

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
OFFICE OF EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2022**

**Submitted by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) serves many roles within Contra Costa County (County). EEO is responsible for ensuring that County employees, applicants, and vendors are provided a professional environment which is free from discrimination and/or harassment. It administers and ensures countywide compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, and guidance that prohibit discrimination in the workplace. It promotes non-discrimination in the execution of contracts while promoting positive external customer relations. It provides leadership, direction, and guidance to all County departments in carrying out its practice of providing equal employment opportunities and responsibilities. It conducts outreach and recruitment activities throughout the communities we serve. It investigates and adjudicates internal complaints of discrimination and collaborates with departments to resolve complaints that are filed with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Developing and implementing specific components to aid in addressing racial inequities within our workforce will play a key role in creating racial and gender equity for current and future employees. In order to address a portion of the current racial inequities within Contra Costa County, EEO has developed the attached Five-Year Strategic Action Plan. This document will examine the methodology used to address some of the issues. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Reviewing applicant flow for posted jobs.
- Analyzing the workforce data.
- Partnering with departmental EEO Coordinators and Administrative Services Officers (ASO's) to provide training.
- Conducting specific outreach and recruitment efforts to Community Based Organizations (CBO's).

This plan is a road map for EEO to successfully navigate its future. It provides information on where EEO is, strategies to attain its goals and objectives, and where EEO plans to be in the next five years. Our vision is to attain racial and gender equity within our workforce by implementing mechanisms to achieve it. The EEO Office will solicit feedback from internal stakeholders, ASO's, EEO Coordinators, Department Heads, managers, and supervisors to make this plan come to fruition and address some of the issues that the County faces in today's market.

This plan is a living document and will be reviewed annually to make additions or subtractions to facilitate a clear path to reach the desired outcomes. As such, it is designed to be flexible enough to respond to unexpected obstacles and adjust to new developments. The plan and its timelines provide solid ground to guide the Office of EEO and evaluate progress made over the next five years.

The EEO Office Five-Year Strategic Action Plan is designed to promote equality and inclusion within our workforce. It will provide a framework for racial and gender equity within the County. The Center for Assessment and Policy Development¹ describes racial equity as the condition that would be achieved when racial identity no longer predicts how one fares as an applicant, employee, business partner, or retiree. It includes redefining policies, practices, and attitudes and cultural messages

¹ The Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD) was established in 1988 as a non-profit organization to improve outcomes for children, families and neighborhoods by helping to build the capacity of institutions, systems, communities, intermediary organizations and foundations that do the day to day work on their behalf.

that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fails to eliminate them. Racial and gender equity provides benefits such as an even distribution of work, hiring and promotional opportunities, and equal pay for equal work for all races and genders.

Racial and gender inequities are caused by the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Within the County's workforce, racial and gender inequities exist which highlight disparate impacts between the hiring occurrences among whites in comparison to minority populations. For example, there were 276 employees whose jobs were classified as Officials and Administrators² as of December 31, 2015. 67% of the employees in this classification were females; 40% were white females; and 62% of those in the classification were white males and females.

The County has been proactive in addressing potential discriminatory behavior in the workplace by requiring training classes for sexual harassment prevention and diversity. Employees are required to take these classes as part of the terms and conditions of their employment. The trainings have provided employees with resources on how to recognize and report discrimination and harassment. In the last year, the number of complaints filed externally and internally has decreased which can be attributed to the County's proactive approach to educate our employees.

In order to further promote positive change within the workforce, the EEO Office suggests that the County implement broad distribution of Implicit Bias Training³. Research demonstrates⁴ that most people hold unconscious, implicit assumptions that influence their judgments and perceptions of others. Without identifying and addressing these issues, hiring and promotional decisions can be thwarted due to our own biases and results for changes within the workforce will be minimal.

