Black/African American owned businesses in partnership with the Greater Augusta Black Chamber of Commerce.

BANKING/FINANCE (Responsible parties: CEOs of local banks/lending institutions)

1. Ensure that banks/lending institutions spend, at a minimum, 33 percent of Community Reinvestment Act dollars in communities where African Americans primarily reside. NOTE: These expended funds need to reflect the demographics of our community;
2. Deliberately work with Black/African American owned businesses to coach them through the process for obtaining business loans;
3. Ensure that the Board of Directors demographics reflect the demographics of the community with a minimum 25-50 percent representation from the Black and African American population over the next two years.
4. Ensure that new hires at the senior level reporting to the President or CEO consist of at least 50 percent Black and African American on the final candidate slate.

HEALTHCARE (Responsible parties: CEO and Board of Directors of Aiken Regional Medical Centers) and Aiken County Legislative Delegation

1. Ensure senior and middle management reflects the demographics of the service area to include new hires or promotions at the senior level reporting to the President or CEO consist of at least 50 percent Black and African American on the final candidate slate;
2. Provide monthly demographics reports to The Umoja Village of the hospital's board of directors, senior staff, doctors, and management positions; along with demographics of the hospital's hiring/firing;
3. Actively and deliberately recruit African American physicians to have privileges at Aiken Regional Medical Centers and provide a quarterly status report to The Umoja Village;
4. Ensure the Board of Directors reflects the demographics of the service area with a minimum of new members being 50 percent Black or African American;
5. Devote at a minimum 30 percent marketing dollars to benefit Black/African American communities/organizations/initiatives or as reflected by the community's demographics;
6. Work in conjunction with city and county governments to educate the community about Medicare, Medicaid, and other services of benefit to those who struggle with paying medical expenses due to health issues;
7. Recognize that racism is a public health crisis that impacts all aspects of African American lives;
8. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes;
9. Create and staff a diversity department that reports directly to the ARMC CEO to develop a comprehensive annual diversity, cultural competency and anti-racism awareness and training/development program for management and staff; and for the management of employee grievances.

CITY/COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Responsible parties: Aiken City Council, Aiken County Council, North Augusta City Council, and City/County Managers) and Aiken County Legislative Delegation

1. Create a Small Business Development program specifically for Black/African American owned businesses in partnership with the local chambers of commerce;
2. Conduct educational sessions in the Black and African American communities focused on the voting process, candidates on the ballots, how to use voting machines, absentee/early voting processes, updates on polling locations, etc., leading up to elections and prior to voter's registration deadlines;
3. Create an email response process to address questions citizens may have related to elections and voting with a 24-48 hour response time;
4. Ensure that procurement contracts are solicited from and awarded to African American owned

- companies, at a minimum, 33 percent of the budget or based on the demographics of African Americans in the Aiken city and county government;
5. Establish a deliberate and proactive communication/marketing plan, which means investing in marketing, to educate citizens about the U.S. Census.
 6. Create an informational campaign to market services available for citizens;
 7. Remove question(s) on employment applications that ask if the applicant has been charged of or convicted of a felony;
 8. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the the school district and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;
 9. Provide financial support for the community healthcare centers;
 10. To recognize that racism is a public health crisis that impacts all aspects of African American lives;
 11. To award contracts to Black/African American businesses at a rate no less than 33 percent of overall budget (or, at a minimum, the percent comparable to the area's demographics of Blacks and African Americans) for the procurement of city and county products and services.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (Responsible parties: Aiken City Council, Aiken County Council, North Augusta City and County councils)

1. Institute the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency's Super Fund Job Training program;
2. Institute the EMERGE Program with assistance from the Imani Group.

ACTION PLAN HUMBLY SUBMITTED BY:
The Umoja Village
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B SECTION TWO (Comprehensive responses from those who responded)

LAW ENFORCEMENT CATEGORY (Responsible parties: City of Aiken Public Safety Police Chief; Aiken County Sheriff; North Augusta Chief of Police)

RESPONSE: Aiken City Manager Stuart Bedenbaugh pertaining to Aiken Department of Public Safety

A: Accountability and Transparency

1. Provide regular reporting of cold cases to the affected families upon request. NOTE: African American families report that many of their murder cases are unsolved and very little progress or communication is given;

Response: Chief Charles Barranco has recently begun meeting with a group of parents who have lost children due to violence in Aiken/Aiken County. The meeting was very positive. There was some frustration expressed regarding the totality of their respective situations (a lot having to do with the judicial process – trial/conviction); however, the general reception toward Chief Barranco/Public Safety was very positive. Chief has committed to meeting with them again in about three months. ADPS is getting them connected with resources from the previously active Youth Restoration Alliance to support their efforts to bring awareness on how to prevent violence. ADPS has connected them with the Aiken County Chapter of Moms Demand Action to connect them with a national support network for moms/parents who are survivors of violence and to help them gain their advocacy voice.

The City of Aiken also respectfully requests that Umoja Village partner with us to encourage cooperation with Aiken Department of Public Safety in investigating crimes. Our Public Safety staff has unsolved cases involving murder and other violent crimes that we believe could be solved if witnesses would come forward. Our entire community would benefit from this.

2. Create a formal process for citizen complaints against law enforcement actions to include review by an independent board of citizens (Citizens Review Board consisting of at least 50% Black members);

Response: The City of Aiken and ADPS have met this objective and have an active Citizen's Review Board.

3. Create an environment which supports continuous quality improvement by eliminating retaliation for law enforcement officers who speak out against unfair practices and individual incidents involving fellow officers.

Response: ADPS has an environment of continual improvement through accreditation and operational audit; assigns staff to various leadership positions that require the highest level of professionalism; promotes individuals based on and insist on an environment of holding each other accountable in the minor and major things.

4. Create a database that shows each officer's career record of complaints, serving precincts/districts and reason for location change.

Response: ADPS maintains and tracks officer complaints and employs a personnel early warning system. Staff may be referred for other actions and/or counseling as necessary.

5. Provide the Umoja Village details on current and future community policing strategies.

NOTE: Reinstigate the Safe Communities Approach to examine hiring and policing policies (include representatives from the Umoja Village)

Response: The entire community is always welcome to participate with the Citizens Academy and/or Chat with Chief series. These programs provide insight into strategies, challenges and community volunteer opportunities. Both programs are once again scheduled for this fall.

ADPS has begun the process to reinstitute the Community Relations Focus Group. The previous Focus Group provided valuable insight regarding hiring and our body-worn camera policy that was immediately incorporated and remains in place. ADPS has had consultation with an organization to facilitate an initial series of relationship building sessions to set the Group in proper alignment to do a deeper level of work in our community. ADPS will provide updates and requests for participation to our community as that process moves along.

6. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes;

Response: This is the present policy of the City of Aiken, and ADPS.

7. Create a website (or add a page on the existing website), that at a minimum, lists the names, photos, command staff, hiring information, community and business relationships, crime maps, forms and documents, and a complaint process mechanism.

Response: Neighborhood crime maps and a citizen complaint form are already on the City's website. ADPS is working with the IT Department to upgrade the Public Safety page of the City's website.

B: Training

1. Institute a mandatory annual diversity and anti-racism training and development program (from a certified diversity trainer or a nationally certified diversity program) for all law enforcement employees within the first month of being hired and annually thereafter; NOTE: Require this action to the South Carolina Academy, as well.

Response: The Aiken Department of Public Safety has provided Anti-Bias training to all new recruits as part of the ADPS pre-service “Rookie School” curriculum since 2011. This portion of their training is completed prior to the recruit attending the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. Anti-Bias and Diversity training is included in the department’s annual in-service training. Anti-bias and diversity curriculums used are varied and include Aiken community members, SCCJA Instructors using approved lesson plans, and materials approved by the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

2. Institute mandatory annual de-escalation training for all law enforcement officers and all management levels;

Response: De-Escalation and “Surviving Verbal Conflict” taught by the Dolan Consulting Group Training has been taught as part of ADPS annual in-service training since 2016. The curriculum has been included in ADPS pre-service “Rookie School” curriculum since 2017. This year’s ADPS In-service training includes training on Constitutional and Community Policing and De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force presented by Lexipol Learning and the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

3. Increase certification standards to require a minimum six months of training at the police academy to become a law enforcement officer;

Response: This item does not fall within the power of the City of Aiken or ADPS.

