



# **COUNTY** *of* **VENTURA**

County Executive Office  
Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Report

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# MESSAGE FROM DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION OFFICER



**Phin Xaypangna**

When I began my tenure as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer in January 2021, I collaborated with the DEI Council and County Executive Leadership to develop an ambitious multi-year work plan.

During this last year, the County has been leaning into DEI work and experiencing tremendous growth in this area. We raised awareness of the importance of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) necessary to improve outcomes, shift culture, and advance inclusive and equitable programs, practices, and procedures.

Working collaboratively with the DEI Council and DEI Leadership Accountability Team, we increased the internal capacity to normalize race and racial equity conversations.

As I reflect on our accomplishments, I am extremely proud of the following: hiring two passionate and experienced staff to lead the work to normalize the conversations around race; restructuring the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council with representation from every department and agency to help bring to life the goals in the Ventura County Board of Supervisors' resolution declaring racism a public health crisis; forming the Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group and the Healthcare Equity Advisory Council; and drafting the DEI component for integrating into the County Strategic Plan.

We 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.

We continue 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.

As we look back on our accomplishments, we must also look forward to a future where equity is possible, and inequities and disparities no longer exist. We must understand our role as government is to do our part to ensure one's identity will no longer predict one's outcome. Advancing racial equity is everyone's job.

The following report highlights some of our most memorable accomplishments over the past year, accomplishments that demonstrate our county's commitment to a more inclusive and equitable workplace and community.

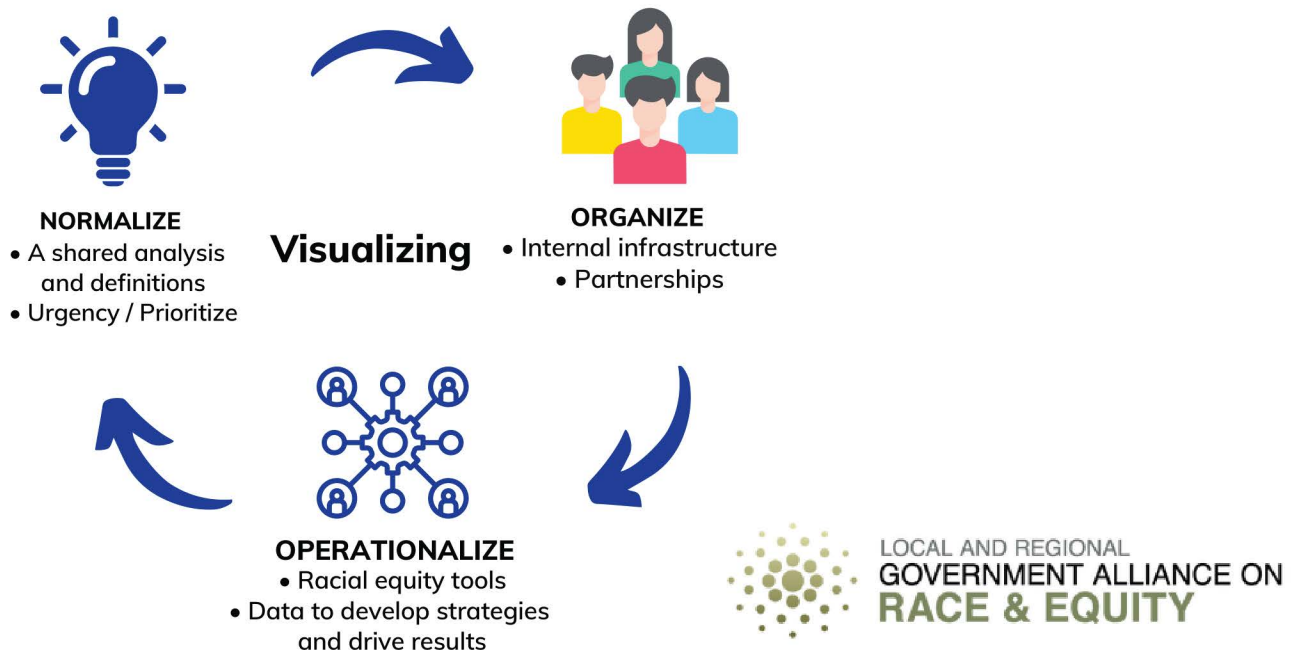
Sincerely,  
Phin Xaypangna  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

# GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE AND EQUITY MODEL

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted a resolution on November 10, 2020, which declared racism 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.