Over the past year, EEO has made accomplishments in areas that further increased our visibility and maximized our potential within the County. The accomplishments are listed below:

- Held regular quarterly meetings with the departmental EEO Coordinators and ASO's.
- Developed and implemented an effective outreach program for County departments.
- Contributed to the research and development of the Bridge to Success (BTS) program.
- Developed the 2015-2020 EEO Plan.
- Developed EEO Outreach and Recruitment seminars to CBO's.
- Partnered with Human Resources (HR) to deliver outreach and recruitment presentations to CBO's.
- Conducted fair and comprehensive EEO discrimination/harassment complaint investigations.

The following pages contain the EEO Office Goals, Strategies and Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes that will be used as an action plan to achieve results to implement the units' plans and priorities.

² Occupations in which employees set broad policies, exercise overall responsibility for execution of these policies, or direct individual departments or special phases of the agency's operations, or provide specialized consultation on a regional, district or area basis such as Department Head.

³ Implicit Bias training refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

⁴ Jo Handelsman & Natasha Sakraney, White House Office of Sci. & Tech. Policy, Implicit Bias

I. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH EMPHASIS ON THOSE WHO ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED WITHIN OUR WORKFORCE.

The County has experienced a workforce that has changed over the years due to attrition and retirement. In today's job market, employees' ages range from millennials⁵ to baby boomers⁶. It is vital that these segments of the County population are informed about our vacancies. The County is at the forefront in developing outreach and recruitment efforts to specific groups who are underrepresented within our workforce. Although many employers have embraced diversity and inclusion, white employees hold a majority of the top positions within organizations while blacks and Hispanics are typically in low paying jobs. This issue has been prevalent for the last 40 years. EEO expects this goal to be fulfilled within 4 years and believes that in order to address this issue, the County must follow the steps below:

Strategies

- Continuing to collect and analyze workforce data points bi-annually.
- Continuing to compare the County's workforce data to the most recent labor force data and determine departmental underutilization bi-annually.
- Continuing to promote strategic outreach and recruitment efforts.
- Continuing to work with departments to develop outreach plans that incorporate equity and inclusion principles.
- Working with CCTV to develop and implement a social media page that will forge a link between the EEO Office and the communities we serve.
- Continuing to develop strategic partnerships with community based organizations, affinity groups, professional associations, and educational institutions to reach underrepresented populations.

EEO will be able to track the success of the strategies based on the following actions:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- Applicant flow data is reviewed bi-annually and will determine whether or not outreach trends are positive in the recruitment of underrepresented individuals.
- Source candidates that will insure that applicant flow data will reflect the local labor pool.
- More outreach meetings and training seminars with CBO's.
- Departments will understand the importance of outreach and create viable outreach plans.

⁵ a person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000

⁶ a person born in the years following World War II, when there was a temporary marked increase in the birth rate.

II. EDUCATE EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONCEPTS TO PROMOTE A CULTURALLY COMPETENT WORK ENVIRONMENT.

Educating employees and managers on equity and inclusion concepts is beneficial in creating and maintaining a workforce which represents our labor force demographics. In order to understand equity issues within the workforce, the County must understand the underlying causes of disparities and make conscious decisions to repair them. Equity refers to the ability to create a workforce that is comprised of individuals of different races, ethnicities and backgrounds who participate in decision making processes. Inclusion promotes equality of opportunity. Cultural competency is the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from different cultures and/or belief systems. These three components are necessary to provide equal access to employment and promotional opportunities within the County. They will also aid in creating an equitable workforce. EEO expects this process will be completed within the next 5 years. The following strategies will assist the County in addressing equity, inclusion and cultural competency:

Strategies

- Assisting in the development of an action plan and training platform to promote equity and inclusion in the workforce.
- Creating an equitable workplace in which all employees have an equal opportunity to enhance their careers through promotions and lateral transfers.
- Making Implicit Bias Training mandatory for department heads, managers, and supervisors to take every three years. Some employees are mandated to take Implicit Bias more often than three years to maintain their certification. In these instances, employees will not be required to enroll in the County's training but they must provide proof that the required training was completed.
- Creating a diverse workforce that is reflected at all levels of the County and in all groups.
- Creating a supportive work environment in which equity, inclusion and cultural competency inform and influence business decisions.

