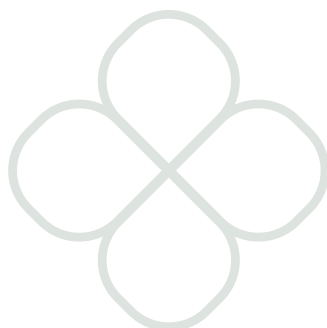


RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTRA COSTA OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



Office of Racial
Equity & Social
Justice

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY



DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to our beloved Contra Costa communities. To each and every person who participated in this community engagement process. Who participated by belief and trust, AND by ambivalence and uncertainty. Who took on and took in the necessity, vulnerability, and beauty of healthy struggle, risk-taking, mistake-making, and truth-telling.

This report, this process, this Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice belongs to us. May it affirm, reveal, heal, and remind us of our power.

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NOTE: Financial resources for the community engagement process and this report were procured through local philanthropic, not County, funds. This was an intentional strategy to ensure deep and broad community engagement. County funds would have tethered the process to the pace and deliverables of the system, not the pace of the community. Philanthropic resources enabled the time needed and deserved to gather, listen, inquire, and reveal a truer and fuller picture of what resources are needed for the ORESJ to achieve its intended aims. See Introduction (pp 11-12) for more information..



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that we are each residing on tribal lands of those who have lived on this land time immemorial.

We pay respects to their elders past and present.

Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today.

We recognize the resilience of those past and present, who work to build a strong and sovereign nation where Tribal members live their values and culture.

Text your zip code to **1 (907) 312-5085** to learn more about the tribal lands in your area.

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the labor of enslaved, kidnapped, displaced peoples, of immigrants of refugees, those who have been made undocumented, incarcerated, and stateless. We are indebted to all this labor that allows us all to be here today.

We remember that our country is built on the labor of enslaved people who were forced to the “Americas” from the African Continent.

We acknowledge the foundational, innumerable, and ever-present ways in which our culture, our economy, our nationhood is *‘made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and ascendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow.*

We acknowledge all labor, including voluntary, involuntary, and trafficked peoples who continue to serve within our labor force’. Dr. TJ Stewart

Visit the following links to learn more:

www.unpaidlabor.com

<https://diverseeducation.com/article/206161/>

HARM ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Core Committee acknowledges any and all harms that we caused, contributed to, and/or allowed in the process to get here, known or unknown. While intent can lend context, impact is what matters, always and especially in matters of justice. We apologize for harms of exclusion, extraction, tokenization, and/or undue distress that were enacted upon and/or felt by our community members in this process. We appreciate the grace and space for our missteps and mistakes. We stay committed to showing up, being, and doing rightfully and righteously as we continue this journey.

HOST TABLE AND LISTENING SESSION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to our Host Table and Listening Session partners:

- Alliance to End Abuse, Employment & Human Services Dept.*
 - Asian Pacific Environmental Network
 - Contra Costa Budget Justice Coalition
 - Contra Costa County County Administrator's Office*
 - Contra Costa County Family Justice Center
 - Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office*
 - Contra Costa Health Services*
 - Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance
 - Contra Costa County Office of Reentry and Justice*
 - Contra Costa County Risk Management Office*
 - District Attorney*
 - East Bay Agency for Children/Trauma Transformed
 - East Contra Costa Community Alliance
 - First 5 Contra Costa*
 - Healthy Richmond
 - Ijichi Perkins and Associates (Graphic Recording)
 - M3tagamers (Tech Team)
 - Multi-faith ACTION Coalition
 - NAACP - East County
 - NAACP- Richmond
 - NAMI Contra Costa
 - Pittsburg First Baptist Church
 - Reimagine Public Safety Contra Costa
 - Rubicon Programs
 - RYSE
 - Safe Return project
 - Stand Together Contra Costa, Contra Defender Association
 - Supervisor Gioia*
 - Supervisor Glover*
 - Village Community Resource Center
- *system partners

Thank you to our resident partners who held more than one listening session;

- Teki Flow
- Isabel Lara
- Katherine Lee
- Latrece Martin
- Patricia Perkins
- Andrea Rios
- Jose Rizo
- Sandy Saeturn

We apologize for omission of anyone. If you notice such, please contact Angela Irvine-Baker at airvine@cerespolicyresearch.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2021, a Host Table composed of BIPOC residents, the Board of Supervisors, and systems partners came together to develop and facilitate a Community Listening Campaign to inform the priorities and structure of the ORESJ.

A smaller group of leaders from the Host Table committed to leading the day-to-day work of planning, community engagement, and development of recommendations formed what became known as the Core Committee.

The Host Table and Core Committee were assigned three tasks: 1) Develop the final structure, roles, and responsibilities of the Office, 2) Develop a plan reflecting the community's priorities for the Office's work, and 3) Develop a plan to hold the Office transparently accountable to the public.

The recommendations that follow emerged from this robust and stepwise planning process.

USING A “TWO-HAT” MODEL

A number of organizations over time have held two core functions in equal regard. For ORESJ, this means holding internal county agency transformation and external community engagement as equal goals for our work. This office will aim:

1. To increase education, resources, and policies to address structural racism and its impact on community residents.

AND

2. To assess, support, and coordinate racial equity work within and across county agencies and departments.



OFFICE PRIORITIES FOR YEARS 1-3

The Core Committee developed a list of office priorities to accomplish these two conjoined goals. The initial list was presented to Community Café attendees for feedback. The draft priorities were then revised to incorporate community input and intensive reflection by Core Committee members, resulting in the following recommended scope of work.

During the first three years, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice should:

1. Establish an inter-departmental team across county departments. This group will assess and coordinate racial equity efforts across the county.
2. Set a safe, welcoming, and belonging culture in Contra Costa County. This should include:
 - Creating a mechanism to address individual and aggregate concerns/complaints
 - Fostering county agency cultures that promote equity, inclusion, and social justice
 - Finalizing the development and implementation of a Contra Costa countywide language equity plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by County departments. (See Appendix B for the history of the plan.)
 - Building capacity for youth leadership and engagement.
3. Build capacity to establish trust across race, ethnicity, income, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
4. Conduct a landscape analysis of racial (in)justice.
5. Review the extent to which County budget allocations are aligned with equity and social justice principles to address root causes of inequality.
6. Reviewing and promoting policies within county agencies that achieve equity, fairness, and opportunity for all.


SUMMARY OF CORE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Core Committee recommends that:

1. In the Office's first year, ORESJ shall hire the following positions:

- Two Co-Directors: one Director to focus on coordinating and expanding the equity work of County Departments and one Director to focus on working more directly with the community. An Equity Committee of the Board of Supervisors (the existing Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee will be expanded in scope and re-named the Equity Committee) will work with the County Administrator's Office to develop the hiring process for the two Co-Directors with meaningful community input. The Co-Directors will lead the efforts to form the ORESJ and hire the remaining staff.
- Language Equity Coordinator to finalize development and implementation of a Countywide Equity Language Plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by County departments.
- Reconciliation Coordinator to focus on strategies and actions to address historical harms and inequity
- Data Analyst
- Budget and Policy Analyst

2. The ORESJ shall be established as a separate County department that reports directly to the Board of Supervisors with regular oversight by the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee; the Equity Committee shall ensure that the ORESJ is effectively staffed and operated to achieve the objectives of the Office.



3. ORESJ will establish a central office, mobile offices, and four regional Racial Equity Zones to be implemented over three years.

4. Upon the hiring of the ORESJ Co-Directors, the ORESJ shall form an interdepartmental committee of representatives from each County department. This interdepartmental committee shall assess, support, and coordinate existing equity efforts across the County and develop a plan to expand this equity work in partnership with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors.

5. In order to create continuity within ORESJ governance, the CORE Committee shall serve as an advisory body to ORESJ until the office is fully phased into the Lived Experience Community Advisory Board (as described on page 36) in the office's second year.

6. The ORESJ will work with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee to develop a plan to implement the other recommendations in the CORE Committee Report.

INTRODUCTION

Contra Costa County is in the unceded Me-wok and Karkin territories.^{1,2} It is home to many social justice movement leaders, activists, and organizations. There is a rich history of organizing across multiple movements and generations. Contra Costa County is also home to an entrenched culture of white supremacy, including surveillance, under-resourcing, and exploitation of Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities.

This culture is too often felt, expressed, and allowed within and by County governance and departments.

The pandemic and racial reckoning of 2020 have exposed and amplified the insidiousness of white supremacy and racial inequity within our county's health, mental health, education, criminal legal, social service, child welfare, and other systems. These events have amplified both the resistance to and demand for transformation in our County systems.



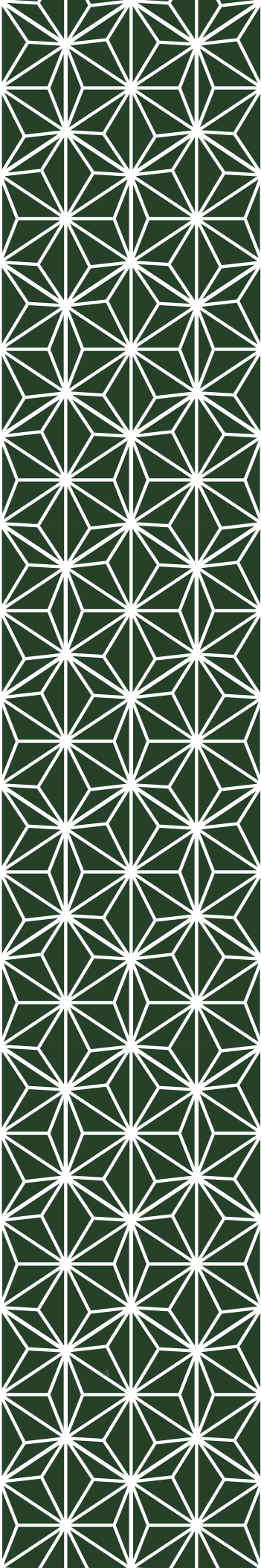
White supremacy is a belief system and ideology that (falsely and harmfully) positions white people and whiteness as dominant, superior, more worthy, and more precious than Black people, indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC). It is the ideology that drives enslavement, displacement, colonization, and extermination of BIPOC communities all over the world, including extremist threats and direct violence against BIPOC. It is the ideology by which the United States was founded and continues to pervade all our institutions and hallmarks as a nation. White supremacy creates conditions of harm, distress, disease, and dehumanization in which BIPOC bear the burden of health, social, and economic inequities compared to white people. At the same time, these burdens are constructed as individual choice, behavior, or circumstance, and invisibilized as conditions of oppression.