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.

To advance racial equity, employees must normalize racial equity as a key value and have a clear understanding and shared definitions. The County of Ventura must operationalize equity via new policies and transform the underlying culture of government. Finally, we must organize, internally and externally, through partnerships with other institutions and the community.



As the County moves forward with our equity efforts, we must continue to lead with these principles:

- Fix systems (Policies, Practices, and Procedures) and not people
- Create racially equitable solutions that benefit all, targeting those most burdened by inequities and disparities
- Ensure that solutions are grounded in and emerge from the lived experiences of communities of color, by engaging leaders of color who are accountable to those communities
- Commit to collecting race/ethnicity data and use it to track and target the greatest needs
- Set measurable, results-based equity goals with specific attention to racial impacts

**The County of Ventura is committed to developing, nurturing, and sustaining an equitable community and workforce where all individuals can thrive.**

# OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

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

Our 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 in order to achieve equitable outcomes for all



**Phin Xaypangna**

## **Phin Xaypangna, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer**

Phin brings over 20 years of experience in public administration and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Before joining the County of Ventura, Phin served as the Equity and Inclusion Manager for the County of Mecklenburg in Charlotte, North Carolina, a County with more than 6,000 employees and more than one million residents. Phin leads the County's efforts in developing diversity, equity, and inclusion measures, programs, and policies.



**Kate English**

## **Kate English, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Manager**

In 2021, Kate joined the DEI Office with a 17-year history of community leadership in racial and social justice work in Ventura County. Kate is an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and farm working communities of the Santa Clara Valley. Her experience includes non-profit leadership, program development, group facilitation, human resources, and community organizing. Kate has deep connections with various communities and many community-based organizations throughout Ventura County.



**Steven T. Auclair**

## **Steven T. Auclair, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Coordinator**

Steven is active throughout Ventura County, serving as a Commissioner on the Citizens Advisory Commission for the City of Port Hueneme and many local community organizations. Before joining the DEI team in 2021, Steven worked in DEI-related areas across the public, private, and non-profit sectors, most recently, working with the State Assembly. Steven has been recognized for his work in staff development, organizational culture reform, and leadership in diverse communities.

# TALKING TOGETHER IN CHALLENGING TIMES

## RACE DIALOGUE

Building on the Employee Racial Justice Town Halls during the Summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd and the Board of Supervisors' declaration of racism as a public health emergency in Ventura County, the DEI Office, in partnership with the DEI Council, facilitated a series of in-person and virtual dialogues about race and racial equity with County staff.

These "Talking Together in Challenging Times" conversations created a space for employees to reflect, share feelings and experiences, and listen to their colleagues.

All agencies were invited to participate in the series, and 18 of 25 agencies participated, including two agency and department directors' sessions. Nearly 500 employees participated in the series during the Summer and Fall of 2021. These employees represented a broad cross-section of over 10,000 county employees.

Multiple agencies have continued to request race dialogue sessions. In alignment with the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, the Office of DEI is developing an updated version of race dialogues to implement in 2022-23 in order to continue to promote open and constructive discussions.



**30** DIALOGUE SESSIONS  
HELD  
IN-PERSON AND  
VIRTUALLY



**493**

EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATED  
ACROSS COUNTY AGENCIES  
AND DEPARTMENTS

**96%**

STRONGLY AGREE OR AGREE

"I HAVE GAINED INSIGHTS FROM MY PEERS."