4) Provide to The Umoja Village the requirements necessary to be promoted within the department along with statistics regarding the eligibility, application, and award of promotions within law enforcement. Also provide public announcements of promotions by utilizing local media.

Response: This information is available via our Policy and Procedures manual which is available to the public as well as our EEOP tracking.

C: Hiring

1. Deliberately hire a diverse workforce to include at least 50 percent Black and African Americans on each hiring slate within all levels of law enforcement that, at a minimum, reflect the demographics of jurisdictions where departments reside within Aiken County and compose a hiring panel that consists of at least 50 percent Black members (outside members of this hiring panel should be considered, as well);

Response: The ADPS hiring panel usually consists of our HR director (Tracy Lott), the patrol division commander, and 2-3 other members of our recruitment team. Over the past few years we have participated in several recruitment events at several of our local High Schools, and Colleges to include Paine College and Claflin University. Last year ADPS also participated in the Carolina HBCU talent showcase in Columbia. ADPS also participates in the local job shadowing that’s organized by Aiken Works Lead where several students can come and have a

tour and presentations from the department and possibly do a ride-a-long. Another program that ADPS has is our Junior Citizen's Academy that was organized last year to create a better and sustainable relations with some of our area youth.

The City of Aiken would request the help of Umoja Village partners in helping us identify and hire a diverse group of individuals that reflect the fabric of our community. It is through this partnership that we can help attain this worthy goal Umoja Village has brought forth.

2. Establish locally and/or join a national and state database where a law enforcement officer's track record of complaints made against him/her;

Response: The SCCJA and the FBI both have databases that departments can report findings of excessive force. The SCCJA also tracks the reason for an officer's separation from an agency, and we are required to call and check each applicant's status and record prior to a conditional job offer.

3. Absorb small municipal police departments within the geographic confines of Aiken County to support resource availability and ensure consistency in training content and quality;

Response: This item does not fall within the power of the City of Aiken or ADPS.

4. Institute a process that includes mental health evaluations prior to an officer being hired, and conduct regular mental health evaluations by a certified mental health professional of every officer -- making those services available after every event involving death or dismemberment of a suspect, citizen, or fellow officer. NOTE: Mental health evaluations should include Black and African American certified mental health professionals.

Response: In 2017 the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy set out guidelines for psychological evaluations and made it a requirement that "all candidates registering for a Class 1 certification training after January 1, 2018 must have a valid psychological evaluation in order to register..." (South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, 2017) Mental health evaluations have been in ADPS policy as a part of the selection process as far back as 1998.

Also implemented into policy in 1998 was our Post-Traumatic Incident Procedures which covers the actions of the department following a traumatic incident. ADPS also now requires officers to have annual mental health check-ups that are done around the time of their evaluations. These are the City of Aiken's responses. I look forward to continuing the dialogue with your organization in the near future. Please suggest some dates and times that representatives of all member organizations of the Umoja Village can be available to meet with representatives of the City of Aiken in the coming weeks to facilitate that.

UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN EDUCATION CATEGORY *(Responsible parties: The Aiken County Public School District Board of Education and Superintendent King Laurence, USC Aiken Chancellor, and President of Aiken Technical College)*

A. Teacher Recruitment

1. Increase recruitment of African American teachers 50 percent by December 2022 from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (i.e. Claflin University, South Carolina State University, Benedict College, Morris College, etc.) as well as from other colleges and universities;
2. Fully fund the Call Me MISTER Program for Aiken County Public Schools, USC Aiken, and Aiken Technical College;
3. Add incentives for African American teachers hired to teach in Aiken County;
4. Promote the PACE program and establish community programs to help teacher candidates get certified in their chosen field.

B. Curriculum

1. Select textbooks and other teaching resources that integrate Black/African American History into the basic history/social studies curriculum. NOTE: African American history should not be addressed as a history add-on. Not teaching African American history must not be an option;
2. Develop an annual review board consisting of African American educators, historians, concerned citizens, and students to review the African American history curriculum being considered in K-12 schools, at USC Aiken, and at Aiken Technical College. NOTE: The African American history curriculum must be comprehensive, including the African homeland, slavery, emancipation, reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, the post Civil Rights era, Black Wall Street, etc.;
3. Develop a marketing program (i.e. videos, radio/television commercials, etc.) aimed at helping students and the general public understand racism that can be communicated within the schools and communities (i.e. Racism, Prejudice, Institutional/Systemic Racism, White Supremacy, Diversity, Diverse, Inclusion, etc.) and utilize a Black or African American owned production company to write and produce the program;
4. Develop a minor in African and African American Studies at USC Aiken and at Aiken Technical College;
5. Fully fund the Office of Diversity initiatives and increase funding to the Diversity Certificate Program, PEAK Mentoring Program, and STAR programs at USC Aiken;
6. In Aiken County Public Schools, fund field trips to the Center for African American History, Art, and Culture; the National African American Museum in Charleston and other museums within the state and surrounding areas (Atlanta) that amplify the Black and African American experience.

C. Training and Accountability

1. Institute mandatory annual diversity, anti-racism and cultural competency training for all

teachers to include recognizing one's own biases, racial stereotypes and microaggressions, and systemic racism;

2. Incentivize teachers who visit homes and neighborhoods of the African American students they serve;
3. Invest funds in creating a Parent Advocacy Program for K-12 schools with Black or African American lead or co-lead;
4. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for educators and staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes towards staff, parents, students, contractors, etc.;
5. Institute a Bias Report System where students, staff, faculty, and parents can report incidents of bias on campus and in the classroom in a digital format; and create a policy for investigating and bringing action, where necessary; publicize data annually on bias incidents.

D. Title 1 Spending

1. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;
2. Utilize Title 1 funds to provide high-quality, results-oriented educational after school programs that can provide measurable results for each participating student;
3. Target 100 percent of Title 1 funds to meet the educational goals of its low-income students in school.

RESPONSE (Forest Mahan, Aiken Technical College president)

1. A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness taskforce is being established that will have participation from faculty, staff, and students. The co-chairs have been selected, and they are putting together the goals and objectives for both short and long-term goals.
2. Our Dynamic Dialogues series will have an expanded view of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness as the schedule is set for the upcoming academic year.
3. ATC has reached out to USC Aiken and the Aiken County Public School District to explore joint opportunities to address these issues. ATC and USCA already co-host the annual MLK celebration, so additional focus on this tradition would be in order.
4. I taught an African-American history course at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, so I will request this option be explored for Aiken Technical College.
5. I plan to work with the Concerned Ministers Fellowship and discuss educational opportunities available at ATC at a number of speaking engagements at churches.

RESPONSE (King Laurence, Aiken County Public School District superintendent)

I know that you are anticipating a response concerning the recommendations ... however, tasks associated with reopening schools safely have consumed most of the available time in the past couple of months. With plans hopefully firming up, the school board and administration will be able to devote time in the coming weeks to this very important endeavor.

You and I were able to chat informally a few weeks ago , and I think that was an excellent beginning to our mutual understanding of the desires all of us have to "live in peace and harmony, succeed, and continue to be productive citizens in society" coupled with certain statutory requirements and logistical realities.

A. Teacher Recruitment

1. Increase recruitment of African American teachers 50 percent by December 2022 from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (i.e. Claflin University, South Carolina State University, Benedict College, Morris College, etc.) as well as from other colleges and universities;

Response: There simply are not enough graduates to meet the suggested 50 percent increase. If there were, we would still be competing with 78 other school districts in recruiting. The fact is that South Carolina does not produce enough education graduates of any race to even come close to meeting the demand each year. We are recruiting across the nation, but as I mentioned, we can and will expand our recruitment of African American candidates.