White supremacy manifests in organizational culture, systems, laws, written and unwritten policies, which are then activated as norms and standards. White supremacy and other aspects of racism are not always conscious, explicit, or readily visible. In fact, “many white people are unaware that this system exists, which is one of its successes.”³ White supremacy is pervasive in our Contra Costa County systems, institutions, and communities just as it is pervasive nationally and globally. The ORESJ community engagement process illuminates some of the ways in which white supremacy manifests in and is experienced by our communities.. The aim of the ORESJ is to connect, engage, listen, learn and unlearn - to dislodge the entrenchment of white supremacy so that we can transform and sustain a just and belonging Contra Costa County.

¹ This report has been prepared by the Core Committee of ORESJ that included the following people: Kimi Barnes, Solomon Belette, Donté Blue, Sonia Bustamante, Kanwarpal Dhaliwal, Teki Flow, Roxanne Carrillo Garza, Angela Irvine, Isabel Lara, Jen Leland, Kerby Lynch, Latrece Martin, Mariana Moore, Karen Perkins, Jose Rizo, Ali Saidi, Willie Robinson, and. Past members also include Victoria Adams, Gigi Crowder, and Susun Kim

² See <https://native-land.ca/> for more information.

³ See <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/system-of-white-supremacy-and-white-privilege>. Additional readings about white supremacy can be found at <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/06/a-reading-list-on-issues-of-race>



In November 2020, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors authorized the development of an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) that would be informed by and launched after a community engagement process. **The goal of the ORESJ is to enact and sustain principles, policies, practices, and investments that are racially just and equitable across all of its departments and divisions.**

Notably, Contra Costa County is the first jurisdiction to develop and launch an office through a community engagement process, not vice versa. Supervisors John Gioia and Federal Glover are leading and stewarding this initiative with the Board of Supervisors and County.

Additionally, financial resources for the community engagement process were procured through local philanthropic partners, not County funds. Though it may seem counter to the efforts and need for County investment and infrastructure, this was an intentional strategy to ensure deep and broad community engagement.

County funds would have tethered us to the pace and deliverables of the system, not the pace of the community. We leveraged philanthropic dollars so that we could take the time needed and deserved to gather, listen, inquire, and reveal a truer and fuller picture of what resources are needed for the ORESJ to achieve its intended aims.

Throughout this process, we have remembered and reminded ourselves and each other that public and philanthropic resources already belong to our communities. Our collective responsibility is to ensure just (re)distribution and allocation of all our resources, whichever coffers they sit in.

⁴ We thank the following funders who invested in the ORESJ Community Engagement Process: The CA Endowment, The Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation, Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, The East Bay Community Foundation, John Muir Community Benefits, John Muir Health Foundation, RCF Connects, Republic Services, San Francisco Foundation, YH Soda Foundation, Zellerbach Foundation

PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

At the onset of this process, a set of guiding principles and commitments were introduced to center mutual support and sustain accountability to honor the aims of the community engagement process. These principles and commitments were formulated through early conversations with a number of existing initiatives and organizations in Contra Costa County. Those conversations also voiced the need for a community engagement process to inform and guide the ORESJ.

PRINCIPLES

- We center the priorities and lived experiences of residents and families most vulnerable to systems' harm and inequity.
- We disrupt racism and injustice that exist in our institutions and systems.
- We center healing, justice and equity.
- We engage in healthy struggle so that we are accountable, innovative and creative.
- We learn and adapt through radical listening, inquiry and reflection.
- We advocate for resources through an equitable, humanizing and transparent process.
- We celebrate and appreciate.

COMMITMENTS

- We participate with awareness and attunement of all our selves, especially our racialized selves.
- We recognize that we are the systems and the systems are us.
- We commit to healthy struggle that meets people where we are with the expectation to move.
- We recognize some of us have not had to move, and some rarely get to slow down. We commit to righteous, reparative pace.
- We remember that vulnerability and discomfort are seeds of transformation.
- We remember that joy and celebration feed our freedom and liberation.

These principles and commitments have served as guideposts for the community engagement process, helping us stay focused on our aims, reflecting and revealing where we have work to do, and anchoring and affirming us in moments of uncertainty and instability. The ORESJ will carry these principles and commitments as a gift and guarantee toward a just and inclusive Contra Costa County.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS: BUILDING COMMUNITY, BUILDING POWER

The Community Engagement process is one of listening, witness-bearing, and reckoning.

It is in service to identifying, investing in, and implementing fundamental and foundational shifts in the ways in which Contra Costa County fully embodies and enacts just public service for ALL of its residents, and explicitly for its Black residents, Indigenous residents, and Communities of Color (BIPOC).

It is about culture shift and transformation, power shifting and power building. Process and relationships are the priorities. Structure and form reflect, respond, and adapt as needed to build and sustain culture.

We have made immense strides towards the bold outcomes of the Community Engagement process (see below). These strides have been made in light of and in spite of the ongoing and unjust conditions and acceleration of harm, violence, and distress our BIPOC communities are experiencing. We have work to do to maintain these strides and mobilize towards full actualization.



THIS IS THE WORK OF THE ORESJ.

WE STRIVE TOWARD:

1. Meaningful acknowledgment and understanding by County leaders, departments, organizations, and programs of the racial harms and burdens experienced by Contra Costa County's BIPOC residents and communities.

2. A more cohesive County ecosystem that is grounded in and responsive to the proximate experiences, priorities, and needs of its residents most burdened by racial inequity and social and economic marginalization.

3. A plan to launch the Contra Costa County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, which reflects resident priorities and expectations. Structure, staffing, resourcing, accountability, etc.

4. A more committed and collectivized base of County residents and efforts that can ensure accountability and transparency, and can mobilize, advocate, organize, and respond to emergent conditions and opportunities that support and protect racial equity and social justice.



The process involved multiple steps described below.

- In February 2021, a Host Table composed of BIPOC residents, the Board of Supervisors, and systems partners came together to develop and facilitate a Community Listening Campaign to inform the priorities and structure of the ORESJ.
- A smaller group of leaders from the Host Table committed to leading the day-to-day work of planning, community engagement, and development of recommendations formed what became known as the Core Committee. This committee includes BIPOC resident leaders and BIPOC-led organization representatives primarily. The Core Committee was organized into subcommittees focused on work streams such as project management, communications, and ongoing research and information gathering.
- The Host Table and Core Committee were assigned three tasks: 1) Develop the final structure, roles, and responsibilities of the Office, 2) Develop a plan reflecting the community's priorities for the Office's work, and 3) Develop a plan to hold the Office transparently accountable to the public.
- Host Table and Core Committee members led 40 listening sessions with more than 400 community residents and stakeholders. The Core Committee conducted a community survey that collected information from more than 2,600 people and convened five community cafés with 300 attendees to share the findings from the listening sessions and survey.

The findings and recommendations in this report emerged from this robust and stepwise community engagement process.





LISTENING SESSIONS

LISTENING SESSIONS METHODOLOGY

Host Table and Core Committee members held 40 listening sessions with over 400 participants. Each session was subsequently summarized in writing by the facilitators. Ceres Policy Research then reviewed facilitator notes and tracked common themes.

1. Ceres reviewed answers to two questions: *“How have you experienced racism in Contra Costa County?”* and *“What do you need now or in general from the ORESJ?”*
2. Answers were coded under the categories of “harms” and “needs”.
3. The most common harms identified came from the criminal and legal systems, the education system, and housing.⁵
4. The most common needs expressed were community engagement, advocacy, healing, food access and justice, youth development and engagement, reparations, and arts and culture.

⁵ In a few of the community cafes held in July 2022 where the survey findings were shared, some community members asked about the use of the term “harm”. Namely, folks shared that they felt unclear on what was meant by harm and expressed concern that omitting the specific types and incidents of harm renders it challenging for County departments and divisions to address and redress the harms. The coding category of harm was informed by the experiences shared in the Listening Sessions.



LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS

The Listening Sessions illuminated an immensity of distress alongside a keen desire and hope for the ORESJ's aims and work. Key learnings from the sessions are as follows:

- Listening deeply and actively is fundamental to change and transformation.
- The more we listen, the more we need to listen
- Our residents want and need the County leaders to listen.
- There is a lot of pain and distress that our communities feel and hold. Individuals don't feel safe.
- There is a fear of retribution for speaking out.
- We need more time to ensure we are connecting broadly and deeply.
- We have residents who are hopeful; many who are doubtful. All are looking to County leaders to change this narrative.

When the Ceres team analyzed the Listening Session information alongside the learnings, they recommended the implementation of a full community survey. This survey would build on the Listening Session findings and allow the Core Committee to connect specific opinions and experiences with harm and violence to demographic data such as race, sexual orientation, age, experience with houselessness, zip code, and supervisorial district.