EEO will monitor the strategies and look for these outcomes to validate our efforts:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- Countywide Implementation of an equity and inclusion plan and Implicit Bias Training.
- Continue monitoring the rate of new hires, promotions and lateral transfers to determine if these benefits have been equitable to all races and genders.
- Department Heads, managers and supervisors will be aware of their own biases and use this knowledge to make more informed hiring and promotional decisions.
- Monitoring of the Implicit Bias Training attendees to ensure that all Department Heads, managers and supervisors have been enrolled to take the course every three years.
- County positions will begin to be equitably distributed through all levels of the workforce.
- All internal interview panelists will complete Implicit Bias training prior to participating in interviews.

III. PROMOTE EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

EEO will partner with the County's Training Manager, Ron Martin and Risk Management's

Training Unit to expand leadership opportunities which includes Succession Planning to ignite a more passionate and engaging workforce. It is important that we focus on these issues to create a conduit for leadership and ensure the County maintains job knowledge and the continuity for delivering excellent service. All eligible employees will be able to participate in the leadership development programs. EEO will monitor the selection of individuals who participate to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of employees who are represented. EEO expects this goal to be fulfilled in the next four years. Some of the strategies that we believe will be beneficial to the success of this goal are below:

Strategies

- Reviewing current County leadership development programs such as ,”The Art of Managing and Supervising People”, the CSAC Institute for Excellence in County Government Trainings and other high level training modules that are offered by Target Solutions.
- Assisting in the marketing of these programs to departments.
- Reviewing races and genders of employees who have enrolled and completed the leadership management development programs.
- Developing strategies to identify and eliminate barriers where they exist.
- Researching and attending seminars/conferences which highlight succession planning.

The following outcomes will help determine the success of the strategies:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- The implementation of a countywide succession plan.
- Long term valuable employees stay with the County.
- Employees who participate in these programs will reflect an equitable and inclusive balance of its participants.
- Creates a seamless transition when an employee leaves the County and another qualified employee can fill in until a permanent hire is made.

IV. CREATING A FLEXIBLE EEO OFFICE TO RESPOND TO OUR CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In the last two years, the role of the EEO Office has changed dramatically. EEO is more active in community involvement such as distributing food with the Food Bank, collaborating with departments to conduct effective outreach, conducting internal investigations, providing training to the departmental EEO Coordinators and ASO’s, and helping to develop a new vision for the Advisory Council on EEO (ACEEO). The EEO Office must be prepared to respond to the changing demands of the services we offer to meet the needs of the Board of Supervisors, our employees, constituents, and vendors. The EEO Office must be a change agent as it relates to technology, outreach, and providing excellent customer service to all stakeholders. Within the next year, this office will strive to become more responsive and collaborative by incorporating the strategies listed below into our unit:

Strategies

- Continuing to collaborate with the larger CBO’s in the County and attend workshops, mixers, training seminars and other events that the CBO’s sponsor.
- Providing Implicit Bias, Outreach, and Discrimination Complaint Investigation training seminars

to the EEO Coordinators and ASO's.

- Participating on boards, commissions, and advisory committees within the County to increase the EEO Office's presence and knowledge of other advisory groups.
- Continuing to develop accessible and historical outreach and discrimination complaint databases to manage and monitor all outreach and investigation activities.
- Continuing to work with the ACEEO members to help raise awareness of the committee and make recommendations to the BOS about EEO issues in the County.
- Providing detailed reports and informative presentations to the Board of Supervisors, the Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee and the ACEEO.
- Propose to the Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee to consider changing meetings from every other month to quarterly based meetings.

