



July 26th, 2022

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Receive and File a Presentation and Annual Report Regarding the County Executive Office, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Recommendations:

Receive and file a presentation and annual report regarding the FY21-22 efforts of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Office of DEI), including the newly formed Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group and Healthcare Equity Advisory Council.

Discussion

The County Office of DEI, Diversity Equity & Inclusion Council leadership and cochair of the Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group and the Healthcare Equity Advisory Council will present an update regarding the FY 2021-22 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts and the formation and progress of these two advisory groups resulting from the adopted Board of Supervisors Resolution 20-126 Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis on November 20, 2020.

Background

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted Resolution 20-126 on November 20, 2022, Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis. The resolution and its implementation reinforce the diversity, equity, and inclusive work initiated by the County in 2017 and are integral to fostering and promoting racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to our community. The County chooses to lead with race but is not exclusively focused on race. This framework extends to additional equity issues, including sexual orientation, gender, and ability.

The Groundwork for the DEI Office & DEI Council (2015-2021)

- 2015: The BOS adopted a Health in All Policies framework to ensure County leaders and decision-makers have the tools they need to view all decisions through a health equity lens.
- 2017-2020: Implemented a mandatory Employee Cultural Competency Training and Mentorship Program
- 2018: Created a DEI Library on the County's Intranet as a staff resource
- 2020: Hosted public and employee forums regarding race and law enforcement
- 2020: Adopted a Board Resolution declaring Racism a public health crisis

- 2021: Recruited & hired a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer, and the DEI Office was established. DEI Office grows to 2.5 full-time equivalent employees
- 2021: Transitioned the DEI Task Force to an ongoing DEI Council in which all agencies and departments are represented

Following the hiring of the DEI Officer, the DEI Office was established within the County Executive Office. The DEI Office serves to advance DEI goals across the County government through collaboration, policy change, inclusive engagement, and capacity building.

The DEI Office is focusing on the following:

- Advance racial equity in all aspects of County operations
- Develop and oversee county-wide and agency/department level DEI Action Plans
- Provide guidance, education, and technical assistance to all departments/agencies as they develop sustainable methods to build DEI capacity and long-term sustainability
- Work to resolve issues rooted in bias and discrimination through research, education, and partnerships
- Build community partnerships and alliances to promote equity and inclusion within Ventura County and throughout the region to achieve equitable outcomes for all

In July 2021, Ventura County joined the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. The County has adopted a framework centered around the Government Alliance on Race and Equity's framework of normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing racial equity.

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, the DEI Office in collaboration with the DEI Council and DEI Leadership Accountability Team implemented the following:

- Hosted Race Dialogues called "Talking Together in Challenging Times" throughout County agencies and departments. These facilitated conversations created space for employees to reflect, share their experiences, and listen to colleagues about the impact of race and racial equity.
- Offered Foundations of DEI Learning Series on the history of race and racial inequity in Ventura County. The focus was to build the capacity to normalize the conversation around DEI and Racial Equity.
- Implemented a DEI calendar to honor and celebrate various identities, races, ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds of traditionally underrepresented communities. The goal is to develop, nurture, and sustain an equitable community and workforce where all individuals can thrive.

As part of last year's effort, the following DEI leadership groups were formally established to sustain DEI efforts throughout the County.

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council
Formed in 2017, the DEI Council (formerly the DEI Taskforce) is building momentum to advance equity with agency representatives at all levels of the organization. The DEI Council meets monthly and provides recommendations to County leadership on policies, programs, and initiatives, while also serving as a link between all County of Ventura Agencies and the community.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Accountability Team (DEI LAT)
Formed in 2021, the DEI LAT sets overall direction and oversight for DEI efforts in

collaboration with the DEI Council and the Office of DEI. This team consists of six directors and the DEI Officer serving as liaison to the CEO. Its role is to serve as the sponsor of DEI efforts & to hold leadership accountable for integrating DEI efforts throughout the County.

- Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group (PSREAG)
Formed in 2021, PSREAG fosters communication and identifies public concerns related to policing. The committee membership is comprised of community group representatives and law enforcement representatives.
- Healthcare Equity Advisory Council (HEAC)
Formed in 2021, HEAC brings together representatives of county agencies and the community to enhance DEI within our healthcare services.

The County of Ventura continues to be committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion with intention, and emphasizing racial equity and intersectionality by focusing on operations, policies, and procedures to ensure equal access to services for every resident who needs them. Ventura County will continue to put racial equity at the center of our operations, policies, and partnerships by having a long-term commitment to address institutional and systemic issues inherited in policies, practices, and procedures that disproportionately impact/burden People of Color in Ventura County.

This Board letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office. For additional information, please contact the DEI Officer, Phin Xaypangna at phin.xaypangna@ventura.org or countydei@ventura.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Phin Xaypangna".

Phin Xaypangna
Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sevet Johnson".

Dr. Sevet Johnson
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Attachment:
Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Annual Report FY21-22