During these sessions, we heard folks repeatedly share incidents, conditions, dynamics of distress (emotional and physical), exclusion, targeting, blaming, denial of services and resources, and direct violence by and in County systems and institutions. Also shared were the ways in which these harms impacted experiences of violence in their families and communities. The survey then delineated harm and violence. The level and extent of harm and violence experienced by survey respondents speaks to an endemic of harm that exists throughout and within the County ecosystem. The types of harm experienced are worthy of further inquiry and understanding but they do not and should not diminish the significance of these findings.


COUNTY-WIDE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Ceres organized a Core Committee Data Committee that reviewed the listening session findings and created a survey. This survey was intentionally worded to signal to community members that it was safe, to be honest about their experiences. For this reason, the answers we received from respondents provide invaluable insight into the experiences of people across the county. Specifically, the survey solicited the following information:

- **Demographics.** This section asked each respondent to share their age, city(ies) that they live and/ or work in, household income, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and whether they are a member of the following communities: people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, Muslim people, or houseless people.
- **Review of System Harms.** This section asked, “Have you ever been harmed by any of the following systems? We ask this to ensure the voices of those most harmed by systems are centered in solutions that the Office puts forth. (Check all that apply or describe in “other”).”

Respondents were given a list of thirteen government systems and asked whether they had been harmed. The systems were: Health System, Mental Health System, Education System, Early Education System, Adult Criminal/Legal/Justice System, Youth Criminal/Legal/Justice System, Social Service System, Housing, Employment Services, Child Welfare System, Planning and Land Use System, Election System, and Transportation System.

The survey allowed each person to self-define harm (see footnote 5). Notably, while the survey’s usage of “system” encompasses both city- and county-provided services, the majority of the systems (e.g., health, social services) are provided solely or primarily by county departments. In cases such as law enforcement, in which cities and the county both play significant roles, the county should focus on those services and harms within its purview and for which it bears accountability.

- 
- **Review of Exposure to Violence.** Respondents were asked, “Have you been impacted by violence?” They were given the following information to guide their answers to this section:

“This could mean family/intimate partner violence, community violence, and violence from the government. Violence from the government refers to feeling as if the government and systems in place do not care about your well-being. You do not have to be the direct victim of the violence. You could have witnessed it or been affected by violence perpetrated against a family member, friend, neighbor, etc.”

This section listed ten different forms of violence. Respondents were asked to share whether they had experienced any of the following: family violence, intimate partner violence, neighborhood violence, police violence, government violence, racial violence, anti-immigrant violence, homophobic/transphobic violence, gender-based violence, and economic violence.

- **Expectations of the ORESJ Office.** For the fourth section, the Data Committee turned priorities that emerged from the listening sessions into follow-up questions. This section listed the priorities identified from the listening sessions and asked each respondent whether they agreed or disagreed that each topic should be prioritized. Choices included Advocacy, Community Engagement, Educational System, Healing, Criminal and Legal Systems, Reparations, Youth Development and Engagement, Food Access and Justice, Arts and Culture, Housing and Houselessness.
- **ORESJ Office Structure.** A fifth section asked respondents where the Office should be located, who should staff the Office, and how to hold the Office accountable for its work.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The Core Committee collected 2655 surveys from the community. Ceres Policy Research compiled and analyzed the data. The findings are summarized below:

DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey respondents represented many different perspectives and county regions. The numbers below reflect the numbers of people in each group.

COUNTY REGION

WEST CONTRA COSTA	907
CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA	608
SOUTH CONTRA COSTA	502
EAST CONTRA COSTA	367

AGE

TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH	123
PEOPLE OVER 56	429

INCOME

UNDER THE POVERTY LINE	322
UNDER THE MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR THE COUNTY (\$107K)	2100

RACE/ETHNIC IDENTITY	
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN OR CENTRAL, EAST, SOUTH OR WEST AFRICAN	1009
WHITE ¹	612
LATINO/A/X/E	415
ASIAN	366
ARAB OR FROM THE MIDDLE EAST OR NORTH AFRICA (AN ADDITIONAL 105 PEOPLE ARE MUSLIM)	134
NATIVE AMERICAN/INDIGENOUS PEOPLE	50

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITIES	
WOMEN	1396
MEN	1115
NON-BINARY ¹	96
LGBTQ	240
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	180
EXPERIENCED HOUSELESSNESS	355
PEOPLE WHO REPORTED HAVING LIMITED ACCESS TO SERVICES DUE TO THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS*	746
DOMINANT LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH	69

This set of demographic data show that this community survey was groundbreaking. The ORESJ Core Committee was able to solicit feedback from the communities most impacted by social and racial injustices. Survey researchers often have the most difficulty reaching Black communities. For this survey, the largest number of respondents were Black or Central, East, South or West African. At the same time, we were able to reach people who are immigrants, LGBTQ+, houseless, and living with disabilities.

We used the different layers of respondents' identities to create a wheel of identities (see below). This wheel was developed to remind us that everyone has multiple identities that are connected. We returned to this when we explored harms and violence to see which communities were most impacted.



REPORTED SYSTEM HARMS

People across the county reported being harmed by all thirteen of the systems listed in the survey. An open-ended question allowed people to describe the harm that they experienced. The four most common forms of harm are reported below:

- 21% of respondents reported not having access or the resources to receive a service
- 19% reported racial discrimination
- 10% reported being physically or emotionally harmed
- 8% reported inadequate or poor treatment from the staff

Most of these systems are departments within county governance. We separated findings related to systems reporting to the Board of Supervisors from those that do not. Of the 2,655 respondents, people reported being harmed by:

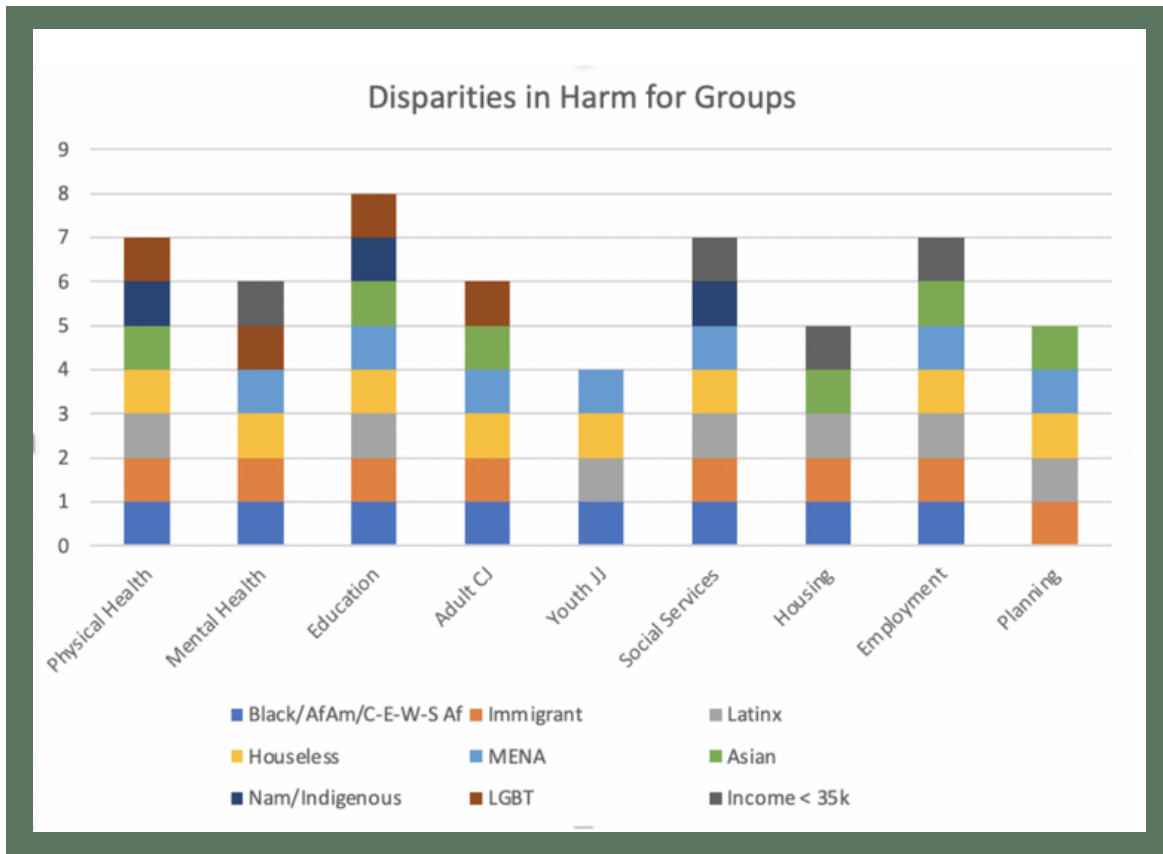
Systems that include agencies reporting to the Board of Supervisors

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	876
HEALTH SYSTEM	734
MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM	739
HOUSING	718
SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM	655
ADULT CRIMINAL/LEGAL/JUSTICE SYSTEM	593
YOUTH CRIMINAL/LEGAL/JUSTICE SYSTEM	490
CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM	431
PLANNING AND LAND USE SYSTEM	449
ELECTION SYSTEM	333

Systems that do NOT include agencies reporting to the Board of Supervisors

(GENERAL) EDUCATION SYSTEM	739
EARLY EDUCATION SYSTEM	400
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM	155

Ceres also explored which of the groups identified within the survey’s demographics section have experienced higher levels of harm than others. The following chart shows that many different groups experienced disparate levels of harm. Black and immigrant communities experienced disparate harm from the highest number of agencies.