In order to determine the success of our strategies, EEO will track the following:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- CBO's continue to contact the EEO Office to present at functions they are hosting.
- A measureable increase in cooperation and communication from the CBO's.
- Identifying and developing new projects that will help the County become more diverse and proactive.
- Working closely with committees and the BOS to develop a more equitable applicant pool talent pipeline and hiring trends.
- Accessibility to run more accurate reports.
- Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee meetings will contain more substantive information and allows the EEO Office to review County statistical data from the previous quarter.
- It will allow EEO more time to better understand and analyze the current state of the County's outreach and recruitment processes.
- EEO will be able to identify and prioritize the best goals/initiatives for the following quarter, which will allow the County to move forward to attain our long term goals.

V. SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS (BTS) PROGRAM

The BTS Program is an alternative employment selection program for qualified persons with developmental disabilities. The County worked closely with the County of Alameda to develop a program similar to theirs which they implemented in or around 2002. BTS is designed to minimize the adverse impact of the traditional selection process by providing an alternate means of assessing the qualifications and skills of job applicants with disabilities. Risk Management played a pivotal role in the research, creation and implementation of the program. EEO will be responsible for the marketing of the program to the State of California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and to service providers who represent the disabled community. The plan is expected to be implemented in or around January 2017 and EEO anticipates it will take up to five years for the program to be fully effective. We will use the following strategies to achieve our goals:

Strategies

- Collaborating with HR, Library and Health Services to launch the pilot program.
- Partnering with the DOR and CBO's to market the program for potential candidates.

- Partnering with HR to market the program to other County departments.
- Maintaining partnership with County of Alameda for guidance.
- Identifying obstacles that may impede the success of the program.

In order to determine the success of the strategies, EEO will track the following outcomes:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- Pilot program will be up and running in 2017.
- Qualified candidates will be referred to the County for job openings that are assigned to the Bridge to Success program.
- Positive feedback from the Department of Rehab and CBO’s regarding their clients’ experiences working for the County.
- More departments participating in the program.

VI. ENCOURAGE UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION IN THE HANDLING, INVESTIGATING AND RESOLVING EEO INTERNAL COMPLAINTS

EEO continues to strive to create a transparent environment by sharing our performance measures and expectations with our customers and stakeholders. EEO serves as a resource to employees, vendors and the public who believe they are or have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment. It is important for EEO to act immediately once we are notified to determine whether or not the complaint will be accepted for investigation. EEO is responsible for informing all parties of their rights and to ensure that the internal investigation is comprehensive, fair and neutral. EEO is also responsible for referring employees to the DFEH, EEOC and the Merit Board. We hope to fulfill this goal within 2 years and believe the following strategies will help us obtain this goal:

Strategies

- Continuing to explain the investigative process to complainants, respondents, and witnesses in detail.
- Continuing oversight of the investigation program to ensure it is robust and in full compliance with all laws.
- Continuing to conduct fair, comprehensive and sound EEO complaint investigations.
- Continuing to monitor new federal changes to existing discrimination laws and self-reporting occupational job categories.
- Provide investigative training to the EEO Coordinators and ASO’s.
- Continuing to ensure that investigations are timely and the reports reflect the findings discovered during the course of the investigation.
- Continuing to develop the updated case file management system.
- Preventing employment discrimination through training, education and outreach.

EEO will review the following to help us measure the effectiveness of our strategies:

Key Performance Indicators/Outcomes

- Conduct fair and equitable internal investigations within a reasonable timeframe.

- Inform and update stakeholders on changes in federal discrimination laws and self-reporting information.
- Make changes accordingly to County policies once approved by internal stakeholders.
- Continue to update the Office of EEO webpage to reflect new EEO legislation.
- Continue to participate in the nine Bay Area EEO Managers Consortium to collaborate and capture best practices and success models.
- Decrease of internal and external complaints year over year.

CONCLUSION

The EEO Five-Year Strategic Plan is a collection of ideas that are believed to be important steps to help this office reach its full potential. The plan reinforces the County's commitment to equal employment opportunities and introduces the racial and gender equity dynamics to the workplace. It recognizes the need to prevent discrimination, encourage training and education, and research best practices in order to create an office that leads by example. EEO will continue to be at the forefront in advocating for equitable treatment for all races and genders to help our County become an employer of choice.