**"The environment felt open, and it was nice to have everyone feel comfortable sharing their stories." ~Staff**

### Participating Departments and Agencies

- Area Agency on Aging
- Agricultural Commissioner
- Airports
- Animal Services
- Assessor
- Auditor/Controller
- Human Services Agency
- Health Care Agency
- HCA-Behavioral Health
- HCA-Ventura County Medical Center
- HCA- VC Public Health
- Child Support Services
- Fire Department
- Harbor Department
- General Services Agency
- Information Technology Services Dept.
- Probation Agency
- Public Defender
- Public Works Agency
- Resource Management Agency
- VC Library

# FOUNDATIONS OF DEI LEARNING SERIES

 <p><b>MAKING THE CASE FOR DEI &amp; LEADING WITH RACE</b> Jan 26th, 2 - 4 pm Phin Xaypangna &amp; Kate English</p>	 <p><b>ARE WE ALL BIAS?</b> Feb 23rd, 2 - 4 pm Sahar Andrade</p>
 <p><b>LOCAL HISTORY: STRATEGIES OF SEGREGATION</b> March 30th, 2-4 pm Dr. David G. García</p>	 <p><b>CHICANO/A HISTORY IN VENTURA COUNTY PAST AND PRESENT</b> Apr 27th, 2 - 4 pm Dr. Frank Barajas</p>
 <p><b>UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURAL RACISM</b> May 25th, 2 - 4 pm Dr. Michael Benitez Jr.</p>	 <p><b>AFFIRMING TRANS &amp; NONBINARY PEOPLE</b> Jun 29th, 2 - 4 pm Dr. Sandy Gómez &amp; Kate English</p>

In keeping with the County's commitment to the ongoing work of DEI, the 2022 Foundations of DEI Virtual Learning Series was launched in January by the County Executive Office of DEI in partnership with Ventura County Management Council and the DEI Council.

The series explored local history and data as well as some of the root causes of racial and social inequities in order to better equip employees with practical tools and strategies to advance racial and social equity. The series invited both local subject matter experts and nationally recognized speakers to address the County employees regarding these topics.



VENTURA COUNTY  
**MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
Promoting Excellence in Ventura County

## FOUNDATIONS OF DEI LEARNING SERIES



**622**

UNDUPLICATED  
EMPLOYEES  
PARTICIPATED IN  
FOUNDATIONS OF DEI



**1,573**

TOTAL ATTENDANCE  
ACROSS ALL SESSIONS



**96%**

ZOOM POLLS REPORTING  
OVERALL SATISFACTION



**2,815**

DEI LEARNING SERIES  
TRAINING HOURS



**25/25**

COUNTY AGENCIES  
PARTICIPATING

"The first set [of trainings] sets the stage and tone for welcoming folks and for them to feel safe exploring ideas, beliefs, and history about race and racism."  
~Staff

"This is so exciting that the CEO's office is addressing diversity/racial issues. You have my full support."  
~Staff

"Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow."  
~Staff

From January through June of 2022, the Foundations of DEI series offered six online training sessions to County employees, and 53 employees also chose to participate in six "Deeper Dive" Discussion Groups following the training that were opportunities to more deeply explore the material.

# DIVERSITY CALENDAR IMPACT



The DEI Office recognized over 15 significant DEI-related calendar events through partnerships with the DEI Council, the CEO Public Information Office, and other county agencies. While the County may observe and recognize other dates and celebrations, the DEI Council commits to working with the County Executive Office on communications, social media campaigns, events, and potential sponsorships to honor the events in the calendar. Centered around community engagement, recognitions of DEI calendar events included social media, events, staff spotlights, and sponsorships.

The purpose of this calendar is for the County of Ventura's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council to honor and celebrate various identities, races, ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds of traditionally marginalized and underserved communities. It is to be adopted by the DEI Council and modified every fiscal year as needed.

Among the recognitions from the DEI calendar, there were a variety of staff and community events. For example, County staff and community members participated in the Second Annual Progress Pride flag raising at the Government Center. Following the LGBTQ+ Pride Month proclamation by the Board of Supervisors, over 30 Pride Progress flags flew for LGBTQ+ Pride Month at various County facilities for the first time ever this year.



