

ATTACHMENT 1

Concept Proposal for a Contra Costa Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (By Supervisors John Gioia and Federal Glover)

Mission/Goals

- To make a transformational shift **within County government** to eliminate inequity, harm, discrimination, and bias (implicit and explicit) based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, socio-economic status, and for people with disabilities by focusing County efforts on understanding what it takes to achieve equity with a priority focus on racial equity.
- Acknowledge and eliminate inequities, disparities and harm **that exist in Contra Costa County**, including inequities and disparities in health outcomes, resource and service allocation, land use decisions (environmental justice), and law enforcement and criminal justice system practices
- Create a sense of urgency for change so that we cultivate and sustain a County ecosystem rooted in belonging, mutuality, equity, and justice. The need for change is urgent; and the opportunity for change is now.

Values and 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 exists 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 ongoing inquiry and reflection.
- We advocate for resources through an equitable, humanizing and transparent process.
- We celebrate and appreciate.

Function: The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice would be established in a separate Division in the County Administrator's Office with direct accountability to the Board of Supervisors. Its function is to: (1) better coordinate, strengthen and expand the County's existing work on equity and inclusion, (2) create new opportunities to deepen the work, and (3) partner with the community (including community organizations and leaders, cities and school districts) in prioritizing and implementing this work. The goal of this work is to promote equity and eliminate disparities in Contra Costa County with the initial priority to eliminate structural racism.

Community Partnership: The community's voice is a necessary and vital part of determining how the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice is structured and operated. It is essential to work with community partners already doing the work of racial and social justice and to look to them to provide stewardship, consultation and partnership in this effort. An inclusive community planning process will be conducted that will include a listening campaign of Contra Costa residents centering the experiences of our County's Black communities and communities of color. This process will inform the following actions:

- Develop the final structure, roles and responsibilities of the Office
- Develop a plan reflecting the community's priorities for the work of the Office
- Develop a plan for how the Office is transparently accountable to the public

The County has a history of equity and social justice initiatives and has laid the foundation for establishing an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

- The County's Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Cohort **developed a proposal for an "Office of Human Rights & Equity"** in 2017, and developed a comprehensive Racial Equity Action Plan in **2019 which also recommended establishing an "Office of Equity & Immigrant Inclusion"**.
- The Board of Supervisors established a Racial Justice Task Force which produced recommendations to reduce racial disparities in the Justice system (2018)
- The Board of Supervisors established a Racial Justice Oversight Body to recommend and implement policies to reduce racial disparities in the Justice system.
- County General Plan Update to incorporate Environmental Justice principles in land use policies
- Board of Supervisors created Environmental Justice seats on the County Sustainability Commission and County Hazardous Materials Commission
- County has developed and implemented Implicit Bias and Procedural Justice training programs
- Health Services has numerous equity initiatives to reduce health disparities based on race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, gender, and sexual orientation.
- Employment and Human Services Department has several initiatives to promote equity focusing on socio-economic status and immigrant inclusion.
- Impact Justice Diversion Program in the District Attorney's Office
- Board of Supervisors established "Stand Together Contra Costa" to provide rapid response services to immigrants at risk of deportation
- Board of Supervisors established "Contra Costa Cares" to provide medical care to families regardless of immigration status
- Board of Supervisors worked with community partners to establish Re-Entry Centers to assist formerly incarcerated individuals transition into community
- Board of Supervisors supported the application for the "Gateways for Growth Challenge" planning process to develop a coordinated approach to supporting immigrant inclusion and equity.

- There have been many efforts led by community partners in Contra Costa who have been engaged in racial and social justice work for years, decades and generations through advocacy, organizing, direct service, and coalition building.

Proposed Roles and Responsibilities of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (subject to modification by the community planning process)

- Coordinate, strengthen and expand the existing equity and social justice work currently being done across Departments, and create opportunities to deepen the existing work, bring innovations and emerging strategies to address systemic and structural inequities.
- Increase education and resources and develop policies to address structural and institutional racism and systemic violence against African American and Black residents.
- Foster an organizational culture in County government that promotes equity and social justice in all decision making and practices.
- Ensure that County investments are aligned with equity and social justice principles and address the root causes of inequities in Contra Costa.
- Assist County Departments (through policies, education and technical assistance) in applying equity and social justice principles and practices to county actions (including law enforcement and the justice system, location and delivery of services, land use decisions, resource allocation, policy development and decision making, and community engagement) and integrate these practices, on a countywide basis, in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and to eliminate disparities.
- Develop policies and practices so that equity and social justice impacts are considered in all County decision-making to achieve equity, fairness and opportunity for all residents.
- Build capacity in County government to engage all communities in a manner that promotes trust and belonging among people across race, ethnic, gender, language, immigration status, and sexual orientation lines.
- Expand the utilization of community driven frameworks and methods of data to address inequities, and publicly report the progress towards advancing equity and social justice.
- Partner with the community (organizations and individuals) to promote equity and inclusion within Contra Costa to eliminate harm and disparities.
- Establish an inter-departmental team (utilizing staff across Departments) to work with the Office to facilitate accountability and coordination by Departments in their implementation of equity and social justice principles, policies and practices.
- Develop and conduct equity assessments of all County departments and their practices including law enforcement and the justice system, land use decisions/environmental justice, resource and service allocation, health disparities, and social service needs.
- Work with the community to create mechanisms for community oversight of County departments to achieve equity and eliminate disparities and harmful treatment.
- Provide support and staffing for the Racial Justice Oversight Committee and the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) Cohort work, and work with Public Health Advocates and Trauma Transformed.