

PROCLAMATION

Juneteenth June 19, 2026

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced that enslaved African Americans were free, bringing long overdue enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation to a region where many people had been illegally held in bondage for more than two years after their freedom had been declared; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth stands as the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, marking the day when Union troops arrived in Texas and informed enslaved African Americans that they were free, ending a period during which, many had been illegally kept in bondage long after the Emancipation Proclamation had declared their freedom; and

WHEREAS, for generations, Juneteenth has served as a celebration of Black American freedom, family, culture, and achievement, commemorating the end of slavery and inspiring continued reflection on our nation's history and the ongoing pursuit of justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth also honors the immeasurable contributions of Black Americans whose labor, leadership, creativity, innovation, and advocacy have shaped this nation and continue to enrich and strengthen communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth provides an opportunity to educate present and future generations about slavery, emancipation, Reconstruction, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights in the United States, fostering a deeper understanding of the nation's history and its continuing impact on society; and

WHEREAS, learning about Juneteenth encourages meaningful dialogue, historical awareness, and civic engagement, helping communities recognize the importance of preserving historical truth while promoting mutual respect, equity, and belonging among people of all backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Oak Park recognizes its longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice, including its historic efforts toward integration, fair housing, and building a community where all residents are respected, welcomed, and empowered; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park unanimously voted to formally observe Juneteenth, affirming the Village's commitment to acknowledging historical truths while advancing equity and inclusion for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Oak Park's annual Juneteenth celebrations, including community flag raisings, educational programming, artistic performances, cookouts, youth engagement, and support for Black-owned businesses, continue to foster reflection, unity, cultural appreciation, and civic participation throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, local leaders, advocates, artists, educators, organizers, and community members, including residents such as Juanta Griffin, co-author of Oak Park's original Juneteenth proclamation, alongside more than a dozen residents who work tirelessly as the

Village’s Juneteenth Committee, with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and many community partners, have helped ensure that Juneteenth in Oak Park remains both a remembrance, celebration and a call to continued action; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Oak Park also recognizes national advocates such as Opal Lee, known as the “Grandmother of Juneteenth,” whose tireless work helped secure federal recognition of Juneteenth as a national holiday in 2021, inspiring communities nationwide to deepen their commitment to truth, healing, and justice; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth offers all people an opportunity to reflect upon the painful legacy of slavery, honor the perseverance of generations who fought for freedom and civil rights, and recommit ourselves to building a more equitable and inclusive society for all;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park, Illinois, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2026, as “**JUNETEENTH**”, in the Village of Oak Park and encourage all residents, businesses, schools, faith communities, and organizations to participate in activities and observances that celebrate Black history, culture, freedom, and the ongoing pursuit of justice and equality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Village of Oak Park reaffirms its commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging in all aspects of community life and governance.

DATED this _____ day of June 2026.

Vicki Scaman
Village President

ATTEST

Christina M. Waters
Village Clerk