County staff and leadership representing the County of Ventura's sponsorship of the 31st annual Juneteenth celebration in Oxnard.



Social media posts were developed to recognize each of the DEI calendar items. Some of these posts highlighted community leaders, including local trailblazers such as Thousand Oaks Mayor Lawrence Horner, the first Black elected official in Ventura County.

## DIVERSITY CALENDAR EVENTS

### CESAR CHAVEZ DAY *Virtual Celebration*

**THURSDAY MARCH 31,  
2–3:30 PM**



In partnership with the DEI Council, the DEI Office supported several virtual events for staff and the community including an event celebrating Latinx Heritage Month with world champion kickboxer Graciela Casillas and a celebration of Cesar Chavez Day with his son Paul Chavez as the keynote speaker. These events were well attended, with over 350 guests.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH PANEL



**Moderator**  
**MARCUS MITCHELL**  
Director  
Department of Child  
Support Services

**AMBER LEE**  
Sr. Deputy District Attorney  
District Attorney's Office



**CAMERON HENDERSON**  
Captain  
Ventura County Sheriff's Office

**DERRICK WILSON**  
Staff Services Manager  
Public Works Agency



**JENNIE PITTMAN**  
Deputy Director  
Human Services Agency

**SABRINA ANDERSON**  
Sr. HR Business Partner  
County Executive Office



In addition to public events, the DEI Council and the DEI Office developed several staff events, including panels highlighting County leaders for Black History Month and Latinx Heritage Month with over 500 staff attending.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

Throughout 2021-22 the DEI Council, in partnership with the CEO Public Information Office, created staff spotlights for the County social media pages.

The goals of the DEI Council spotlight program included highlighting the diversity of staff roles and of the staff of the County of Ventura through personal stories. Throughout the year, the DEI Council highlights staff and their personal connections to the items on the DEI calendar. Below are a few examples of staff spotlights. This program will continue in 2022-23.



Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month:  
Ellen Bajenting, with the County Counsel's Office

*"My husband and I immigrated from the Philippines in 1992. For the many years we've been here, we found out that the values, education, and work experiences play an important part in your success in life. Through perseverance, hard work, faith, and determination, you can reach your dreams no matter where you come from."*

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month:  
Tony Chan with the Ventura County Fire Department

*"AAPI heritage month is a reminder for us all of the many different communities in Ventura County, each contributing to the tremendous way of life we all enjoy here. My grandparents came to California from China and worked hard to open and run a very successful business providing for an ever-growing family. They were always thankful for the opportunities that hard work and perseverance provided.*

*I have been a 20-year Ventura County resident and employed with the County for 15+ years. I've been honored to work for the Ventura County Fire Department in IT for the last five years. I am very proud to support people and the mission of our first responders, ultimately serving all residents and communities in the County."*



Black History Month:  
Rob Harris, with the General Services Agency

*"For me, Black History Month is a time to reflect on the struggles of the past and the hope for the future. I grew up in Chicago in an all-black neighborhood and faced the inequality of my environment and lack of equity in education. I had a community that laid a foundation for me. It was a mother, teachers, family and my history that inspired, motivated and supported me. This community of support is what I bring to my work team and clients daily. The hope is that others won't have to struggle because we have the ability to make it better. As I mature and continue to grow, I try to pass on to others what I have learned. I try to bring humility and humanity to our work culture. The county is a great place to share my experiences to help support my team and help my county colleagues fulfill their service to the community. I yearn for a time when Black History becomes American History because All people will be treated equally."*

\*Some quotes have been edited for formatting.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



Latinx Heritage Month:  
Sade Flores-Haro, with Ventura County Animal Services

"Latinx Heritage Month is a time for visibility, a reminder for everyone that as a community, we continue to exist, and flourish. I was born in the United States, and though my roots are grounded in Oxnard, they run down to Zacatecas, Coahuila, and Guadalajara. It was not until after college that I found myself returning to the very community I thought would disown me for being part of the LGBTQIA community. They greeted me with open arms. As a non-Spanish speaking person who identifies as Mexican American, there is a lot that gets lost through the inability to communicate; one being a sense of belonging. Despite this I try to advocate for language access, so that my Latinx community knows that wherever they are, that space will be there, with open arms to welcome them too."