2. Fully fund the Call Me MISTER Program for Aiken County Public Schools, USC Aiken, and Aiken Technical College;

Response: Call Me Mister. ACPSD as well as ATC and USCA continue to be committed to Call Me Mister. Recruiting students into the cohorts has been challenging, but we will continue to actively pursue candidates.

3. Add incentives for African American teachers hired to teach in Aiken County;

Response: We are open to and have used incentives in the past for difficult to fill positions like math/science and special education. We will investigate the Title VII legalities concerning the offering of incentives based on race or ethnicity, but just in my reading it does not look allowable. However, I think base pay is probably the best incentive. Aiken County consistently has one of the highest if not the highest starting teacher salary in the state.

4. Promote the PACE program and establish community programs to help teacher candidates get certified in their chosen field.

Response: We provide active support for potential employees in the PACE program as well as other alternative certification pathways.

B. Curriculum

1. Select textbooks and other teaching resources that integrate Black/African American History into the basic history/social studies curriculum. NOTE: African American history should not be addressed as a history add-on. Not teaching African American history must not be an option;

Response: From a curriculum standpoint, core standards are created by the state while Aiken County Public School District teachers create curriculum based on those standards. Textbooks are also adopted by the district from a list approved by the SC Department of Education. Our schools have locally developed and approved courses that focus on African American History.

C. Training and Accountability

1. Institute mandatory annual diversity, anti-racism and cultural competency training for all teachers to include recognizing one's own biases, racial stereotypes and microaggressions, and systemic racism;

Response: Our annual training includes the topics of cultural competence and racial bias, discrimination awareness, and diversity awareness. A couple of years ago, all administrators participated in diversity leadership training sponsored by the Richard Riley Institute at Furman.

4. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for educators and staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes towards staff, parents, students, contractors, etc.;

Response: We continue to seek opportunities for growth in this area and do not tolerate outward exhibitions of racist behaviors.

D. Title 1 Spending

2. Utilize Title 1 funds to provide high-quality, results-oriented educational after school programs that can provide measurable results for each participating student;

3. Target 100 percent of Title 1 funds to meet the educational goals of its low-income students in school.

Response: Title I funding is based on pupils in poverty (PIP). There are specific regulations on how those funds may be spent in schools. Schools are required to conduct a needs assessment and involve a variety of representatives from their school communities in determining how funds will be spent to meet the needs of their students.

I hope that helps. As always, our desire is to work with everyone in our communities to meet the needs of the children and families of Aiken County Public Schools. Please call on me with additional questions and/or recommendations. See you this evening. Thank you for understanding, and know that Aiken County Public Schools is eager to work with all segments of our communities to improve the lives of our citizens.

RESPONSE (Dr. Sandra Jordan, University of South Carolina Aiken president)

Dear Members of the Umoja Village:

Thank you for sending your thoughts and suggestions about how to improve upon social justice and create permanent changes that will help to address equity among diverse individuals and communities. Like you, I think that it will take all of us in fruitful discussion and deliberate action to build greater understanding. It was my honor to speak with you on 7/8/2020 and address many of your identified priorities and action-steps at that time. But, I thought you'd also appreciate receiving my responses in writing. I want you to know that I feel no disquiet over the recognition that there are many things that need to change to accomplish greater equity and justice. And while I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is that they must change if they are to get better. Therefore, you have my ongoing commitment, on behalf of UofSC Aiken, to address systemic racism and provide our students with an environment that supports inclusion and opportunity. UofSC Aiken has taken many steps to address some of the very issues you have listed, but we recognize that there is more we can do. As was once famously stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Thus, as a member of this community and the leader of a public university in this state, I'm committed to lending my efforts, mind, voice, and heart to this task.

A. Teacher Recruitment

1. Increase recruitment of African American teachers 50 percent by December 2022 from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (i.e. Claflin University, South Carolina State University, Benedict College, Morris College, etc.) as well as from other colleges and universities;

Response: We are in agreement with you. In our strategic plan is a university goals to increase African American professors. We are advancing that goal through many action steps and changes to the way we do business in order to make certain that we are attracting qualified African American professors to our advertised positions and that the search committees are aware of "unconscious bias" that can impact the search results, and that we have advocates on every search committee to make certain that all candidates receive due consideration. These action steps should net results over time. Unfortunately, the suggested approach you outlined is not appropriate for university-level searches.

The HBCUs in our region of the country are fine institutions offering excellent academic programs. But, they are typically undergraduate-serving institutions. Those that have a mission to be more "comprehensive" universities, typically have the Master's degree, but not the doctorate degrees. That means most HBCU's primarily offer undergraduate or baccalaureate degrees. That is the case for each of the institutions listed in your document. To teach at a public university, the tenure-track, full time positions must be filled with individuals who hold a terminal degree (doctorate).

We can hire adjuncts and temporary faculty without a terminal degree, but in the majority of cases, full-time positions require the doctorate. This is a requirement of the U.S. Department of Education that is enforced by regional accreditors. An institution like UofSC Aiken tends to lean heavily toward full time, tenure track positions. Failure to hire terminally prepared faculty could ultimately jeopardize our institutional SACSCOC accreditation and loss of accreditation means losing access to federal funds, students who need Pell grants, and the loss of our reputation. So, with stakes this high, all institutions tend to run national searches requiring the terminal degree for almost all disciplines (the exception is the visual arts, which require MFA's, and law schools, which require the JD instead of Ph.D.)

While HBCU's typically do not prepare doctoral candidates, large, RI Universities do have doctoral programs. But, there are many challenges for recruiting African Americans candidates with doctorate degrees into our universities. These challenges are significant and range from the percentage of African Americans who complete a doctorate degrees, to personal preferences for disciplines studied, life-style preferences (such as urban or rural and community size), salary and benefit options at different types of universities. I am not outlining the challenges as an excuse, but to build mutual understanding around this very important issue.

While the number of African American students enrolling in and completing advanced degrees have steadily increased, there is room for improvement there. Participation in doctoral education by underrepresented minorities who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents is increasing, though from a small base. From 2008 to 2017, the number of doctorates awarded to blacks or African Americans increased by 23%. That being said, data for the annual Survey of Earned Doctorates shows that universities in the United States conferred 54,641 doctorates in 2017 (most recent date of the survey). Of these, 2,963 or 5.4 percent were awarded to Black students. So, in practical terms for UofSC Aiken, it means that we are competing with some 5000 institutions in America for 2,962 minority candidates....IF every candidate for a doctoral degree even wanted to go into higher education as a career. Of course, of the individuals receiving a doctoral degree...not all want to enter higher education as their profession, so the number of graduates available to recruit is substantially smaller.

Additionally, in higher education, we hire expertise within a field or discipline. So, if we are seeking a new faculty member in Mathematics, we must hire someone whose graduate work was in Mathematics. Among minority U.S. citizen doctorate recipients, different racial or ethnic backgrounds are more heavily represented in some fields of study than in others. In 2017, Asians earned more doctorates than other racial and ethnic minority groups in life sciences, physical sciences and earth sciences, mathematics and computer sciences, and engineering. Blacks or African Americans were the largest U.S. minority population in the field of education. Hispanics or Latinos earned a larger share of doctorates in psychology and social sciences and in humanities and arts than did any other minority group. Again, this may limit the number of

African American applicants if we are adding faculty in the high demand areas of engineering, computer science, or business.

Finally, there are personal preferences. African American doctoral recipients who want to work in higher education are in great demand. So, if they have lots of choices and are courted by many institutions. There are things that we can't control associated with preferences of available graduate students. This would include preferences in the size and scope of the institution, the size of our community, the salary range...and so forth.

That being said, UofSC Aiken has taken many steps to try to recruit more faculty from underrepresented groups and taking steps to make certain that we are driving more minority applicants to our university. Those steps include:

Every faculty and staff member taking a job at UofSC Aiken must go through diversity/inclusion training. Since our search committees are made up of employees, this helps to make unconscious bias less likely among search committee members.

