

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**PROCLAMATION NO. 2024-009**

Proclaiming February 2024 as “Black History and Futures Month” in Multnomah County, Oregon.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- A. Black History Month is observed every February throughout the United States to celebrate and recognize the vital role and contributions of Black and African Americans in our history and culture. Black History Month grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. It is a month to mark and celebrate the achievements of Black Americans. It is a time for recognizing Black Americans’ crucial role in our shared history - and the incredible sacrifices, chosen and unchosen, they made. Each February, we take stock of these cumulative efforts undertaken by Black people to help deliver on America’s promise of liberty and justice for all - efforts that continue today.
- B. In recent years, Black leaders and visionaries have led the movement to expand the purpose of this month - to celebrate Black Futures alongside Black History. Black Futures Month is a visionary, forward-looking celebration of Blackness in February. It is a time to honor Black history and it is also a time to imagine and commit to a world in which all people of African descent enjoy the rights, resources, and recognition to be a thriving, resilient, and connected community - a world in which we are *all* free.
- C. We join these two - Black History and Black Futures Month - in an example of “Sankofa,” a word and symbol from the Akan tribe in Ghana. Literally translated, Sankofa means “it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.” The symbol is based on a mythical bird with its feet firmly planted forward and its head turned backwards. Thus, the Akan believe the past guides the future - that our history gives wisdom for how we must progress. We believe as the Akans believe, that our present reflects our past and that we can repair historic and current wrongs to create a future where everyone and every community thrives.

- D. Multnomah County acknowledges the long history of personal, institutional and structural racism toward African Americans in the United States - racism that, despite some advances, persists across so many parts of our society today. The observance of Black History and Futures Month calls on us to confront this racism, to rectify the parts of our history that continue to shape who gets access to opportunity, and to build a society that lives up to the ideals to which our Constitution aspires. We recognize that a more just future requires rethinking, reimagining, reprogramming and evolving how we've structured our economies, our governments and our communities. We endeavor to do just that, while uplifting the dignity and power of Black people.
- E. In 2024, Multnomah County recognizes the importance of Black futures by centering racial equity in all of our priorities and decisions, and by continuing to invest in work that focus on the health, security, success and care of our Black residents through County programs including, but not limited to, REACH, Preschool for All, Healthy Birth Initiatives, The Multnomah Mother's Trust, and Black Cultural Advocates in our Libraries.
- F. We also acknowledge the incredible impact of Black art and Black culture on American life. Black art is interchanging, influential, and impactful. It has both allowed Black people to assert their individuality and united Black communities through cultural expression. It has been a source of resistance against American oppression, and a call to change. We honor the Black artists, the Black organizations, the Black cultural institutions, the Black futurists that are working to show us a better and more just tomorrow for Black and African American communities.
- G. Multnomah County honors the rich heritage, extraordinary legacies, and ongoing accomplishments of Black and African Americans and joins the chorus of other local, state and national leaders who celebrate Black and African American excellence and lift up the importance and power of Black and African American health, healing, justice and hope during this month. Moreover, we celebrate and recognize Black and African American communities not only this February, but 365 days a year.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaim:**

February 2024 as Black History Month and Black History and Futures Month in Multnomah County, Oregon

**ADOPTED this 22nd day of February, 2024.**



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

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Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:

JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

Submitted by: Commissioner Jesse Beason, District 2

**NOTE:**

The use of the plural *Futures* in the name of *Black Futures Month* is often interpreted as indicating the diversity of the Black experience and the many different opportunities and possibilities for Black people—as opposed to a single, monolithic vision for the future.