REPORTED EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

People across the county reported being exposed to all ten forms of violence.⁶

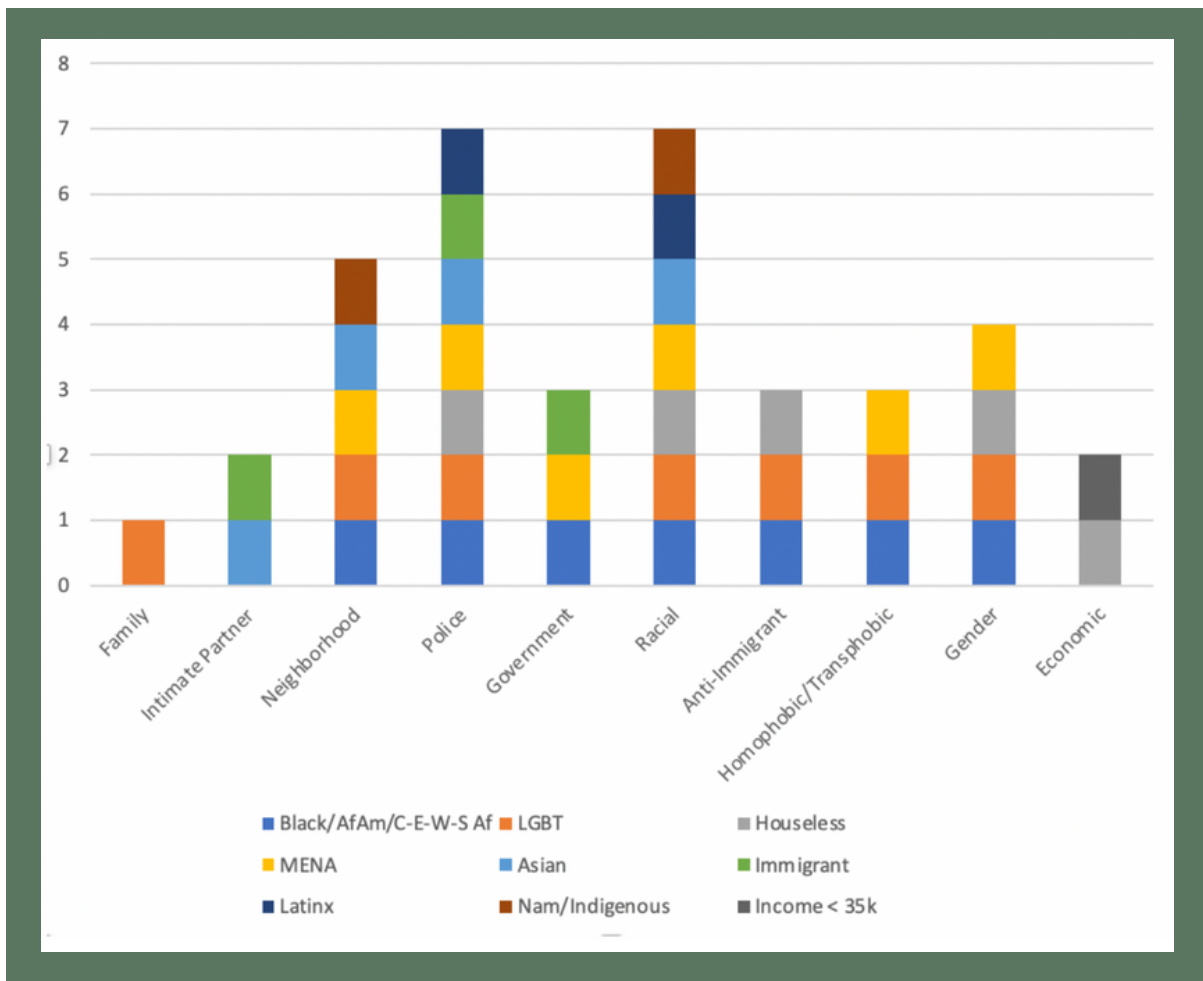
Of the 2,655 respondents:

People reported experiencing:

RACIAL VIOLENCE	1028
POLICE VIOLENCE	896
ANTI-IMMIGRANT VIOLENCE	754
NEIGHBORHOOD VIOLENCE	747
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	735
HOMOPHOBIC/TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE	609
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE	576
GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE	575
ECONOMIC VIOLENCE	504
FAMILY VIOLENCE	482

⁶The Data Subcommittee chose to differentiate each of these forms of violence. Once the Office begins identifying priorities for programming, these categories might be combined in different ways. Some organizations may want to combine gender-based violence and homophobic/transphobic violence. Some organizations may want to combine gender-based violence with intimate partner violence and family violence. Some organizations might want to combine racial violence with anti-immigrant violence.

Ceres also explored which groups identified within the survey’s demographics section were more likely to experience violence as compared with other groups. The following chart shows that many different groups are at higher risk of experiencing violence. Black and LGBTQ+ communities are at higher risk of experiencing the broadest range of violence.



OFFICE PRIORITIES

The survey asked whether priorities that were raised in focus groups were also priorities for people responding to the survey.

How should the Office do its work?

- Community Engagement: 1,301 people
- Advocacy: 1,019 people

Harms

- Criminal and Legal System: 1,262 people
- Education System: 1,097 people

Needs

- Healing: 1142 people
- Food Access and Justice: 1142 people
- Youth Development and Engagement: 980 people
- Reparations: 886 people
- Housing: 838 people
- Arts and Culture: 573 people

OFFICE STRUCTURE

The survey also provided important information about how community members would like to see the Office structured and staffed. These results are combined with the section on Office Structure and Staffing below.



REFLECTIONS AND FEEDBACK



After collecting the survey data, the Core Committee reflected on the findings, solicited additional community feedback, and completed intensive research and organizing to prepare for the final presentation to the Board of Supervisors. Activities included subcommittee meetings, Core Committee retreats, and community cafés.

CORE SUBCOMMITTEES

At the outset of its work, the Core Committee created a governance structure that included multiple subcommittees, including:

Project Management: The Project Management subcommittee met bi-weekly to prepare agendas for the full Core Committee meetings, which also convened bi-weekly.

Data Subcommittee: The Data Subcommittee designed, distributed, and analyzed the survey findings.

Office Structure Research Subcommittee: The Office Structure Research Subcommittee conducted extensive background research on dozens of racial equity offices across the country. They conducted interviews with staff members in these offices and sought to identify a model that could utilize government funding sources while also addressing community concerns and skepticism. They were seeking a model that could engender trust from people who reported harm from county agencies.⁷

Community Engagement Subcommittee: The Community Engagement Subcommittee met to develop strategies to engage residents from across the county in developing and vetting the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Office's structure and priorities.

⁷ For information about the full range of offices across the country, contact Dr. Kerby Lynch at klynch@cerespolicyresearch.com.

COMMUNITY CAFÉS

In July 2022, the Core Committee sponsored five separate community cafés for Contra Costa residents. Four of the cafés were organized regionally: west, south, central, and east. An additional café was held for leaders of community-based organizations across the county.

These events were each two and a half hours long. They were facilitated by multiple Core Committee members and Ceres staff. Following language justice principles, they were simultaneously translated into American Sign Language and Spanish.

At each session, presenters reviewed the purpose of the planning process, key tasks, our core principles, and survey findings relevant to each region. The survey findings were followed by an opportunity for participants to share reflections. Preliminary drafts of the office structure and priorities for the first three years were shared, and participants were encouraged to provide feedback.

CORE COMMITTEE RETREATS

The intensive work completed by Core Subcommittees, along with the reflections and feedback from the community cafés, were compiled and discussed at two Core Committee retreats. These retreats allowed participants to hone collective recommendations for Office priorities over the first three years, an Office staffing plan, and a proposed model for the Office's structure.

The following conclusions and recommendations emerged from the ideas and wisdom synthesized in the subcommittee meetings, community cafés, and Core Committee retreats.



USING A “TWO-HAT” MODEL

A number of organizations over time have held two core functions in equal regard. For ORESJ, this means holding internal county agency transformation and external community engagement as equal goals for our work. This office will aim:

1. To increase education, resources, and policies to address structural racism and its impact on community residents.

AND

2. To assess, support, and coordinate racial equity work within and across county agencies and departments.

OFFICE PRIORITIES FOR YEARS 1-3

The Core Committee developed a list of office priorities to accomplish these two conjoined goals. The initial list was presented to Community Café attendees for feedback. The draft priorities were then revised to incorporate community input and intensive reflection by Core Committee members, resulting in the following recommended scope of work.

During the first three years, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice should:

1. Establish an inter-departmental team across county departments. This group will assess and coordinate racial equity and social justice efforts across the county.

2. Set a safe, welcoming, and belonging culture in Contra Costa County. This should include:

- Creating a mechanism to address individual and aggregate concerns/complaints
- Fostering county agency cultures that promote equity, inclusion, and social justice
- Finalizing the development and implementation of a Contra Costa countywide language equity plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by County departments. (See Appendix C for the history of the plan.)
- Building capacity for youth leadership and engagement.



3. Build capacity to establish trust across race, ethnicity, income, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This should include:

- Creating a data dashboard, populated with our community survey results, that can track and aggregate data on community requests, complaints, and trends.
- Facilitating ongoing conversations with community members about our survey results.
- Building data infrastructure

4. Conduct a landscape analysis of racial (in)justice. This should include:

- Completing a racial justice audit across county departments.
- Forming “learning labs” for members of the Board of Supervisors and department heads and staff.
- Launching a Contra Costa Racial Equity report card that includes aggregated information about community needs and complaints.

5. Review the extent to which County budget allocations are aligned with equity and social justice principles to address root causes of inequity.

This should include:

- Working with the Budget Justice Coalition to initiate a participatory budget process that might be initially funded through ARPA dollars.