Every search includes a trained affirmative action representative on each search committee; We've enhanced training for search committee chairs that focuses on how to advertise and promote positions on campus to help increase the number of applicants from those groups; and on unconscious bias, how to handle the committee to make certain minority candidates have a fair/unbiased interview.

We are advertising every faculty position in journals focused on Diversity and Minorities in the field.

We are working with the Inclusion Advisory Council to developing ways that council can provide assistance when candidates arrive on campus for their interview to highlight the strengths of Aiken County and the support the community provides UofSC Aiken.

We are considering a "grow our own" program that would help part time minority faculty who are here to go back to complete their doctorate. That will not be launched this year as the costs of the pandemic are quite extensive and our budget will be austere this year. The director of our Diversity Program provides additional training for each of our employees on diversity topics.

2. Fully fund the Call Me MISTER Program for Aiken County Public Schools, USC Aiken, and Aiken Technical College;

Response: Yes. This program is fully supported by me and is funded and fully by the sponsoring institutions: UofSC Aiken and Aiken Technical College.

3. Add incentives for African American teachers hired to teach in Aiken County;

Response: N/A

4. Promote the PACE program and establish community programs to help teacher candidates get certified in their chosen field.

Response: N/A

B. Curriculum

1. Select textbooks and other teaching resources that integrate Black/African American History into the basic history/social studies curriculum. NOTE: African American history should not be addressed as a history add-on. Not teaching African American history must not be an option;

Response: UofSC Aiken offers a variety of African American focused classes (literature, history) as well as requires all students to take at least two non -Western courses to expand upon the learning outcomes associated with our general education curriculum. The faculty are required to remain current in the discipline and thus, shape their courses in history and other studies around current discipline approaches.

2. Develop an annual review board consisting of African American educators, historians, concerned citizens, and students to review the African American history curriculum being considered in K-12 schools, at USC Aiken, and at Aiken Technical College. NOTE: The African American history curriculum must be comprehensive, including the African homeland, slavery, emancipation, reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, the post-Civil Rights era, Black Wall Street, etc.;

Response: One of the tenets of “Academic Freedom” adhered to by public universities (and required by accreditation and the American Association of University Professors, is that faculty, who are experts in their fields, have primary control over the course content, which includes teaching materials. We have an Inclusionary Council who may be able to provide insight, but their insights would be recommendations, for the well-meaning input of non-experts in the field cannot be allowed to supersede the judgment of the faculty. Additionally, faculty are required to remain current in their fields, to update their courses and the curriculum and they do so by participating in special field-specific conferences. At all public universities, curriculum content and course materials are reviewed by the departmental faculty, the department chair, and the dean. Additionally, the entire must approve the curriculum and materials whenever a new course is added or significant changes are made to a major, minor, or certificate program. After the department, college, and university approve a curriculum, it goes to the provost and chancellor for approval. Programs must also be approved by a state entity called the Council on Higher Education, and approved by the Board of Trustees, and by the accrediting body, Southern Conferences of Schools-Commission on Colleges.

3. Develop a marketing program (i.e. videos, radio/television commercials, etc.) aimed at helping students and the general public understand racism that can be communicated within the schools and communities (i.e. Racism, Prejudice, Institutional/Systemic Racism, White Supremacy, Diversity, Diverse, Inclusion, etc.) and utilize a Black or African American owned production company to write and produce the program;

Response: This is an interesting idea that would require institutions to use public funds to develop a marketing fund for public messaging around a civic or social topic. That would need to be approved by the Board as it is outside of the mission of the university. I think a better way to accomplish this would be for a non-profit agency to request community, individual, and institutional support for this goal....a fund-raising program to support public messaging. Even more expedient would be for radio and television stations to provide more public service messaging space, free of charge, which could be used for messaging about racism, prejudice, systemic racism, white supremacy, etc.

4. Develop a minor in African and African American Studies at USC Aiken and at Aiken Technical College;

Response: We agree. In fact, the faculty has a proposal for a minor in African American Studies and the curriculum and learning outcomes have been submitted to Faculty Assembly for approval. The proposal states that the approval would be voted on during fall 2020, then it will be submitted for approval through all the entities listed in Item #2. It usually takes a full year for all the approvals to be completed, so I suspect the program will be launched in fall 2021.

5. Fully fund the Office of Diversity initiatives and increase funding to the Diversity Certificate Program, PEAK Mentoring Program, and STAR programs at USC Aiken;

Response: In comparison to other similar institutions, UofSC Aiken does a good job of funding the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The certificate program is funded and with the help of donors and institutional support, the PEAK Mentoring Program is in place and has been funded for the first 2 years. I am not familiar with the STAR program objectives on a yearly basis or what their budgetary needs, but we will follow up and learn more about that program and whether or not we will invest in it at the university. In the last budget cycle, the Office Diversity Initiatives has been supported with new institutional funding for hiring additional hiring of new professional as well as additional dollars to increase the number of student employees. Additionally, we have a full time director of the Office of Diversity.

6. In Aiken County Public Schools, fund field trips to the Center for African American History, Art, and Culture; the National African American Museum in Charleston and other museums within the state and surrounding areas (Atlanta) that amplify the Black and African American experience.

Response: N/A

C. Training and Accountability

1. Institute mandatory annual diversity, anti-racism and cultural competency training for all teachers to include recognizing one's own biases, racial stereotypes and micro-aggressions, and systemic racism;

Response: This is in place at UofSC Aiken. All employees must engage in training that helps us recognize bias, stereotypes, and micro aggressions. The topic of systemic racism is also addressed. The training comes in the form of online video training, special workforces, and face-to-face instruction.

2. Incentivize teachers who visit homes and neighborhoods of the African American students they serve;

Response: N/A

3. Invest funds in creating a Parent Advocacy Program for K-12 schools with Black or African American lead or co-lead;

Response: N/A

4. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for educators and staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes towards staff, parents, students, contractors, etc.;

Response: UofSC Aiken is a state institution and we do not tolerate employees who exhibit manners and behaviors that are not inclusive. When needed, employees are dealt with through our Human Resources Office following state and federal guidelines. However, we cannot and do not make any employee discipline known publically. State employment guidelines are adhered to.

5. Institute a Bias Report System where students, staff, faculty, and parents can report incidents of bias on campus and in the classroom in a digital format; and create a policy for investigating and bringing action, where necessary; publicize data annually on bias incidents.

Response: This was recently created at UofSC Aiken and was implemented in the last 20-21 academic year.

D. Title 1 Spending

1. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;

Response: Universities do not receive Title 1 funding. However, the UofSC Aiken would be supportive and want to help with this initiative.

2. Utilize Title 1 funds to provide high-quality, results-oriented educational after school programs that can provide measurable results for each participating student;

Response: N/A

3. Target 100 percent of Title 1 funds to meet the educational goals of its low-income students in school.

Response: N/A

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY (*Responsible parties: Economic Development Partnership and City and County Governments*)

Meet three times a year with members of The Umoja Village to discuss potential economic development projects (i.e. to include actual grocery stores) that would invest in the North side of Aiken and the underserved areas.

Updated Response received from Will Williams, president and CEO, Economic Development Partnership, received 8/28/2020

Our organization’s charter goes back to 1984. We have three basic missions: 1) Diversify the Tax base; 2) Diversify the employment base 3) Raise per capita income. We accomplish this mission by bringing in new capital investment and jobs into Aiken County either by successfully recruiting a new industry or one of our existing industries expanding. During this timeframe, our efforts have resulted in over \$10 billion in new capital investment that created 23,000 new jobs. These industries are what helps Aiken County enjoy the 8th lowest property tax rate in South Carolina. From 2010-2018 Aiken County per capita personal income rose from \$33,490 a year to \$42,511. We know that when we are successful African American citizens of Aiken County have job opportunities to better themselves and their families. We will continue to carry out our mission aggressively.

