



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 14, 2022

Contact: Kent County Welcome Plan Steering Committee
EM: Welcome@kentcountymi.gov

Kent County Welcome Plan Statement Regarding Death of Patrick Lyoya

The Welcome Plan for Kent County Steering Committee recognizes that our community, especially our Black, Immigrant and Refugee Communities, are impacted by the shooting of Patrick Lyoya on April 4. When critical incidents are seen through the eyes of language barriers, various cultural orientations, and trauma associated with a lifetime of fleeing violence or persecution, we recognize the importance of listening to the voices of New Americans to make our community feel safe for all. Over the past decades, West Michigan has become home to upwards of 5,000 Congolese individuals and families that sought refuge in a community that is safe. The Welcome Plan contains specific recommendations to build understanding and safety for New Americans and law enforcement and improve access to information and service when and prior to critical incidents that may take place.

The Welcome Plan Steering Committee members are committed to working in solidarity with our community to see the recommendations of the Welcome Plan carried out, ensuring West Michigan is a place that New Americans belong, where their voices and lives matter, and they will continue to call home. Join us as we work together to create a community environment with shared goals of inclusion and social cohesion, that maximizes the contributions of all residents, and gives community members the tools and policy they need to thrive. Please contact us at welcome@kentcountymi.gov or visit us at kentcountynewamericans.org to learn more and join the Welcome Plan efforts. Also, follow [Mental Health Clinicians of Color Grand Rapids](#), [Glimpse of Africa](#), and the [Black Impact Collaborative \(BIC\)](#) on Facebook who have additional resources and upcoming events for the community to process this tragedy.

###