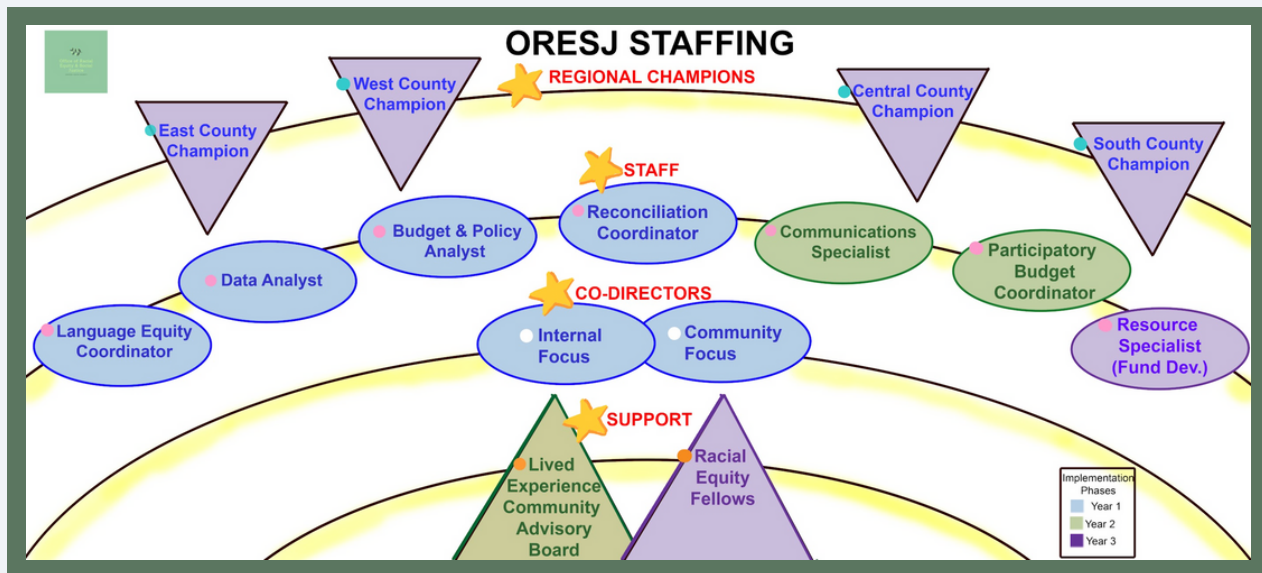
6. Reviewing and promoting policies within county agencies that achieve equity, fairness, and opportunity for all.

OFFICE STAFFING

The community survey asked respondents about the composition of Office staff. The majority expressed a desire to staff the Office with community members. 48.2% of respondents voiced this preference over 31.9% of respondents who preferred county employees and 16.7% who favored appointees.

The Core Committee recommends that ORESJ build a staff that includes 13 full-time positions and two advisory boards by the end of the third year. This staff size is comparable to other Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) offices. Multnomah County in Oregon (pop. 810,000) has a staff of 7 people. King County in Washington (pop. 2.25 million) has a staff of 19 people. Sonoma County (pop. 406,800) has a staff of five people.

The illustration below provides an organizational chart. The illustration is color-coded to reflect how the Core Committee expects to see the staff built over the three- year period.



YEAR ONE

The positions that should be filled in the first year include:

- Two Office Co-Directors: One director coordinating with county departments and one director working with the community.
- A Reconciliation Coordinator
- A Language Equity Coordinator
- A Data Analyst
- A Budget and Policy Analyst

The two Co-Directors shall be hired first. They will then lead the formation of the office and the hiring of additional staff.

YEAR TWO

ORESJ shall hire a Communications Specialist and a Participatory Budget Coordinator.

Additionally, the ORESJ shall create a Lived Experience Community Advisory Board, composed of 20 residents who have been directly impacted by system harms, with four representatives from each county region. These positions would include permanent seats for people representing faith, education, labor, and youth perspectives. This Board is a key pivot in centering community direction and oversight. It is vital that community members—particularly those impacted by system harms and varied forms of marginalization—anchor, author, and authorize the work of this Office. In order to ensure that the Lived Experience Community Advisory Board empowers residents to drive change in internal county culture, we recommend adopting the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership model developed by Rosa Gonzalez & Facilitating Power, which is being utilized, demonstrated, and embraced by the City of Richmond’s Race Equity Team as well as by the Healthy Contra Costa initiative (see Appendix C).

The Core Committee envisions that its members will serve as an advisory board through the first year, after which time that role will transition to the Lived Experience Community Advisory Board. Membership would be rotated until the new board reflects the recommended range across regions and community sectors.

YEAR THREE

ORESJ shall create four Racial Equity Zones (REZ) in the third year. These zones will respectively represent the west, south, central, and east regions of the county. In order to staff these Zones, ORESJ will hire four regional champions, one for each Zone. The Core Committee envisions that these Zones will function like Rhode Island’s Health Equity Zones. The Zones will liaise with the Board of Supervisors yet operate as independent entities. They will serve a strategic role in implementing ORESJ policies and priorities. They will also solicit pushback and feedback from community members within their respective regions in order to improve community services and outcomes. Finally, each Racial Equity Champion will act as an ombudsperson responsible for fielding complaints about county agencies from community members.

ORESJ shall also create a Racial Equity fellowship program for university students who can aid the Office with ongoing research and evaluation. These fellows will be chosen from impacted communities and will create an employment pipeline into policy research.

PHASED STAFFING BUDGET

Based on our research, staff should be hired at the following salary levels.

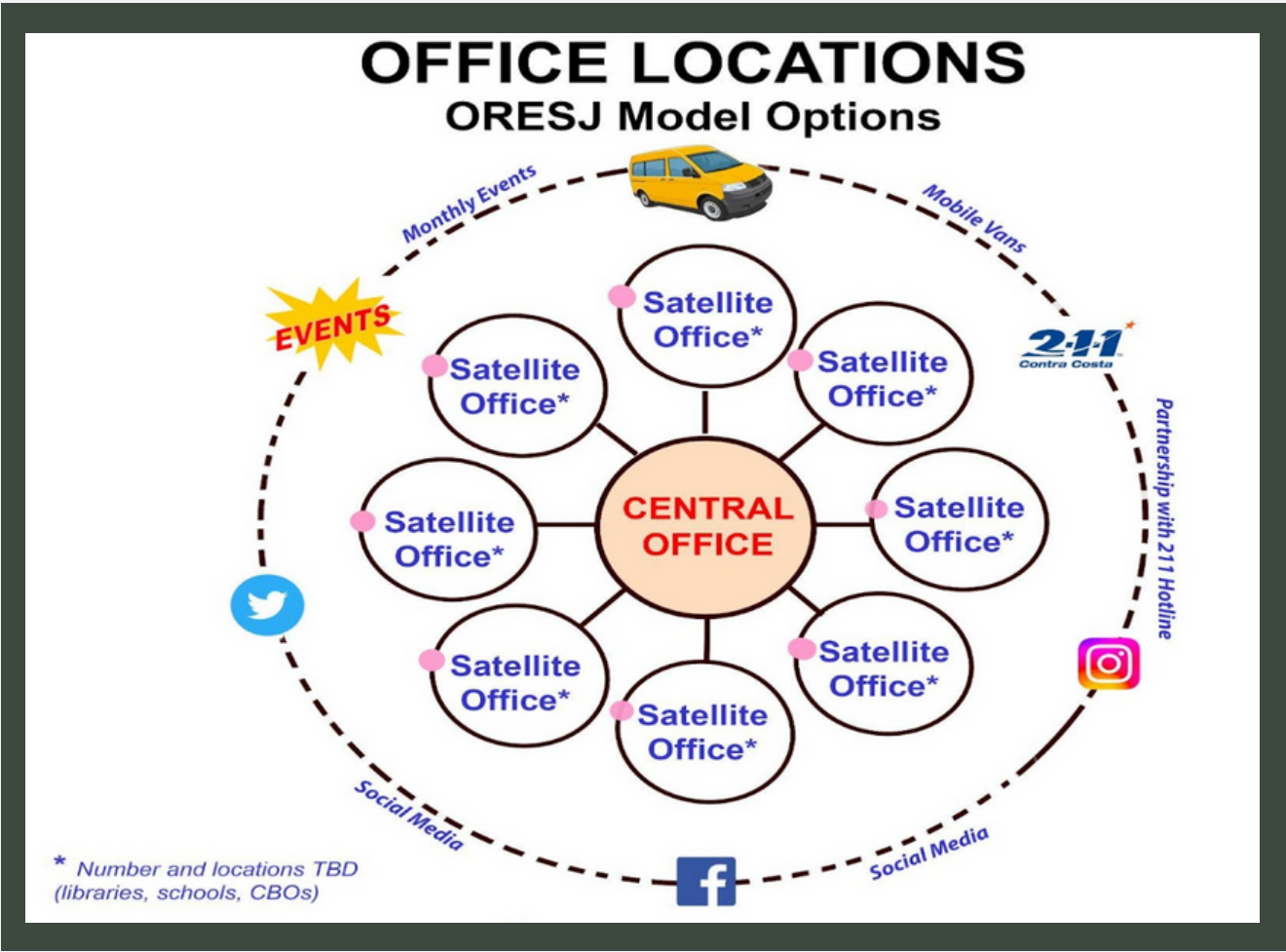
POSITION	Min	Max	Code
CO-DIRECTOR (INTERNAL COUNTY FOCUS)	197,000	240,000	NAA1
CO-DIRECTOR (COMMUNITY FOCUS)	197,000	240,000	NAA1
RECONCILIATION COORDINATOR	119,000	145,000	7AGB
LANGUAGE EQUITY COORDINATOR	119,000	145,000	7AGB
DATA ANALYST	77,000	120,000	ADVB
BUDGET AND POLICY ANALYST	77,000	120,000	ADVB
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	119,000	145,000	7AGB
PARTICIPATORY BUDGET COORDINATOR	119,000	145,000	7AGB
RESOURCE SPECIALIST (FUND DEVELOPMENT)	128,000	164,000	7BFA
RACIAL EQUITY CHAMPION (WEST)	128,000	164,000	7BFA
RACIAL EQUITY CHAMPION (SOUTH)	128,000	164,000	7BFA
RACIAL EQUITY CHAMPION (CENTRAL)	128,000	164,000	7BFA
RACIAL EQUITY CHAMPION (EAST)	128,000	164,000	7BFAI

OFFICE STRUCTURE

Based on our survey results, community members have split opinions about where the Office should be located. 39.6% of respondents would like to see offices established within their supervisorial districts, 28.7% would like to see a central office, and 12.9% would like to see mobile offices.