Retail recruitment is not an area where go often. At times we have been asked to assist other groups with this, but it is not a core competency of EDP. Retail follows rooftops and spending ability. In these days of online shopping and more recently COVID-19, retail recruitment has become even more difficult. However, there are several ongoing initiatives within the larger Aiken County community that could possibly enhance minority business involvement and improvement:

- Partnering with the City of Aiken to implement aspects of the soon to be released AECOM Economic Development Plan for workforce and economic development sites on the city’s Northside.
- The City of Aiken rezoning of the Eastern side of the downtown area to Downtown Business (DB) designation with light manufacturing, retail and mixed income housing investment opportunities.
- The three federally designated “Opportunity Zones” championed by US Senator Tim Scott encouraging and incentivizing investment in distressed inner-city areas.
- Encouraging and supporting the Cities of Aiken and North Augusta, Aiken County Public School District and Aiken County Government to establish and implement minority owned small business procurement programs.
- Encourage US Department of Energy to utilize minority owned construction firms and sub-contractors in the construction of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) on the campus of USC Aiken.

HOUSING CATEGORY (*Responsible parties: City and County governments, local Housing Authority*)

1. Work in conjunction with the local Housing Authority Department and city and county governments to develop more affordable and attractive housing developments that encourage keeping families together (landscaping, playgrounds, family floor plans, etc.).

Response from Chanosha Lawson, Aiken Housing Authority, chief executive officer

1. The Housing Authority of the City Aiken is committed to working with the local city and county governments to develop more affordable housing communities by pursuing public private partnerships.

2. Leveraging public funds with private investment will provide the financial resources needed to increase the number of affordable housing developments within the local community.

3. The Housing Authority of the City of Aiken continues to focus on the need of providing attractive affordable housing and commits to reducing concentrations of poverty within the Aiken County Community.

Through its efforts and commitment, the Authority purchased, through the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Replacement Housing Factor Funds (RHFF) Program, eleven single family homes, two (2) and three (3) bedrooms, in prominent subdivisions throughout Aiken County. Over the next two years, the Aiken Housing Authority plans to complete a demolition/disposition for two of its Public Housing properties. This is critical given the backlog of deferred maintenance of the agency's capital improvements. Upon the demolition/disposition of the Public Housing properties, the plan is to develop mixed-income properties, providing more affordable and attractive housing developments.

The Authority fully supports the action plan presented by the Umoja Village relative to the housing concerns and needs of the community. We welcome the opportunity to meet with the Umoja Village to further discuss how the Authority can collectively, with the city and county governments, continue to provide adequate, affordable and attractive housing that promotes a positive family living environment.

UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN BUSINESS/COMMERCE

CATEGORY (*Responsible parties: The Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce, North Augusta Chamber of Commerce, and Midland Valley Chamber of Commerce*)

1. Ensure that banks/lending institutions spend, at a minimum, 33 percent of Community Reinvestment Act dollars in communities where African Americans primarily reside. NOTE: These expended funds must reflect the demographics of this city, at a minimum;
2. Create a Small Business Development program specifically for Black/African American owned businesses in partnership with the Greater Augusta Black Chamber of Commerce.

RESPONSE (J. David Jameson, president/CEO, Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce)

As the leading voice of business in Aiken, the Aiken Chamber of Commerce recognizes its great responsibility to champion diversity, equity, racial justice, and inclusion in our region. The Aiken Chamber of Commerce remains dedicated to creating and sustaining an inclusive environment where people want to live, work and play. Tragic deaths and injustices caused by racism and discrimination in our country are unacceptable and go against everything we stand for as an organization.

Our nation and our community are at a turning point, and we must task ourselves with tearing down long-standing policies and practices, changing not only our internal biases, but also the institutional racism that has led to deep disparities for our communities of color. In the business world, these disparities undercut the ability of some of our residents to realize prosperity and stifle the growth and success of our economy.

The following actions have been undertaken by the Aiken Chamber of Commerce:

1. Aiken Mosaic – This group of 110 individuals (approximately half are Black/African American, and half are Caucasian) spent 6 months learning from one another and building relationships. These relationships have been the source of much discussion and are continuing to build bridges within the Aiken community. The focus of the group is building Aiken's future. The group continues under the direction of Pastor Paul Bush, Julie Whitesell and Keyatta Priester. The Aiken Chamber provides communication support as needed.
2. David Jameson, President & CEO, and Mandy Collins, VP Economic Vitality, participated in the U.S. Chamber's Equality of Opportunity National Summit on June 25. The purpose of the summit was to explore some of the underlying challenges driving inequality of opportunity and chart a path to actionable, data-driven solutions. This was a first step toward identification and understanding and will continue. Information gleaned from this initiative will be evaluated and applied to Aiken as appropriate.

3. Mandy Collins is now serving on the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce Diversity and Inclusion Council. This group is in the process of creating a D&I tool kit for small business. The goal is to have this kit ready to release in early 2021. It will be a resource for small business owners across the state that do not have access to internal training due to the size of their business. A D&I Summit for small business is being considered as well.

4. The Aiken Chamber is a partner with SCORE to provide business counseling and education. The organization has been very effective in reaching the Black/African American population and has taken steps to meet the needs of the community as they are identified. Classes have been held at Friendship Baptist Church outside of traditional business hours and have seen great participation. The group plans to continue this practice once face-to-face interaction is once again a viable option. Ron Garnett, a board member of the Augusta Black Chamber of Commerce is a SCORE mentor and will look for ways that SCORE can partner with the organization. One limiting factor in this endeavor is the ability to identify, recruit and train current Black/African American business owners in Aiken to be mentors.

5. The Aiken Chamber convened a minority business council in 2005 and hosted the Aiken Minority Business Development Conference in 2006. It was led by Rev. Doug Slaughter. In 2007, the group recommended disbanding as they felt no reason to continue with a parallel group. They preferred to integrate with traditional business and not be separate. At this point the check box identifying black, minority, or women owned businesses was removed from membership applications. The Aiken Minority Business Development Conference was replaced with a Small Business Development Summit and various procurement events. This has changed over time to accommodate the needs of the Aiken community. Now, smaller educational workshops are held throughout the year focusing on small business owner's needs. Additionally, Aiken City Council member Lessie Price convenes a group of minority business owners about twice a year. Mandy Collins is asked to attend and presents information on the Aiken Chamber and the services of its partner SCORE to attendees.

6. In 2019, the Aiken Chamber celebrated the beginning of its second century. Pastor Paul Bush became the Chamber's first African American Board Chair. This has opened the door to conversations previously not seen in the Aiken business community. We will continue to work with Pastor Bush as we seek guidance for moving Aiken forward.

7. NAACP chair, Eugene White, is active in the Aiken Chamber of Commerce and was a guest speaker at Caffeinated Conversations. The Aiken Chamber will continue to seek speakers from the African American community to educate and inform Chamber members on a variety of subjects.

8. The Aiken Chamber champions and supports people's opportunities to serve as agents of direct change for themselves by encouraging completion of the Census and by promoting voter registration and voting.

9. David Jameson has been involved with and recognized for his leadership to champion diversity and inclusion. Most recently, Jameson was recognized as "Stuff Legends are Made Of" by Eden's Ministry. Prior to moving to Aiken, Jameson lived in Greensboro, N.C. where he served on the board of directors of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum Foundation. In that role, he had the opportunity to interact with the three surviving members of the Greensboro Four. He considered this eye opening and the experience continues to influence his leadership today.

The Aiken Chamber of Commerce knows that an inclusive and equitable region is healthier, more vibrant, more competitive, and more productive. Achieving equity isn't only the right thing to do, our collective future prosperity depends on it. We will continue to listen and are committed to working with our members and partners to be part of the solution. Aiken and its residents deserve nothing less.

Response from Ms. Terra Carroll, president and CEO, North Augusta Chamber of Commerce, received 9/22/2020

The North Augusta Chamber of Commerce supports the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies that allow every possible advantage for economic growth, equality and prosperity for the greater North Augusta Community. We encourage leaders to be influential voices to foster workplace environments that demand fair treatment, opportunities and advancement for all.