Latinx Heritage Month:  
Margarita Gabella with Ventura County

"What I love the most about my Colombian culture is the joy. We love music and dance. There is no celebration that does not include dancing. People are cheerful and family-oriented. When I came to this country, I noticed that it was contagious. We have had a history of loss and hardship, but that makes you strong and gives you a sense of gratitude. That is something that will stay with me."



Black History Month:  
DelaChone Short, with the Ventura County Fire Department

"Black History Month means a lot to me but, most importantly, it's a time to reflect on the past in both appreciation and pride. It's also a reminder to not take for granted the freedoms that I have today because they did not come without enormous struggle. I celebrate my culture by simply being proud to be a Black man in America and making sure not to forget those who gave up so much for me to live the life I live today."

This month is about legacy. It's about paying respect to those trailblazers before us. It's about using those stories of sacrifice as reason to make a difference today. It's also about projecting the youth into a positive productive future. Black history isn't solely in the past. Soon what we do today will be included in that history. It makes a big impact when little kids the same race as myself, and when minorities in general, see me in uniform. Knowing that just by seeing someone who looks like them drive a fire engine can be motivation and reassurance that they too can do something like this, and might be one of the best rewards this career yields.

# ORGANIZING: DEI LEADERSHIP



## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council**

Formed in 2017, 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**

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.

## **Groundwork for 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 when developing policies that impact population health outcomes.
- 2017-2020: Developed and 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
- 2021: Transitioned the DEI Task Force to an ongoing DEI Council in which all agencies and departments are represented

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL LEADERSHIP REFLECTION



Cynthia Salas  
DEI Council Chair

As we reflect on the past year, we should all be proud of how much we have accomplished in our first year as the DEI Council. We started the process of normalizing discussions that touched on the areas of intersectionality, race, equity, and systemic racism. We created a foundation of knowledge through the learning series. We celebrated causes and individuals who have advanced the cause of equity.

The first year came with its challenges and growing pains and it did not come as a surprise as we understood that discussions about race, diversity, equity and inclusion are not easy conversations to have, let alone discussions addressing systemic racism.

In the coming year, the goal of the DEI Council is to complete the county-wide Racial Equity Assessment planned for all county departments and agencies in the next few months. The results of the Assessment will be used to focus on and be more intentional in directing our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts over the next five years. In the meantime, we intend to use a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted last year by the Council, where we found that many of the 25 County agencies represented in the Council experience similar challenges, to focus our efforts until we have a more comprehensive report on which to build our goals and objectives for the Council's work. Additionally, we will start the discussion with the Board of Supervisors and agency and department heads on how we can incorporate lessons learned, review policies, and advance racial equity through policy, systems, and environmental change efforts, including permanent funding, hiring, and succession planning.



Selfa Saucedo  
DEI Council Vice-Chair

The efforts made by members of this Council are made in addition to existing job duties and responsibilities causing us to put on hold some of the work necessary to advance racial equity. As a consequence. If we are committed to continuing with changing the culture of the County of Ventura, it must come with dedicated resources and employee power.

We close this statement by thanking each DEI Council member that has dedicated hours of their time to these efforts, as it takes radical love to do the work that we have done on top of the work we proudly do as public servants to our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as DEI Chair and Vice-Chair. We humbly thank you for allowing us to represent the DEI Council.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL



## **DEI Council Vision:**

The vision for the DEI Council is to develop and nurture an equitable community where everyone is able to reach their full potential.

