



24-4186

DATE: February 6, 2024 (Item No. 11)

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Analilia Garcia, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer
Gregory G. Iturria, County Budget Director

SUBJECT: Report on Application of Equity into Strategic Planning and Budgetary Decisions

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Under advisement from June 27, 2023 (Item No. 11): Receive report from the Office of the County Executive relating to a definition of equity, and the application of equity in countywide strategic planning and budgetary decisions.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications associated with the receipt of this informational report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

On June 27, 2023, Board President Ellenberg brought forth a referral (Item No. 11) to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Budget process and potential improvements for the FY 2024-2025 Budget process. During this discussion, Supervisor Arenas requested that Administration return for a more focused discussion on equity as the County proceeds in its development of a strategic plan.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (ODEB) is facilitating the co-design of the County's first Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap. The Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap development process began in December 2023 and will conclude in June 2024. There is Countywide engagement of departments and agencies, as well as engagement and partnership with the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits' Racial Equity Action Leadership (REAL) Coalition. Thus far, a proposed equity definition, equity principles and glossary have been developed. The end deliverable of the Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap development process will outline a vision, priority areas, goals, objectives, and metrics for internal County

programs and services. The Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap implementation phase will begin in July 2024. Implementation of the final Roadmap will require departments to identify their role within the internal goals and objectives, and work with ODEB to build an implementation plan to track, monitor, and communicate progress.

Defining Equity

Equity is a nuanced concept and rather than simplifying it into a single definition, ODEB recommends adopting a multifaceted understanding to guide County work towards its Strategic Goal & Operational Priority to advance equity:

Equity is both a ***process*** and ***outcome*** that results in just and fair inclusion into a society in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

As a ***process***, equity requires a new way of doing business that (1) prioritizes access and opportunities for groups who have the greatest need; (2) methodically evaluates benefits and burdens produced by seemingly neutral systems and practices; and (3) engages those most impacted by the problems we seek to address as experts in their own experiences, strategists in co-creating solutions, and evaluators of success.

As an ***outcome***, equity is a measure of justice that is achieved when outcomes in the conditions of well-being are improved for marginalized groups, improving outcomes for all.

Guiding Principles for Achieving Transformative Racial Equity in Government

In October 2023, ODEB engaged over 60 County of Santa Clara executives, department leaders, and equity practitioners in an exercise to review, provide feedback, and endorse local versions of five guiding principles for achieving transformative racial equity in government. Grounded in a deep understanding of historical and present-day inequities, these principles will guide consistent decision-making, strategy, and actions to advance racial equity across County departments and cross-system operations, in alignment with County strategic goals and operational priorities.

1. Understand Government role in past and present inequities

- a. Understand and acknowledge the government's role in impacting communities at a wide scale to this day—whether positive, negative, or seemingly neutral. Example: Taking an inventory of the historic and present benefits and harms of major laws, policies, and programs.

2. Consistently address root causes

- a. Target the fundamental root causes of gaps and inequities, and prioritize the people who have traditionally been excluded, recognizing these investments will benefit all.

Example: Assessing the impact of an entire portfolio of departmental programs and operations on holistically addressing root causes of inequity versus selectively addressing symptoms.

3. Work in partnership with communities impacted by inequities

- a. Engage and elevate community voice in the design, discussion, and decision-making process for policies, practices, and programs that impact them.

Example: Leveraging the expertise and experiences of all to promote equity, particularly leaders of color and their communities.

4. Adopt a continuous learning and adaptive approach

- a. Acknowledge that the scale and complexity of reaching racial equity will require ongoing commitment, action, and adjustments to drive meaningful change and strengthen our communities over time.

Example: Evaluating and significantly adjusting policies, programs, and systems where data highlights that racially equitable outcomes and goals are not being met.

5. Be transparent and accountable

- a. Build trust and accountability in the long-term commitment to racial equity through data-driven decision-making and outcome tracking.

Example: Creating and publishing annual progress towards departmental racial equity aspirations and goals, including positive and negative changes in outcomes across populations.

Budget Equity

The County is committed to ensuring equity and inclusion are critical factors in decision making throughout the budgeting process and informing all of the County Executive's budget recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. From initial department planning stages to budget adoption by the Board, the County aims to meet the needs of undeserved and marginalized communities. To achieve this, the County engages with community stakeholders and staff to guide and inform the budget process, as ongoing dialogue with these communities can build our understanding of current inequities.

In last year's budget process, departments were instructed to use a new Budget Equity Manual and Tool that highlighted equity information for incremental budget proposals. This year, the tool was revised by the Office of Budget and Analysis and Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging to broaden the submission to include comprehensive information on the department's entire budget and a description of how equity is embedded into the department's operations. Departments have been directed to prepare one equity statement for the entire department or agency. The updated document is attached for awareness.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Budgeting for Equity - Manual and Tool FY 24-25-Accessible