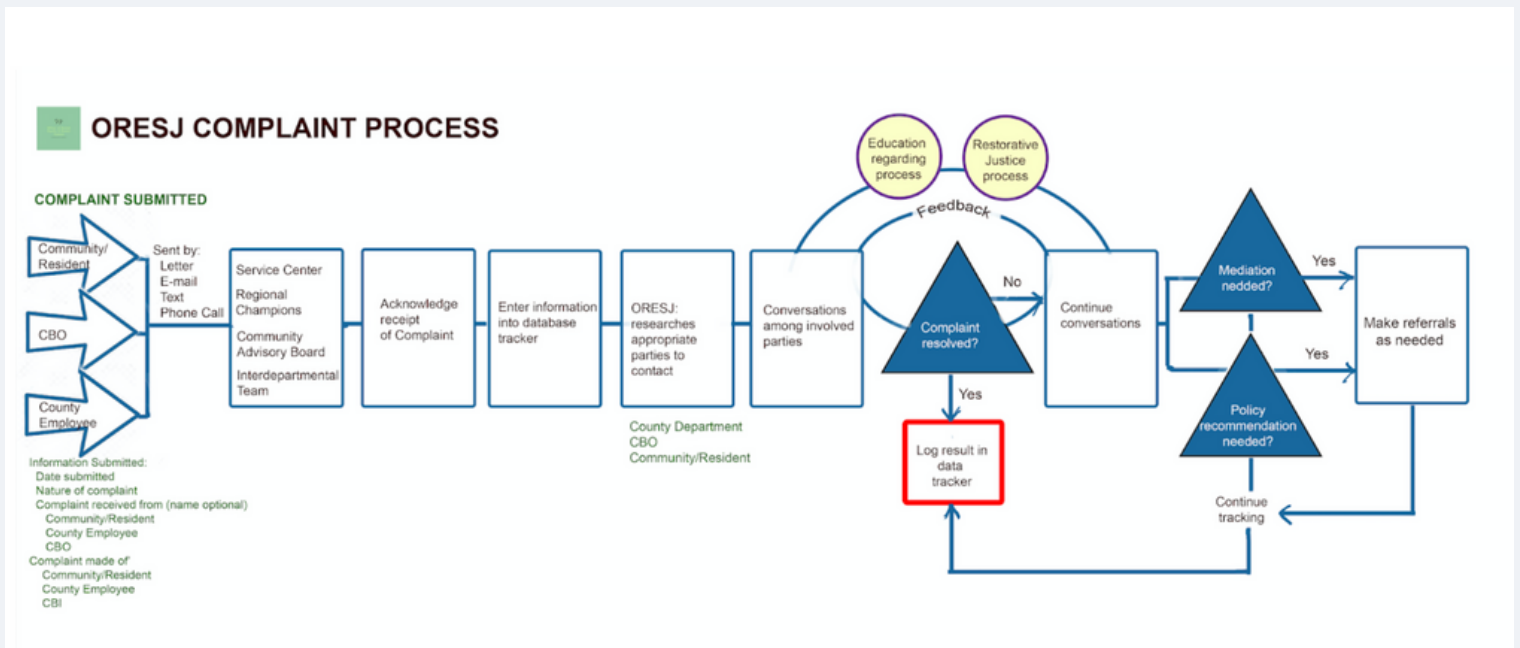
In response to this input, the ORESJ recommends establishing a central office, with community outreach efforts achieved through:

- A mobile van
- Satellite office hours at libraries, schools, and partner Community-Based Organization's
- Monthly community events
- Social media and communications pipelines
- Partnership with the county's 211 Hotline



ORESJ COMPLAINT PROCESS

Establishing a process to receive and act upon community complaints represents one of the most critical tasks for the Office’s first year. Community members who attended ORESJ listening sessions, answered the survey, and attended community cafés identified developing a robust new complaint process—one they can trust—as a top priority. A preliminary plan for this process is provided below. The ORESJ Co-Directors should review this plan, subsequently share it at a public meeting to solicit feedback from community members, and implement it as soon as possible.



SUMMARY OF CORE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Core Committee recommends that:

1. In the Office's first year, ORESJ shall hire the following positions:

- Two Co-Directors: one Director to focus on coordinating and expanding the equity work of County Departments and one Director to focus on working more directly with the community. An Equity Committee of the Board of Supervisors (the existing Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee will be expanded in scope and re-named the Equity Committee) will work with the County Administrator's Office to develop the hiring process for the two Co-Directors with meaningful community input. The Co-Directors will lead the efforts to form the ORESJ and hire the remaining staff.
- Language Equity Coordinator to finalize development and implementation of a Countywide Equity Language Plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by County departments.
- Reconciliation Coordinator to focus on strategies and actions to address historical harms and inequity
- Data Analyst
- Budget and Policy Analyst

2. The ORESJ shall be established as a separate County department that reports directly to the Board of Supervisors with regular oversight by the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee; the Equity Committee shall ensure that the ORESJ is effectively staffed and operated to achieve the objectives of the Office.



3. ORESJ will establish a central office, mobile offices, and four regional Racial Equity Zones to be implemented over three years.

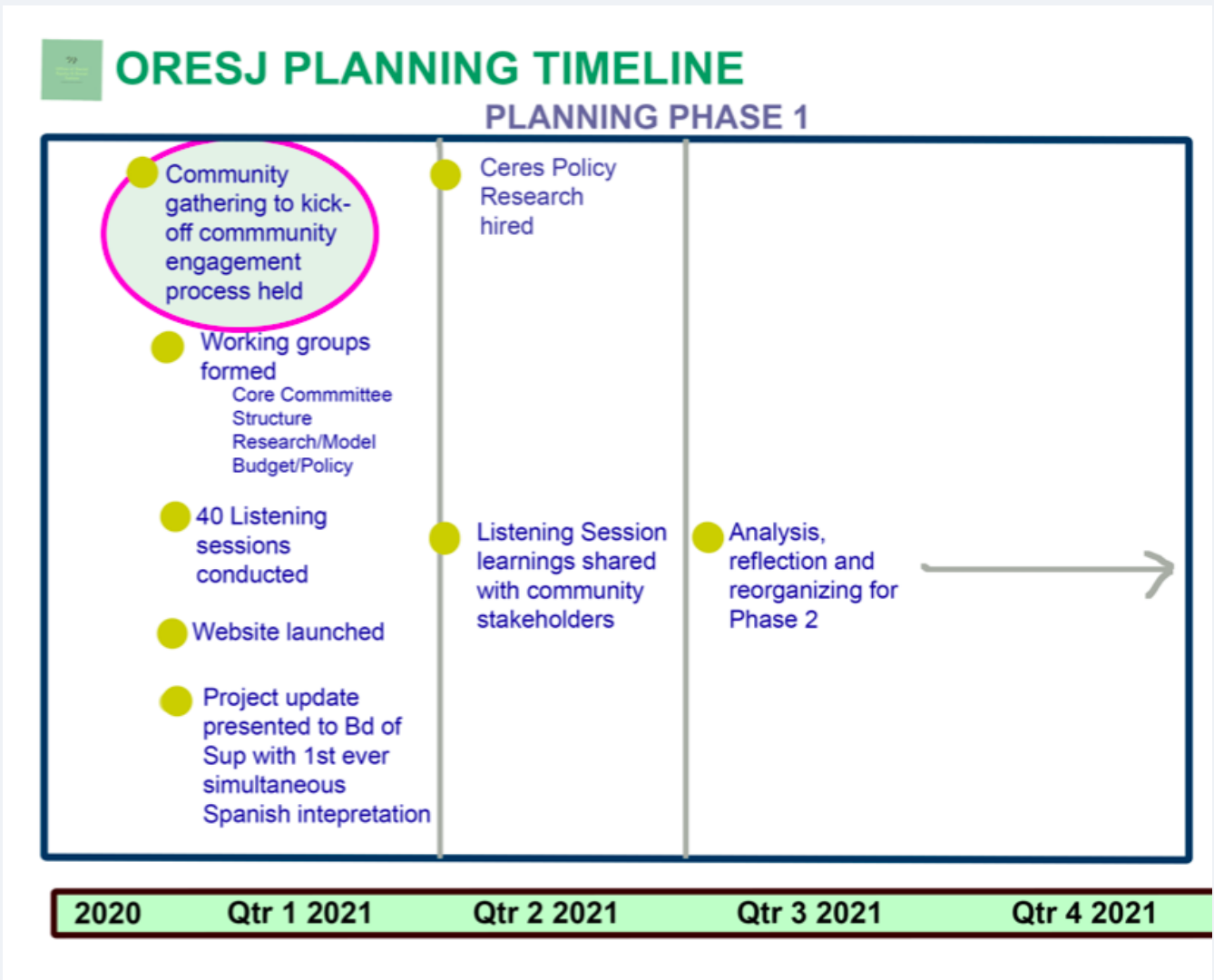
4. Upon the hiring of the ORESJ Co-Directors, the ORESJ shall form an interdepartmental committee of representatives from each County department. This interdepartmental committee shall assess, support, and coordinate existing equity efforts across the County and develop a plan to expand this equity work in partnership with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors.