## **DEI Council Mission:**

The mission of the DEI Council is to develop, sustain, recommend and model equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices in collaboration with the various County agencies we represent, as well as to embrace the valued perspectives and experiences that arise from diversity within our community. Through the work of the DEI Council, we will empower and share decision-making and accountability with all members of our community and the County workforce in order to remove barriers that may exist throughout the County agencies that are the results of social injustice, inequality, and racial trauma. We are committed to engaging the voices of our community to promote equitable outcomes for all. We commit to ensuring that the County provide resources that promote equal access and opportunity for all people in order to achieve a prosperous society, and we advocate for policies that secure diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices within the County of Ventura.

## **Current DEI Council Members**

Cynthia Salas, Chair  
Selfa Saucedo, Vice Chair

Carlo Aldeguer	Vijay Bheemisetty	Ernie Moore	Jennifer Orozco
Anitha Balan	Dee Dinnie	Leticia Morales	Barry Parker
Talía Barrera	Donna Gillesby	Dave Nafie	Jose Rivera
Korinne Bell	Teresa Jimenez	Claudia Nevarez	Michael Rodriguez
Nancy Beltran	Rob Harris	Monique Nowlin	Keith Taylor
Mayra Benitez-Tadillo	Renee Higgins	Paul Nuñez	Rebecca Willhite

CEO Staff Support: Phin Xaypangna, Kate English, Steven Auclair & Jackie Nuñez

## **Current DEI Leadership Accountability Team**

Dr. Sevet Johnson	Melissa Livingston
Shawn Atin	Marcus Mitchell
Claudia Bautista	Phin Xaypangna
Jeff Burgh	

# PUBLIC SAFETY RACIAL EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP



## Purpose

Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group (PSREAG) provides a forum where public safety and community stakeholders collaborate to improve communications and understanding amongst the parties and the greater public. The PSREAG will work to identify potential solutions for improving law enforcement policies and procedures and community engagement.

## Creation

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) resolution adopted on November 10, 2020 declared racism a public health crisis and pledged to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in housing, employment, economic development, health care, and public safety in the County of Ventura. The BOS envisioned an independent advisory group of public safety and community leaders, all of whom would collaborate to create greater understanding and identify strategies and proposals to improve institutional law enforcement practices.

## PSREAG Goals

1. Improve Communications: Work together in a two-way dialogue between public safety agencies and community organizations that share an interest in advancing an equitable justice system and creating a community forum by which information, education, and ideas are encouraged and exchanged.
2. Improve Policies and Procedures: This forum will help increase public understanding of public safety policies and procedures, and identify areas of concern and offer potential solutions or strategies for enhancements. Findings, proposals or recommendations may be submitted in a report to the County CEO for placement on a Board of Supervisors meeting agenda at least every six (6) months or as needed and will be distributed throughout the community.

## PSREAG MEMBERSHIP

### Community Group Members

- Black Lawyers of Ventura County (Co-Chair)
- Ventura County NAACP (Secretary)
- Santa Paula Latino Town Hall
- Latinx Bar Association
- Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)
- Diversity Collective of Ventura County
- We Belong 805
- Pacific Clinics
- VC Asian American Bar Association
- Conejo Valley Interfaith Association

### Agency Members / County of Ventura and Public Safety Representatives:

- Public Defender (Chair)
- Sheriff
- Municipal Law Enforcement Agency Head (Oxnard Chief of Police)
- District Attorney
- Probation

# HEALTHCARE EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (HEAC)



## HEAC MEMBERSHIP

### Community Members:

- Kimberly Cofield (Co-Chair)
- Liz Diaz-Querol
- Juliza Ramirez
- Audrey Ford
- Juana Zaragoza
- Kimberly Kelley
- Emily Bridges
- Hugo Tapia

### Agency Members:

- Barry Zimmerman (Chair)
- Sevet Johnson
- John Fankhauser
- Theresa Cho
- Rigoberto Vargas
- Kristina Swaim

### HEAC Purpose

HEAC is a working group of healthcare subject matter experts and community stakeholders whose purpose is to advocate for equity for historically underserved communities. The Council will convene to evaluate the delivery of healthcare services for underserved populations, including allocation of resources and personnel practices, and recommend strategies for improvement when gaps are identified.

