

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

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DATE: May 10, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

SUBJECT: Update on the Office of Children and Family Policy and the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Belonging

At the April 15, 2021 (Item No. 8) Finance and Government Operations Committee (FGOC) meeting, Supervisor Chavez asked for an update on the status of the Office of Children and Family Policy, and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Belonging.

Office of Children and Family Policy

At the June 23, 2020 (Item No. 29) Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board approved a referral to Administration to evaluate and report back to the Board with options for consideration relating to the creation and funding of the Office of Children and Families Policy. At the August 25, 2020 (Item No. 27) Board of Supervisors meeting, the Administration provided a report back with staffing options as well information related to goals and objectives for the office. However, the County's response to the pandemic delayed the creation of potential positions and the Employee Services Agency is currently evaluating if appropriate job classifications exist or need to be created. Additionally, Deputy County Executive Rocio Luna was hired in late February, and this responsibility has been assigned to her along with oversight of the Division of Equity and Social Justice. She has begun the work of reviewing and cataloguing all services, programs, initiatives, budget investments, policies, and systems improvement efforts focused on children. She is also working to utilize existing resources allocated to the division until a leadership position can be created to lead and build the office. An off-agenda update will be provided to the Board once more information is received from the Employee Services Agency on the most appropriate classification and next steps. Once a position is added, an extensive recruitment process will be initiated to ensure a strong candidate pool to lead this office.

Office of Diversity, Equity, & Belonging

Staff in the Division of Equity and Social Justice (DESJ) joined forces with the Public Health Department's racial equity team in May 2019 to advance an equity framework Countywide

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including membership and participation in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). While the County's response to COVID-19 has delayed aspects of this work, the impacts of this disease on communities of color along with the unrest and hate incidences on the rise locally and across the Country, underscore the importance of creating a dedicated office to oversee the County's diversity and equity initiatives, programs, and policies. The Employee Services Agency is currently evaluating if appropriate job classifications exist or need to be created in order to lead this office. Additionally, this office will be supported by an expanded team in the Public Health Department made possible through a \$62 million grant allocation to expand and address COVID-19 response including addressing structural and systemic racial inequities that have exacerbated the impact of this disease in communities of color. This was approved by the Board of Supervisors at its meeting on May 4, 2021 (Item No. 41). Specifically, four positions that were added in the Public Health Department will be supporting the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging, and those include a Program Manager II, Health Planning Specialist III, Community Outreach Specialist, and Health Education Specialist. Together, staff in DESJ and Public Health, will accelerate the County's ability to apply a racial equity framework across its operations. This will include increased capacity to provide technical assistance, training, consulting, and coaching to Department staff and teams as they develop their workplans to advance this work.

In the absence of a formal countywide racial equity infrastructure, the County-wide Racial Equity Steering Committee, made up of representatives from various county offices, including Public Health and DESJ, developed and implemented a pilot training project to support departments that were ready to begin building the infrastructure and capacity to support racial equity work. The Race, Equity, and Leadership Cohorts (REAL) pilot builds on the Public Health's Racial & Health Equity Learning Institute and the participation of the Racial Equity Steering Committee in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) training series between 2016-2019. Initial commitment was expressed by Reentry and Probation, but participation extended to also include: Health and Hospital System, Pre-Trial, CEPA, and Social Services Agency, with over 150 county staff participants. Critical to the participation in REAL, each department needed to have commitment beyond training and an executive sponsor to support the teams throughout REAL and in the implementation of an Action Plan to operationalize Racial Equity.

From September-October 2020, the six REAL teams participate in a synthesized, weekly structured curriculum that focused on strategies to:

- **Normalize** conversations about race to build a shared understanding,
- **Operationalize** application of racial equity tools to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget to address the impacts of racial equity.
- **Organize** efforts to shift institutional culture and practice by implementing a county-wide racial equity strategy

The Racial Equity Steering Committee provided coaching and technical support to the REAL teams in the completion of their: Racial Equity Organizational Assessment Continuum, Racial Equity Narrative, Racial History of Santa Clara County.

Since the completion of REAL in October, the Steering Committee continues to provide support to the teams, and to date, two teams have developed racial equity action plans: Social Services and Reentry.

The REAL pilot highlighted the urgency, need, and readiness on behalf of county departments to govern for racial equity. It also amplified the critical need for a dedicated team and infrastructure within the County Executive's Office to have the desired reach, impact and scale to address the immediacy and the root causes of racial inequities that have been amplified by COVID and the racial unrest in communities of color.

Staff in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Belonging will help strengthen county and departmental programs, services, and policies to address racial inequities. The office is tasked with developing and implementing a countywide racial equity strategic plan which will include measurable goals, objectives, and performance measures to track, monitor and evaluate, and report on departmental and countywide racial equity efforts. A countywide baseline racial equity employee survey is planned for the fall, and an inventory of all county-sponsored racial equity trainings are currently being inventoried. Membership in GARE will include access to a network of over 300 government agencies working to advance equity, membership portal, webinars, trainings, tools, resources, a community of practice, and coaching for office staff who will facilitate and coordinate this work across the County.

cc: Chief Board Aides

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