The North Augusta Chamber will communicate to its members any specialized funding opportunities provided by member banking/lending institutions.

In partnership with SCORE, the SBA and the Small Business Development Centers in SC and GA, the North Augusta chamber provides counseling and advocacy services for businesses challenged by insufficient knowledge and/or access to resources. Additionally, the Chamber's Small Business Development Council provides business to business peer counseling and best strategies for entrepreneurs.

Ambassador Council

The Ambassador Council serves as the goodwill arm of the Chamber, playing an essential role in member communication, appreciation, retention, and level of engagement. Ambassadors are highly visible, prestigious volunteers who serve as the Chamber's primary liaison to new Chamber members.

Government Affairs Council

The Government Affairs Council will work to improve the effectiveness of legislation and regulations which affect our business environment every day. They will attend North Augusta City Council and Aiken County Council meetings to monitor key issues, receive input from our membership and develop policy statements on behalf of our member investors.

Programs Council

The Programs Council exists to create opportunities for Chamber membership to interact, *network*, and build relationships. Additionally, the programs and events are designed to increase *visibility* for our membership, foster *involvement* in the North Augusta Chamber and business community, provide opportunities for *business referrals*, and cultivate *professional development* and growth.

Education/Workforce Dev Council

The Workforce/Education Council seeks to improve communication between the business and education communities to remain informed of the issues and encourage improved outcomes with the ultimate goal of a well-trained workforce for our business community.

Small Business Council

The Small Business Council is a group of local business owners and business professionals who come together to strengthen the business climate and improve the Chamber's professional development opportunities. The Small Business Council will ensure that small businesses have a big voice within the Chamber, in North Augusta and in the Region.

UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN BANKING/FINANCE

CATEGORY (*Responsible parties: CEOs of local banks/lending institutions*) **NOTE:** *Due to the facts that Security Federal is our local community bank headquartered in Aiken, at this point, this plan was only given to Security Federal.*

RESPONSE (Michael Strange, Security Federal, executive vice president, Community Development & Public Affairs)

Security Federal Bank (SFB) is in receipt of your Action Plan and we appreciate your in-depth and well thought out ideas. SFB has a long history of helping the communities in which we serve with numerous financial tools and programs to help our customers grow in the area of finance.

Please note that our Financial Counseling (FC) program provides free training, coaching and the basics in finance so that people from all walks of life will have the confidence to successfully approach and overcome daily financial challenges. The FC Department consists of nine (9) counselors whose primary objective is to recognize the challenges of managing personal finances and to partner with municipalities, churches and non-profit organizations to offer financial literacy workshops and in person counseling sessions. This commitment to free Financial Counseling creates an annual investment of approximately \$850,000 which displays the Bank's dedication to the community's financial success.

Additionally, we are one of only 130 banks in America with the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) designation. This designation is given by the US Treasury Department's CDFI Fund (cdfifund.gov). The designation is for specialized organizations that provide financial services in low-income communities and to people who lack access to financing. CDFIs include regulated institutions such as community development banks and credit unions, and non-regulated institutions like loan and venture capital funds. By building the capacity of a nationwide network of CDFIs, the CDFI Fund works to empower low-income and underserved people and communities to enter the financial mainstream. This designation is for banks who make at least 60% of their loans to underserved markets. As one example of our work, we are partnered with Aiken Electric to provide assistance to people whose homes need weatherization, but cannot afford it.

The federal government provides a rating for every bank in America on their efforts to help underserved markets. Our bank has a Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) rating of "Outstanding." Less than 10% of the banks in America are rated that high. SFB's community development services are evaluated based on the level of services delivered within the bank's area of service. In addition, SFB evaluates the innovativeness of its services, including whether they serve low- and moderate-income customers in new ways or serve groups of customers not previously served. CRA not only consists of monetary donations but also home loans, auto loans, loan servicing, free financial counseling, savings education (Looney Tunes)

just to name a few. Finally, SFB evaluates the degree to which it serves low-and moderate-income areas or individuals and responds to available opportunities for community development services. The Bank makes adjustments based on this data.

In response to your Umoja Village Action Plan, which was emailed to SFB on June 26, 2020, we plan to address your issues as follows:

1. Ensure that banks/lending institutions spend, at a minimum, 33 percent of Community Reinvestment Act dollars in communities where African Americans primarily reside. NOTE: These expended funds need to reflect the demographics of our community;

SFB RESPONSE: SFB continues to receive “Outstanding” ratings concerning CRA. CRA is intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, consistent with safe and sound banking operations. The Bank annually participates in CRA activities, loans and contributions. The bank annually provides monetary donations and services to United Way, Salvation Army, ACTS, Golden Harvest Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity (Aiken, Columbia, SC, Augusta) among many other community organizations. Additionally, the bank provides funding to various groups that help low to moderate income families. These funds were used to help construct or remodel affordable housing in various communities. In 2019, SFB serviced 297 Habitat for Humanity mortgages and 282 in 2018. Additionally in 2019, The Bank will continue to work with community leaders, municipalities, nonprofits and other organizations.

2. Deliberately work with Black/African American owned businesses to coach them through the process for obtaining business loans;

SFB RESPONSE: SFB has Business Bankers, in addition to Financial Counseling, who specialize in banking local businesses. They are available for consulting and can provide more details on preparedness for daily cash flow monitoring and loan requests. Additionally, we can collaborate with non-profits and municipalities to provide training sessions on submitting loan requests, principles of banking, financial counseling, etc. In 2019, the Financial Counseling Department closed 265 loans totaling over \$1.8 Million and hosted 20 Financial Workshops. We will work to build partnerships in additional cities to bring more counseling and business technique training to business owners.

3. Ensure that the Board of Directors demographics reflect the demographics of the community with a minimum 25-50 percent representation from the Black and African American population over the next two years.

SFB RESPONSE: The Bank will continue to have ongoing discussions about board representation. Currently, the bank has a total of 11 African American Advisory board members that help keep us apprised of each community’s needs and happenings. In doing so, we will look to identify community representatives within the Bank’s geographical footprint with compassion

for the same work that aligns with the Bank. Additionally, identify individuals who have a reputation for balanced, sound, deliberate thoughts and actions. We think board members are vitally important to the ongoing success of the Bank. We will continue to strive to meet this objective.

4. Ensure that new hires at the senior level reporting to the President or CEO consist of at least 50 percent Black and African American on the final candidate slate.

SFB RESPONSE: SFB has made a commitment to the continuous development of the senior level team. As of March 2, 2020, the Bank hired Michael Strange, a previous SFB employee in commercial lending, as the new Executive Vice President of Community Development and Public Affairs. He reports directly to Chris Verenes, SFB's CEO. He concentrates his efforts on improving relationships with municipalities, non-profits, colleges/universities and community stakeholders. Additionally, his position makes concentrated efforts to review and improve the Bank's diversity, equity, inclusion and talent.

In conclusion, SFB will continue to support its local communities and continue to pursue its tagline... "Helping People...Changing Lives." As we continue with our community outreach through Looney Tunes children's savings, workshops, financial counseling, community monetary donations and supporting numerous non-profits we will work harder to make a difference. We strive to be the best bank possible and we will continue to make a conscientious effort to be progressive in our growth. The Bank appreciates the Umoja Village and looks forward to working with you while also being your bank of choice.

UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN HEALTHCARE CATEGORY

(Responsible parties: CEO and Board of Directors of Aiken Regional Medical Centers)

1. Ensure senior and middle management reflects the demographics of the service area to include new hires or promotions at the senior level reporting to the President or CEO consist of at least 50 percent Black and African American on the final candidate slate;
2. Provide monthly demographics reports to The Umoja Village of the hospital's board of directors, senior staff, doctors, and management positions; along with demographics of the hospital's hiring/firing;
3. Actively and deliberately recruit African American physicians to have privileges at Aiken Regional Medical Centers and provide a quarterly status report to The Umoja Village;
4. Ensure the Board of Directors reflects the demographics of the service area with a minimum of new members being 50 percent Black or African American;
5. Devote at a minimum 30 percent marketing dollars to benefit Black/African American communities/organizations/initiatives or as reflected by the community's demographics;
6. Work in conjunction with city and county governments to educate the community about Medicare, Medicaid, and other services of benefit to those who struggle with paying medical expenses due to health issues;
7. Recognize that racism is a public health crisis that impacts all aspects of African American lives;
8. Enforce a zero tolerance policy for staff who outwardly exhibit racist behaviors, conversations, and/or attitudes;
9. Create and staff a diversity department that reports directly to the ARMC CEO to develop a comprehensive annual diversity, cultural competency and anti-racism awareness and training/development program for management and staff; and for the management of employee grievances.

RESPONSE (James O'loughlin, Aiken Regional Medical Centers Chief Executive Officer)

Thank you for your community leadership, tireless efforts and continued commitment to improving our community. Aiken Regional Medical Centers is committed to ensuring an environment of inclusion and acceptance, appreciating and valuing diversity. As leaders in healthcare, we take our responsibility seriously, to be a place of hope and healing, and we remain committed to serving all individuals in our community with compassion, dignity and respect. As an employer, we are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all of our staff. The Aiken Regional Medical Center's Board of Governors will be meeting in early August where we will share the Umoja Village Action Plan.

**UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN CITY/COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CATEGORY** (*Responsible parties: Aiken City Council, Aiken County Council, North
Augusta City Council, City/County Managers*)

RESPONSE (Stuart T. Bedenbaugh, Aiken City manager)

I understand that Umoja Village is comprised of representatives from The Black Lives Matter (Aiken and North Augusta) movements, the NAACP of Aiken County, The Concerned Ministers Fellowship, Education Matters Nonprofit Corporation, The Imani Group, The Hankinson Boxing Club, The Sky Is The Limit Foundation, CHOICES, LLC., and other key stake holders. You have expressed the intent for your group to represent the collective voices of many Blacks and African Americans to provide City leaders with a single point of contact to discuss the important issues you raise in the document you've forwarded to us and many other agencies and institutions in Aiken County and the broader CSRA.

I am eager to open a dialogue and continue to discuss these matters and potential paths forward with any and all concerned groups, and individuals, either separately or as the collective you've suggested. As you know, City leadership has already had a number of productive conversations with several of your coalition's member organizations in recent weeks, and in fact, over many years. To facilitate the desired conversation on the issues you've raised, I would ask that you offer some dates and times that representatives of all member organizations of the Umoja Village are available to meet with representatives of the City of Aiken in the coming weeks. Once we have a date in place, we can discuss specifics such as agenda, format and location.

To best start our conversation and offer the response from the City of Aiken you've requested, I have studied the document you submitted to numerous local governments and organizations and attempted to pull out the elements that apply most to the City of Aiken and its ability to make impactful contributions. The first section of this correspondence will be limited to the civil government responsibilities of the City, those items related to locally funded, but largely state governed, law enforcement duties of Aiken Department of Public Safety will be addressed in a separate section below.

The following bulleted list represents the items that I find most closely associated with the purview of the City's municipal government:

- Meet three times a year with members of The Umoja Village to discuss potential economic development projects (i.e. to include actual grocery stores) that would invest in the North side of Aiken and the underserved areas.
- Work in conjunction with the local Housing Authority Department and city and county governments to develop more affordable and attractive housing developments that encourage keeping families together (landscaping, playgrounds, family floor plans, etc.).

- Create a Small Business Development program specifically for Black/African American owned businesses in partnership with the local chambers of commerce;
- Ensure that procurement contracts are solicited from and awarded to African American owned companies, at a minimum, 33 percent of the budget or based on the demographics of African Americans in the Aiken city and county government;
- To award contracts to Black/African American businesses at a rate no less than 33 percent of overall budget (or, at a minimum, the percent comparable to the area's demographics of Blacks and African Americans) for the procurement of city and county products and services.

One of the bulleted items that has been omitted from the original list is the following:

- Remove question(s) on employment applications that ask if the applicant has been charged with or convicted of a felony;

I'm pleased to share with you that prior to receiving your June 26 communication, I had directed that the City of Aiken immediately remove the question regarding prior criminal charges or convictions from our organization's employment application. This has been carried out and the question is no longer presented to any applicant for a City position. On the remainder of the list, if I have not included an item that you feel was directed at or involves action on the part of the City of Aiken's municipal government, please let me know and I will include it as well.

RESPONSE (Clay Killian, Aiken County administrator)

Thank you for the correspondence you provided to community leaders a few weeks ago. I will not address each point specifically, but will generally try to give you a feel for where we are with some of your points.

1. Create a Small Business Development program specifically for Black/African American owned businesses in partnership with the local chambers of commerce;

Response: I don't know if you are aware of the program, but USCA has a Small Business Development Center that is designed to assist small businesses start up, grow and develop. The County does provide some limited funding assistance, but that is a program available to any small business in the County. I would encourage anyone to reach out to them if they are trying to start a business or have issues with their current business.

2. Conduct educational sessions in the Black and African American communities focused on the voting process, candidates on the ballots, how to use voting machines, absentee/early voting processes, updates on polling locations, etc., leading up to elections and prior to voter's registration deadlines;

Response: See #3 below.

3. Create an email response process to address questions citizens may have related to elections and voting with a 24-48 hour response time;

Response to action items #2 and #3: Any of your thoughts and ideas dealing with Registration and Elections should be addressed by either the Aiken County Board of Registration and Elections or the Aiken County Legislative Delegation. While the employees in that office are County employees, they report directly to the Board and not to me or County Council. That Board is actually appointed by the Legislative Delegation so the County has no direct responsibility for the operations of the office.

4. Ensure that procurement contracts are solicited from and awarded to African American owned companies, at a minimum, 33 percent of the budget or based on the demographics of African Americans in the Aiken city and county government;

Response: Aiken County has a very open and transparent procurement process, but by our own code and state law, do not do set asides or set quotas for particular businesses. We do have a local preference clause to give some nod to our local businesses, but that adjustment is very narrow. We always try to award the best value price/bid for the citizens of the County. We do ask if a bidder is a Minority or Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) and track those statistics, but we do not award unless it is the best value contract. We would love to attract more bids from African American-owned companies and would welcome any assistance you can provide in getting more companies to bid when opportunities arise.

5. Establish a deliberate and proactive communication/marketing plan, which means investing in marketing, to educate citizens about the U.S. Census.

No Response.

6. Create an informational campaign to market services available for citizens;

No Response.

7. Remove question(s) on employment applications that ask if the applicant has been charged of or convicted of a felony;

No Response.

8. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the the school district and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;

Response: Historically, we have not provided funding in the County budget for items like teen centers or community health centers. Our Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department runs summer camps and many other programs for the youth in our community, but are always looking for other ways to serve in our current parks within the restraints of our limited resources. I

believe community health centers have historically been supported by federal grants and other funding and not so much by local dollars.

9. Provide financial support for the community healthcare centers;

No Response.

10. To recognize that racism is a public health crisis that impacts all aspects of African American lives;

No Response.

11. To award contracts to Black/African American businesses at a rate no less than 33 percent of overall budget (or, at a minimum, the percent comparable to the area's demographics of Blacks and African Americans) for the procurement of city and county products and services.

Response: Aiken County has a very open and transparent procurement process, but by our own code and state law, do not do set asides or set quotas for particular businesses. We do have a local preference clause to give some nod to our local businesses, but that adjustment is very narrow. We always try to award the best value price/bid for the citizens of the County. We do ask if a bidder is a Minority or Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) and track those statistics, but we do not award unless it is the best value contract. We would love to attract more bids from African American-owned companies and would welcome any assistance you can provide in getting more companies to bid when opportunities arise.