5. In order to create continuity within ORESJ governance, the CORE Committee shall serve as an advisory body to ORESJ until the office is fully phased into the Lived Experience Community Advisory Board (as described on page 36) in the office's second year.

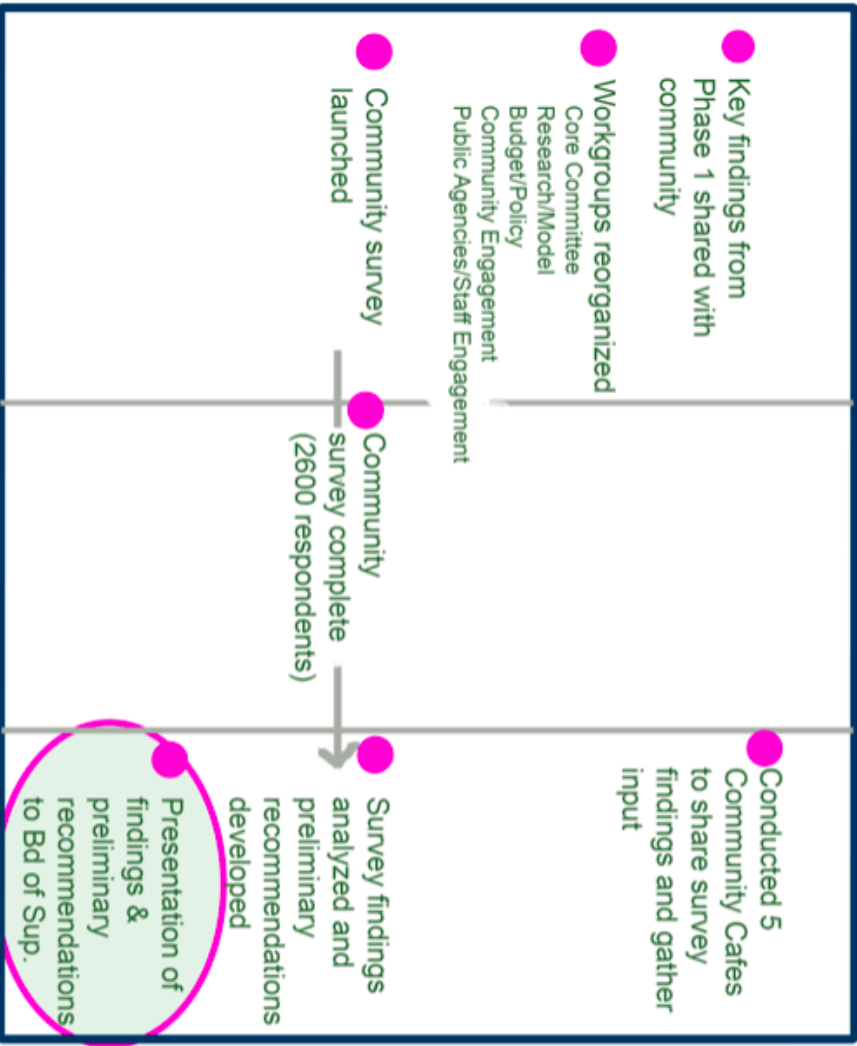
6. The ORESJ will work with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee to develop a plan to implement the other recommendations in the CORE Committee Report.

APPENDIX A

PLANNING TIMELINE



PLANNING PHASE 2



YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION

- As Year 1 implementation begins, Core Committee:
 - Continues supporting stewarding the office launch
 - Continues in its role, and adapts as needed, as an accountability entity
 - Synergizes and integrates its efforts with other existing initiatives and coalitions

Qtr 1 2022

Qtr 2 2022

Qtr 3 2022

Qtr 4 2022 and Beyond

APPENDIX B

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN JUNE 2021

The following recommendations were presented to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021 by the Core Committee.

In order to achieve a more just County, the Core Committee recommended that the supervisors:

- Work with the Host Table to support and attend Listening Sessions for residents in your Districts.
 - Launch language interpretation at all Board of Supervisors Meetings and Commission meetings (the choice of languages should be Census threshold languages).
 - Establish land and labor acknowledgments at all Board of Supervisors and Commission meetings.
 - Establish a Reparations Task Force to study and make proposals for Reparations for African Americans in Contra Costa County.
 - Commission a research study into the historical and contemporary impacts and costs of racism in Contra Costa County.
 - Research study should include the Board of Supervisors, Board of Supervisors staff, and Department/Division Heads participating in education on the racial harms of the areas and sectors of work the County oversees, including health systems, criminal legal/justice systems, law enforcement, child welfare, social services, behavioral health, early childhood education, elections, planning and land use, and transportation.
 - Work with the Host Table to research and learn from models and approaches in other jurisdictions.
-

APPENDIX C

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN HISTORY

Contra Costa County has a population of approximately 1.1 million residents and ranks among the most diverse counties in the United States. Among residents over 5 years old, 37% speak a language other than English at home. Contra Costa County is committed to being a welcoming county to all people, and to demonstrating cultural competence in providing access to all county programs.

The objective of this Countywide Language Equity Plan (CLEP) is to ensure that current and prospective residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from the menu of services offered by County agencies.

Contra Costa County is committed to delivering quality services to Contra Costa County residents in their preferred language, regardless of their ability to communicate in English. All County agencies shall provide language services as needed to ensure that people with a language preference other than English have meaningful and equitable access to County services and civic participation. A County agency is defined as any County-governed department or entity that is organized and funded by the County of Contra Costa, including but not limited to all County departments and offices, and County Administration.

In November 2020, The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors authorized the development of an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) that would launch after being informed by a thorough community engagement process. ORESJ's goal is to enact and sustain principles, policies, practices, and investments that are racially just and equitable across all County departments and divisions.

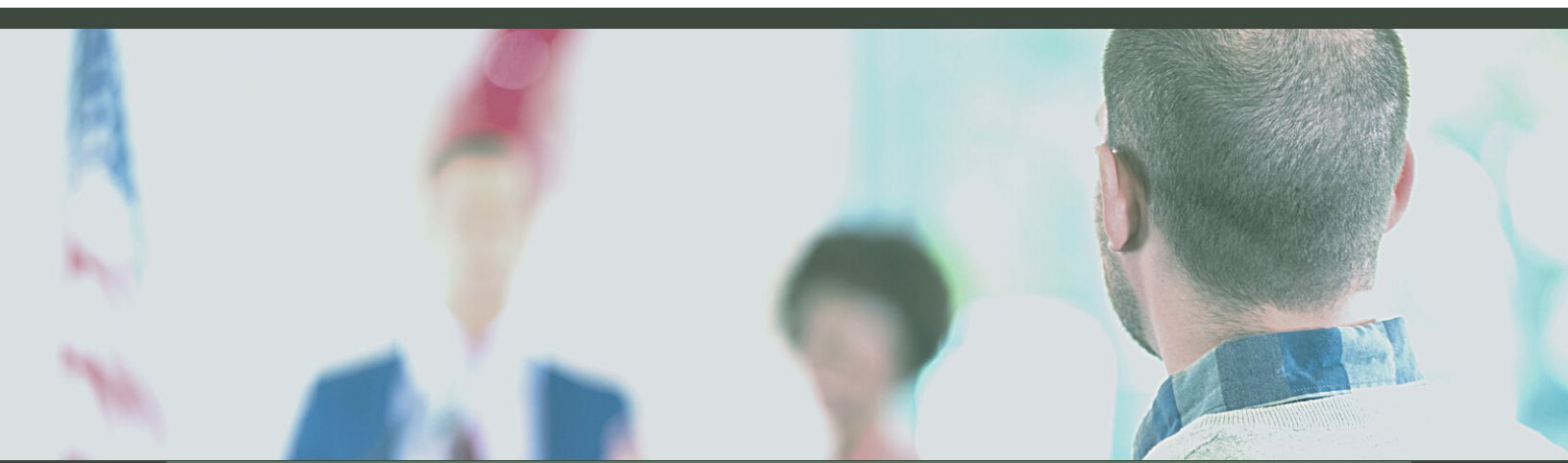
Also in November 2020, Contra Costa County was awarded the Gateways for Growth technical assistance grant to write a Contra Costa County Welcoming Plan for Immigrant Inclusion and to create a draft Contra Costa County Language Access Plan. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors assigned County staff to complete the work of the grant between January and December 2021. The Board of Supervisors published initial versions of the Welcoming plan and Draft Language Access Plan in December 2021.

After the conclusion of the Gateways for Growth grant program, the work of revision and implementation of a Countywide Language Equity Plan (CLEP) was integrated into the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice community planning process, as the ORESJ will hold responsibility for the implementation, evaluation, and stewardship of this Countywide Language Equity Plan (CLEP). This plan integrates the work of the Gateways for Growth process with the model recently adopted by the City of Los Angeles in their FY22-24 Citywide Language Access Plan (see https://bit.ly/oresj_final_19oct2022 for the October 2022 draft of the plan).

One of the defining markers of Contra Costa County's diversity is the number of languages spoken in the County. This presents both benefits and challenges in promoting and advancing the economic, cultural, social, and political well-being of multilingual immigrant and refugee communities, as well as deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing communities.

