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# City of Detroit

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**TO:** Detroit City Council

**FROM:** David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division

**RE:** **Applying to be appointed to the Reparations Task Force**

**DATE:** **July 7, 2022**

Council President Sheffield directed LPD to provide a document outlining a formal process for the general-public to apply to serve on the Reparations Task Force, including a timeline, qualifications that will be considered, and where people submit resumes for consideration.

This report will provide a summary of the process, addressing the above issues. An on line link for applicants to fill out to be considered is provided.

### Overview

A recent resolution passed by Council on July 5, 2022, described the process Council will follow to appoint the Reparations Task Force as follows:

“According to the results of the reparations task force survey, the qualifications of the individuals to serve on the task force should be considered:

### **Eligibility**

- Detroit Residents
- Required term of residency 6-10 years
- Membership is open to Non-African Americans

## Composition

The top 12 professions and disciplines selected for representation on the Task Force:

- Historian
- Legal
- Impacted resident
- Community/Grassroots
- Housing expert
- Social justice advocate
- Economist
- Senior Citizen
- Urban Planner
- Youth Representative
- Restorative Justice Advocate
- Clergy/Religion

WHEREAS The Reparations Task Force is established as a result of the overwhelming support received by the ballot initiative which garnered over 80% of the vote to help further exploration of the feasibility and ability of the City of Detroit to create processes, develop, and implement community reparations for mass historic unjust treatment of Detroit's majority Black population by making recommendations for housing and economic development programs that address historical discrimination against the Black community in Detroit; Now, therefore be it

RESOLVED That the Members of the Reparations Task Force shall be determined as follows:

The Task Force shall consist of thirteen (13) members, appointed as follows:

a. The City Council President shall appoint a Four-Member Executive Committee consisting of a chair and three (3) *ad hoc* working coordinators

b. Nine (9) Members at large shall be appointed by the City Council as follows: City Council Members may nominate two (2) additional members each. City Council shall conduct interviews in Council's Internal Operations Committee of the eighteen (18) or fewer nominees, exclusive of the executive committee members. The top nine (9) nominees shall be selected by vote of the City Council Committee of the Whole."

This referral then seeks to establish a formal process for individuals to proffer their names and qualifications as prospective members of the task force to be selected by the above process. LPD respectfully suggests that Council follow a process based on the way previous positions such as the Ombudsperson and Council Members to fill vacancies on your honorable body itself for the 9 members to be appointed by Council.

That is, a standardized application form will be made available through a link on the City's web site here: [Reparations Task Force Application Form](#). It will be available to the general public via this report, media and whatever additional public, organizational and individual communities who express interest in the task force. The dedicated link solely for this purpose will receive applications, which will be reviewed by LPD and forwarded to all Council Members for evaluation, nomination (or not) as appropriate in each individual case and confirmation if so determined by Council vote(s) as summarized above.

Specifically, the positions will be posted electronically on the City web site, on other web sites to be identified if necessary for wide distribution, and through the City's internal communication network. The Legislative Policy Division (LPD) will accept applications responsive to the postings, submitted to a dedicated email address, through a particular date (October 10, 2022) at 11:59 p.m.

Applications must be submitted electronically during the stated application period. Other applications, resumes or other materials received after the application period or through other channels will not be considered.

All persons seeking appointment may submit a cover letter and resume by the due date. An applicant may submit supporting documents. However, none are required.

LPD shall collect and screen the applications out only if they clearly fail to meet minimum criteria for membership on the task force as identified in the council resolution above. LPD shall then forward all qualified candidates' applications to City Council for action, along with a list of candidates who failed to meet the qualifications with the corresponding reasons for transparency.

Specific qualifications for the task force have been addressed in previous reports. Generally they would include the above-summarized historical, legal, financial and other experiences, training and skill sets listed in Council's July 5, 2022 resolution and needed to render a comprehensive report on behalf of Detroit regarding the weighty subject of reparations for slavery and structural, systemic racism.

Ultimately, the qualifications for serving on the Task Force are a matter for discretionary decision making by City Council Members who will appoint the task force.

Timelines are generally subject to reassessment and adjustment by Council and for purposes of full implementation, but to allow sufficient time to seek a well-qualified group LPD respectfully suggests the following:

1. Post and distribute the link and the application with appropriate general information and informational links within approximately 30 days, or by August 10, 2022;
2. Allow 60 days for applicants to put their names and qualifications forward, or by October 10, 2022; and
3. Allow another 60 days for Council to review applications, select 18 nominees, schedule and conduct interviews and vote for the Task Force members, or by December 10, 2022 (International Human Rights Day).

If shorter or longer time lines are desired by Council, they can of course be adjusted. Likewise, if Council wants the attached application form revised, LPD can do so upon request.