

County of Santa Clara
Office of the County Executive



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DATE: July 16, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rocio Luna, Deputy County Executive DS
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SUBJECT: Update on the Equity Workplan

This off-agenda report provides the status of implementing the draft equity workplan presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 25, 2020 (Item No. 13). The County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the establishment of a formal equity countywide racial equity organization and operational infrastructure to implement the approved equity workplan. Nevertheless, the County-wide Racial Equity Steering Committee, made up of representatives from various county offices, including Public Health and the Division of Equity and Social Justice, provided leadership, coordination, technical assistance, and oversight for departmental and county-wide racial equity efforts over the past year.

The Equity Workplan utilizes the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) framework: Normalize, Organize and Operationalize, to advance racial equity efforts in the County.

- **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 following summary provides progress against each of these three categories in the workplan.

Phase I: Normalizing Conversations About Race: Training Pilot

The County-wide Racial Equity Steering Committee developed and implemented a training pilot 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 build 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

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series between 2016-2019. The 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. Each of these departments has sustained its commitment to this work.

From September-October 2020, the six REAL teams participated in a synthesized, weekly structured curriculum that focused on strategies to apply the concepts of normalize, operationalize, and organize, across the participating departments. With coaching and technical assistance, this work culminated in two departments, Social Services, and Reentry, developing specific and actionable equity workplans. Reentry Services, for example, is planning for roundtable discussions on education, employment, and social enterprises, and future discussions with local academics doing research on race and equity. In June 2021, the Public Defender's Office began their own journey by launching a REAL team and training program with support from the Public Health Racial & Health Equity team.

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 across the country.

Phase 2: Organize Efforts to Shift Institutional Culture and Practice: Examples

Upon completion of the REAL pilot, many of the participating departments began to systematically organize their efforts to advance racial equity. The Probation Department developed a Probation Racial Equity Team made up of four sub-committees, including Training, Communications, Policy & Practice and Data, to support their efforts in developing their own racial equity workplan. The Employee Services Agency created a departmental Racial Equity Team structure consisting of a Racial Equity Manager to coordinate the strategic plan for ESA, Department Champions to lead departmental racial equity teams, and Racial Equity Champions to implement racial equity action plans across its units. The Social Services Agency convened an advisory committee consisting of representatives from La Raza Roundtable, Black Leadership Kitchen Cabinet, NAACP, and ACAI, and South County to serve as advisors during the development and vetting of the Department of Family and Children's Services racial equity strategic plan.

Phase 3: Operationalize Racial Equity

Applying the GARE framework to everyday operations is ultimately intended to ensure that policies, services, programs, and initiatives are developed and implemented in ways that do not exacerbate institutional inequities that harm the very people we aim to help and support. Many Departments have begun the work of applying tools and concepts in several ways. A few examples include:

- The Hospitals and Clinics have begun to evaluate existing policies and data to assess the impact on racial equity across its many service lines.

- The Office of Budget and Analysis introduced and piloted the use of a budget equity tool during the FY20/21 budget cycle, and are in the process of adapting future implementation strategies based upon learnings from the pilot.
- Reentry engaged a cross-group of community members in the development of their racial equity workplan including the analysis of systemic inequities in the justice system, and partnership commitments to work on eliminating racial disparities.

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging

The Board approved the creation of the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer to lead the new office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging in its FY 21/22 budget. This new office will leverage work already underway to advance racial equity and support opportunities for all residents in the County. The Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer will work to develop a strategic approach to this work by developing a clear roadmap with measurable goals, objectives, and performance measures to track and monitor departmental and countywide racial equity efforts. This office will support departments through training, consultation with subject matter experts, coaching and mentorship, data support, and by leveraging the County's GARE membership resource portal for webinars, trainings, tools, and best practices in the field.

cc: Chief Board Aides

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