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English, are herein referred to as persons with Language Preference Other than English (LPOE). Contra Costa County commits to strengthening language access & equity to ensure the full inclusion and belonging of our LPOE communities representing languages from all over the world. In order to achieve this objective, a robust language equity program is necessary to ensure that the County implements best practices and processes to provide meaningful and equitable access to all County programs and services.

Language Access and Language Equity Plans are designed to create uniformity in the provision of meaningful access and equity at a Countywide level and to provide guidance to County departments in creating or updating their individualized Department Language Equity Plan (DLEP), as well as in designing future budget requests to ensure compliance with the Countywide Language Equity Plan.



APPENDIX D

LOCAL EXAMPLE OF UTILIZATION OF THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY:

THE CITY OF RICHMOND'S WORKSHOP AND RESIDENT AMBASSADORS OF THE RACE EQUITY TEAM

In October 2020, the City of Richmond's Race Equity Team (also known as the GARE team) and Healthy Contra Costa (formerly known as Healthy Richmond) hosted a half-day virtual workshop facilitated by Rose Gonzalez of Facilitating Power, who developed the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership in partnership with multiple communities advancing racial equity through centering resident voice and power. The purpose of the workshop was to create a space for collaborative learning and capacity building to promote equitable community engagement and fair outcomes for all Richmond residents, by centering on historically marginalized groups impacted by structural racism. The workshop was attended by more than 60 participants representing a diverse array of stakeholder types, including community-based organizations, various departments of the City of Richmond, Contra Costa Health Services, West Contra Costa Unified School District, and resident leaders.

Based on the workshop, the general community highlighted many **barriers to authentic participation** due to **limiting practices, beliefs/bias/racism, information & training, language, technology & transportation, political power, and the dominant economic paradigm.**

Despite these challenges, in order to overcome the identified barriers and improve the cultural practices, and change/build institutions or systems, the community also brainstormed ideas, actions, & next steps. Their recommendations included themes related to cultivation of equitable housing opportunities, enhancement of the community equity profile, assessment and improvement of diversity in Boards & Commissions, utilization of a racial equity tool to determine local budgets, application of a racial equity lens to improve hiring and human resources practices, development of a framework for equitable community engagement, and establishment of practices for equitable policy development and racial equity departments in each major jurisdiction.

In particular, as part of the ideas under “establishment of practices for equitable policy development & racial equity departments in each major jurisdiction,” one of the statements highlighted the need to “Build on the Y-PLAN model; we have a relationship with students, it will create agency in their school, education, etc. Don’t wait for students to engage because it will translate beyond their schools.” In another idea under “development of a framework for equitable community engagement”, highlighted the need to have “programs that facilitate pathways to decision making” and to have “capacity training and compensation for time and voice. And acknowledge their work. Give residents credit.” Recently, the City of Richmond articulated the foundations to start building on these recommendations by allowing residents to engage and take action at their monthly Race Equity Team meetings.

In August 2021, in order to pipeline and train Y-PLAN and Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP) alumni into the City of Richmond’s (CoR) Race Equity Team Resident Ambassador Program, Healthy Contra Costa and LEAP launched the Y-PLAN Bridge Program, a one-week training series with 1.5-hour daily sessions. During these sessions, facilitators shared practical tools and conceptual knowledge to help participants understand how their positions as resident ambassadors and visions of equity in its all forms (health, racial, housing, etc.) are associated with institutional/systems change, the political landscape, policy advocacy, and community power.

After the completion of the program, in September 2021, resident ambassadors were able to finally join the monthly City Race Equity Team meetings. Resident Ambassadors, Healthy Contra Costa, and partners from LEAP (Literacy Program Manager who worked closely with the resident ambassadors during their participation in LEAP and the Y-PLAN Adult Projects) and Advance Peace (a former staff member of the City of Richmond and devoted Race Equity Team member) were learning and engaging in discussions related to the City of Richmond's Race Equity Action Plan (REAP). To summarize, the REAP is focused on fixing or telling the city how to fix its practices and processes in a way that benefits the community in an actionable and equitable way. It is a guide or instrument used to promote and embrace race and equity in all its forms. There are 4 goals to the REAP and each goal has a set of community indicators, outcomes/actions, timeline, accountability, performance measures, progress, participant priority ratings, and council values.

In order to influence this plan, resident ambassadors have been meeting frequently with Healthy Contra Costa and their Economic Justice Action Team partners to receive support and guidance, and to strategize on improving practices related to community engagement, so that the Richmond community is aware that resident ambassadors and the Race Equity Team exists and that resident voices should be embedded in the plan. An idea from the group was to host monthly virtual "community buzz" cafes on race equity, starting in January 2022, where the team of resident ambassadors and partners plan and facilitate discussions with community members by unpacking the goals and their respective actions. Based on what was heard from the community, the team will synthesize the responses from the cafes and create recommendations to inform the REAP and overall policies and practices of the local jurisdiction system.

In addition to influencing the REAP, resident ambassadors have built individual and collective power. Through speaking their truths and receiving authentic acknowledgment from city staff regarding their new positions as resident ambassadors, they have been able to expand their sphere of influences and connections to those who can advance their previous advocacy and equity efforts in areas of interest and passion. In particular, resident ambassadors also participated in research and accountability meetings with the City of Richmond's Planning Division staff, who hold a major level of responsibility in integrating the recommendations (intended to improve resources, meaningful community engagement, cleanliness, communication, safety, community spaces, 'rent-to-own' programs, etc.) from the Final Policy Brief Y-PLAN Adult Project for the Nystrom Village Housing Project 2019 into the Request for Proposals of the future Nystrom redevelopment. Resident ambassadors have also been able to advance their interests to prioritize the well-being of Nystrom residents and others who may be facing housing issues by meeting, sharing recommendations, and posing questions to other relevant decision-makers and stakeholders such as the Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services and Project Managers of the Community Benefits Policy Development.

Strong values and positive outcomes have emerged all over the state of California when community members are centered and empowered in decision-making spaces. In a recent study titled "People Power for Public Health" by the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN), based on findings from a statewide survey (n=913), county listening sessions (5 counties, n=416), and community leader interviews (n=12), the report stated, "CPEHN's racial equity analyses of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) spending by counties demonstrated that robust community engagement was positively associated with just funding allocations. A key tenet of People Power for Public Health is the need for a just allocation of governmental spending at the local and statewide levels to communities of color. This is needed to help communities recover not only from the pandemic but also the systemic racism and disinvestment that have harmed the health and economic well-being of these communities...A Just Allocation means INCREASED AND CONTINUOUS INVESTMENT in historically/currently disinvested communities and the organizations that serve these communities, DECREASED INVESTMENT IN SYSTEMS THAT ARE HARMFUL AND VIOLENT towards marginalized communities, (and) PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES that meaningfully include communities in shaping their local budgets" (CPEHN, 2022).



It is possible to strengthen and transform our local democracies by inviting, centering, supporting, incentivizing, and sustaining community members to be meaningfully involved and engaged at the tables of decision-making. When creating a base of residents to advance these efforts, robust outreach, recruitment, and training must take place, and an internal system of care must be cultivated to respond to, vent about, and heal from the traumas imposed by systems and structural racism. This facilitates relationship and trust-building between the community and their local jurisdiction. Improving the current windows of opportunity and increasing the number of opportunities for community members to be meaningfully engaged and take part in civic leadership will also significantly amplify community power and system accountability in an equitable manner. Residents are the ones directly impacted by the decisions, practices, policies, programs, and culture of our institutions and systems, systems which have historically and to this day exclude many of those who face cumulative burdens and come from marginalized backgrounds. In order to improve residents' quality of life, well-being, and living environment and advance equity for all of our community members, we need to center and empower the most impacted residents and create new spaces and improve current spaces for them to directly be part of and lead decision-making. This work to create pathways to resident decision making is relevant to ORESJ, Reimagine Safety CC, Budget Justice Coalition, and other initiatives.

Acknowledgment: Thank you to Dante Angel Miguel, Roxanne Carrillo-Garza, Abigail Sims-Evelyn, Trina Jackson-Lincoln, and Johann Fragd for authoring this case study and providing a local model for the entire county to learn from.

RELEVANT SOURCES:

City of Richmond Workshop Evaluation 2020

https://docs.google.com/document/d/14NM3QZdwkAsn_XYpNXIlgSiTFI66dvaOZ/edit#heading=h.tyjcwt

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

<https://movementstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Spectrum-of-Community-Engagement-to-Ownership.pdf>

Nystrom Village Housing Project 2019

<https://dl.airtable.com/.attachments/2e9d157b29ea4ed967d6138bb5bbcd11/4c3effa0/FinalPolicyBriefY-PLANAdultProject-NystromFall2019.pdf>

Community Benefits Policy Development

<https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4126/Community-Benefits-Policy-Development>

California Pan Ethnic Health Network People Power for Public Health August 2022

<https://cpehn.org/assets/uploads/2022/08/CPEHN.PeoplePowerForPublicHealthReport-FINAL.pdf>

- “CPEHN’s racial equity analyses of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) spending by counties demonstrated that robust community engagement was positively associated with just funding allocations (CPEHN, 2022). A key tenet of People Power for Public Health is the need for a just allocation of governmental spending at the local and statewide level to communities of color. This is needed to help communities recover not only from the pandemic but also the systemic racism and disinvestment that have harmed the health and economic wellbeing of these communities. In addition, we recommend statewide accountability measures to ensure that county budget allocations are responsive to community needs and that community members are involved in funding allocation decisions.”
 - “A just allocation means...
 - INCREASED AND CONTINUOUS INVESTMENT in historically/currently disinvested communities and the organizations that serve these communities
 - DECREASED INVESTMENT IN SYSTEMS THAT ARE HARMFUL AND VIOLENT towards marginalized communities
 - PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES that meaningfully include communities in shaping their local budgets.”
-