UMOJA VILLAGE ACTION PLAN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM CATEGORY
(Responsible parties: Mr. Bill Weeks and others with decision-making authority and Aiken County Legislative Delegation)

1. Remove necessity for cash bonds for low-level nonviolent offenses;
2. Appoint prosecutors and public defenders who reflect the community and are familiar with the population they serve;
3. Ban no knock entry;
4. Ban knee and choke holds and make it a felony leading to termination for any law enforcement officer who is determined to have used this unauthorized procedure;
5. Uphold all laws that protect voters' rights;
6. Remove question(s) on employment applications that asks if the applicant has been charged of or convicted of a felony;
7. Ensure expungement programs are made available equitably to African American youth;
8. Enforce 100% mandatory usage of body cameras with disciplinary actions that reflect South Carolina Dash Cam policy, to include fines and up to termination;
9. Institute community and mentorship programs that promote building of positive relationships versus criminalizing youth who often make "youthful" mistakes in judgment. NOTE: Lack of sound judgment should not always result in ruining an individual's entire life; Give African Americans the same privileges and amenities as Caucasians;
10. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments, the school district, and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;
11. Develop deliberate reentry programs and job training programs (by working in conjunction with the city and county governments, employment agencies, and the business community) that promote second-chance opportunities for those who have paid their debt to society;
12. Develop a citizen's review board for the Aiken County Sheriff's Office, the University of South Carolina Aiken, and Aiken Technical College that consists of USC Aiken and Aiken Technical College students with Black and African American representation.

RESPONSE from John W. "Bill" Weeks, Solicitor, Second Judicial Circuit, received 9/25/2020

1. Remove necessity for cash bonds for low-level nonviolent offenses;
Response: *I support low or no cash bonds for low-level non-violent offenses provided the Magistrate or Circuit Court is allowed bench warrants for non-attendance on the court date.*
2. Appoint prosecutors and public defenders who reflect the community and are familiar with the population they serve;

Response: *I welcome minority applicants for employment in our office when there are vacancies or new positions. I believe that our office should strive to reflect the community it serves.*

3. Ban no knock entry;

Response: *I support law enforcement. I support no knock entry in certain circumstances. When law enforcement is presented with facility scenarios that present extreme danger to officers or citizens when serving warrants (e.g., explosives, numerous weapons, kidnapping, etc.), then I believe that a judge should allow these warrants after specific probable cause is sworn to in front of the Judge issuing the warrant.*

4. Ban knee and choke holds and make it a felony leading to termination for any law enforcement officer who is determined to have used this unauthorized procedure;

Response: *I support policies and state statutes that proscribe choke holds on suspects, unless these holds are in life-threatening self-defense for the officer or citizens.*

5. Uphold all laws that protect voters' rights;

Response: *I support protecting voting rights in state laws and federal laws.*

6. Remove question(s) on employment applications that asks if the applicant has been charged of or convicted of a felony;

Response: *A prosecutor's office handles very serious information. I do not support banning questions on employment applications about prior convictions of an applicant. Our record checks are subject to omissions, and we need to know an applicant's complete history.*

7. Ensure expungement programs are made available equitably to African American youth;

Response: *All expungement programs should and will comply to all qualified applicants. Race will not be considered.*

8. Enforce 100% mandatory usage of body cameras with disciplinary actions that reflect South Carolina Dash Cam policy, to include fines and up to termination;

Response: *I believe in body cameras for citizens and law enforcement protection. They should not be mandatory or criminalized unless proper funding for training, and access to the equipment and storage of the devices data is provided. The use of BWC has dramatically added to the time necessary to prepare cases for court. I agree that video evidence is usually more compelling and credible than eye-witness testimony.*

9. Institute community and mentorship programs that promote building of positive relationships versus criminalizing youth who often make "youthful" mistakes in judgment. NOTE: Lack of sound judgment should not always result in ruining an individual's entire life; Give African Americans the same privileges and amenities as Caucasians;

Response: *My office would gladly support programs which build positive relationships with our youth. I am a product of sports and had great mentors in my youth. I do believe that there should be consequences for “bad” choices. The lack of sound judgment affects more than just the above. Victims has the right to expect sound judgment from fellow citizens regardless of their age.*

10. Create a process for the planning and building of a teen after school center in conjunction with the county and city governments, the school district, and the business community OR expand availability for African American youth to participate in current youth programs, such as the YMCA, by providing transportation, membership scholarships;

Response: *I don't believe that the Solicitor's office could allot funds for construction of a teen center. I do believe my staff would be very supportive of a teen center.*

11. Develop deliberate reentry programs and job training programs (by working in conjunction with the city and county governments, employment agencies, and the business community) that promote second-chance opportunities for those who have paid their debt to society;

Response: *I support and encourage re-entry and job training for those who wish to pursue making the transition back to normal society. These type of programs should be funded by our legislature. This office is funded to prosecute people who break our laws. The concept of getting people acclimated to re-entry is a great goal.*

12. Develop a citizen's review board for the Aiken County Sheriff's Office, the University of South Carolina Aiken, and Aiken Technical College that consists of USC Aiken and Aiken Technical College students with Black and African American representation.

Response: *The citizens elect the Solicitor to provide the legal experience necessary to enforce our laws. We are given great discretion. I would always listen to opinions about a case from a review board the Sheriff creates if that is the purpose of the board.*

Response received from Tom Young, Jr. Chairman, Aiken County Legislative Delegation, received 9/3/2020

The General Assembly returns to session in mid-September for a short period and again in January 2021 for the 2021 legislative session. While some of the matters you raise in your emails are not within the scope of matters that the General Assembly may consider, we anticipate that various bills and other legislative measures may be offered during the 2021 legislative session that impact some of those raised in your recent emails. One such bill is the proposed South Carolina Law Enforcement Accountability Duty and Standards (SC LEADS) Act, which has bipartisan support in both legislative bodies:

A BILL

“TO AMEND SECTION 23-23-150(A) AND (B) OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO ADJUDICATIONS OF ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT, TO PROVIDE THAT MISCONDUCT ALSO MEANS WILFULLY FAILING TO INTERVENE WHEN OBSERVING ANOTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER NOT COMPLYING WITH THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINNG COUNCIL, TO PROVIDE THAT A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY THAT HAS MADE A REPORT SHALL FULLY COOPERATE WITH ANY INVESTIGATION BY THE COUNCIL TO INCLUDE MANDATORY ATTENDANCE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AGENCY KNOWLEDGABLE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ALLEGATION AT ANY SCHEDULED HEARING, AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

Another action that the General Assembly is taking is the expansion of broadband infrastructure to improve reliable internet access for thousands of South Carolinians living in rural areas around our state. Many of those impacted are minority families and improving such access will enhance educational, health care, and employment opportunities in these communities. Statewide, over \$26.7 million has recently been allocated to this effort from CARES Act funds, including nearly \$600,000 to Aiken County.

C. Section Three (Path Forward)

Due to the comprehensive nature of this document, it will take time for The Umoja Village to provide thorough assessment of the responses. As stated in the original plan, this document is fluid and will change as progress is made and additional revelations become apparent.

Therefore, participants should not expect this effort to dissipate or go away. Lives are at stake, and change must happen now in order to realize positive impacts to the lives of Blacks and African Americans thereby improving the communities as a whole. When one group succeeds, we all succeed.

As it currently stands, the path forward will include the following steps, which may be adjusted as the Umoja Village deems necessary:

1. The Umoja Village will reconvene by subgroups of those individuals who initially developed the suggested actions per category. During this session or sessions, the subgroups will assess responses to determine if further clarification is needed or if follow up is required.
2. After all Umoja Village subgroups have performed assessments, the full Umoja Village family will convene to present their understanding of each category's responses so that the full group can receive a thorough examination of the plan's impact and scope and determine if additional clarification or follow up is needed in addition.
3. Representatives from the Umoja Village will be assigned to assist with tracking progress of committed actions from those who provided responses. Progress made will be communicated as deemed necessary.
4. Periodic update meetings will be scheduled with parties involved as deemed necessary.

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