

Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis

Council Resolution No. 146-2021

Introduced: September 8, 2021

Auditor: Owen Clark

Fiscal Impact:

There is an anticipated fiscal impact of \$5,000 in annual costs associated with the purchase of a membership to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), which our Office confirmed aligns with the entity's membership fee schedule.

The Administration plans to use available appropriation authority in the County Administration's FY 2022 Operating Budget for this year's membership fee and to include the fee in future budgets.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to endorse the Howard County Executive's application for a County membership with GARE.

Other Comments:

The Howard County Racial Equity Task Force was created by the County Council in October 2020. The Task Force submitted a report to the County Council on August 2, 2021, that included the following:

We recommend the County Council pass legislation to allow the county to become a member of Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunity for all.

Intent

GARE membership would allow the county to receive technical assistance and research support in its equity work as well as join a professional peer-to-peer network that enables governments to exchange information, collaborate to advance their practice and develop solutions to racial equity practices.

Racial Equity Impact

Government institutions at the local, state and federal level have historically played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity from laws and policies on who could be a citizen, vote, own property and where one could live and so on. With the Civil Rights movement, laws and policies were passed to address explicit discrimination. Many current inequities are sustained by government laws and policies as well such as how schools are funded, zoning and land use

policy and more. GARE membership would boost county efforts to eliminate racial disparities and raise quality life for all.

Per the Administrator of the Office of Human Rights and Equity, this membership is intended to cover all County Departments, which excludes its component units (such as the Howard County Public School System, Howard County Library System, and Howard County Community College). If the County's component units are interested in a GARE membership, they would need to submit a separate application.