The HEAC is a new Health Care Agency Advisory Council that will be comprised of 8 community members at large and 7 Health Care Agency staff, each appointed to two or three-year terms.

The implementation of HEAC is one example of a direct-action item stemming from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopting a resolution on November 10, 2020 declaring racism a public health crisis and making a commitment to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in housing, employment, economic development, public safety, and health care in the County of Ventura.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & CONNECTIONS



To advance racial equity and social justice in the community, local and regional governments must work in partnership with communities, state and federal governments, and other institutions to achieve meaningful results. This collaboration will have the most significant impact on overall racial equity and DEI work. For Ventura County, we are committed to building partnerships with the institutions and the communities as we recognize we cannot do this work alone and must lead the way.

### **Here are a few highlights from our partnerships in 2021-2022:**

- Collaborated with the Ventura County Office of Education on an Equity Conference which had over 1,000 attendees
- Participated in the Youth, Equity and Success (YES) Collaborative, whose mission is to promote equity and well-being for youth in Ventura County
- Partnered with the City of Thousand Oaks to facilitate a community DEI Roundtable to envision an equitable and inclusive community
- Connected with DEI Officers locally, regionally, and nationally to build communities of practice
- Joined the LGBTQ+ Aging Coalition to raise awareness about the challenges that face LGBTQ+ older adults and to provide education and advocacy to create an LGBTQ+ friendly Ventura County
- Served as a resource for other local, state, and federal jurisdictions and organizations, who reached out for support in their DEI work
- Presented DEI work to community-based organizations
- Partnered with California Lutheran University through the ASCENSO Hispanic Fellowship program to place four fellows in an eight-week fellowship that raises and bolsters their understanding of root issues that perpetuate inequities in the lives of Hispanic students, families, and communities in Ventura County

# MOVING FORWARD 2022-2023

Over the past year, in collaboration with the DEI Council, the Office of DEI has begun to normalize DEI concepts, skills, and language with a focus on racial equity with an intersectional approach. Thousands of Ventura County staff across all agencies and departments have participated in this work and infrastructure is being built to lead and sustain the work.

There is a commitment to the work that is evident alongside the recognition that while this is long-term work, it also requires a sense of urgency due to the real-world impacts on the quality of life for Ventura County residents and County of Ventura staff.

In the coming year, there are many exciting efforts to support DEI, including employee assessment and training, action planning, equity data, and history projects.

We will continue to frame our work through Normalizing, Organizing and Operationalizing.



## Normalizing

We will continue normalizing the conversations around DEI to increase buy-in and support from leadership and employees at all levels of the County. We will offer ongoing Learning Series for staff to advance their knowledge to apply an equity analysis to program design and delivery, celebrating and honoring various identities, races/ethnicities, and backgrounds of traditionally marginalized and underserved communities. To continue with the race dialogue, we will design Race Dialogues Part II to enhance conversations around race and other intersectionalities such as Gender, LGBTQ+, and Disability.



## Organizing

We will collaborate with other community-based organizations and local jurisdictions to advance racial and social equity in Ventura County. We will continue to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders representing low-income and communities of color. We will formalize networks of DEI communities of practice throughout Ventura County such as Chief DEI Officers, LGBTQIA+ networks, as well as establish a DEI Council Advisory Group. We will provide support in forming and sustaining DEI committees within the County's agencies/departments.



## Operationalizing

To lay a roadmap for racial equity, we will hire a consultant to facilitate the racial equity assessment, train senior leadership, and develop a Racial Equity Action Plan for the County. We will continue to promote the DEI Council's focus area and incorporate its input into the County's Strategic Plan. We will launch a racial equity data dashboard and mapping tools project that will serve as a baseline for ongoing measurement of racial inequities and disparities to show progress over time and help increase the efforts.

In 2022-23, 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 inherent in policies, practices, and procedures that disproportionately impact/burden People of Color in Ventura County.



## **COUNTY** *of* **VENTURA**

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