



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

To: Board of Supervisors, County of Sonoma
Department or Agency Name(s): Office of Equity
Staff Name and Phone Number: Office of Equity
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Professional Services Agreement for an assessment of the Sonoma County Boards and Commissions

Recommended Action:

Delegate authority to the Director of the Office of Equity to execute a Professional Services Agreement with The Justice Collective, for an assessment of the Sonoma County Boards and Commissions, for a not-to-exceed amount of \$179,623, through December 2026, payable on a per-task lump sum basis.

Executive Summary:

The requested Board action authorizes the Director of the Office of Equity to execute a Professional Services Agreement with The Justice Collective for an assessment on Sonoma County Boards and Commissions for a not-to-exceed amount of \$179,623, through December 2026, payable on a per-task lump sum basis. The assessment (Assessment) will yield recommended compensation and meeting policies as well as identify the infrastructure needed to implement the recommended policies.

The proposed agreement is responsive to the [Boards and Commissions Plan <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6720198&GUID=95000944-B15F-4055-A1DC-2E9DB17736B1&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6720198&GUID=95000944-B15F-4055-A1DC-2E9DB17736B1&Options=&Search=>), approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on June 10, 2024, and which directs the Office of Equity (OOE) to conduct an assessment to better understand the landscape of Boards and Commissions, and present recommendations on how to improve processes and policies, including recruitment, member selection, stipends, and demographic data collection practices.

Discussion:

Background

Boards and Commissions have traditionally been designed to bring community voices into government decision-making. Through a diverse composition, Board/Commission members can help highlight and provide feedback on issues that specifically, or disproportionately, impact historically underrepresented identities and increase the likelihood that public entities address those issues. Therefore, it is important that Boards and Commissions reflect the racial, ethnic, socio-economic, gender, and other identities of the communities served. The County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors currently appoints one or more members to 76 bodies and is responsible for appointing all members to 56 of these bodies. The term Boards and Commissions ("Boards and Commissions") refers, but is not limited to, Boards, Commissions, Committees, Municipal Advisory Councils, Community Advisory Committees, and Task Forces.

In the fall of 2023, as part of the development of the [Community Engagement Plan <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6495180&GUID=86A5CDAE-1F15-413D-AF31-26A8FA801F02&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6495180&GUID=86A5CDAE-1F15-413D-AF31-26A8FA801F02&Options=&Search=>), the Office of Equity (OOE) conducted a focus group and several interviews with 10 Board/Commission members and additional County staff supporting these bodies to gather initial insights on how Boards and Commissions operate. Focus group participants highlighted the following key challenges:

- The County does not provide enough resources (financial or otherwise) to sustain the comprehensive participation of community members on the Boards and Commissions, such as compensation, food, and/or translation and interpretation services.
- There are discrepancies on how the Board/Commission members and the Board of Supervisors interpret the roles of the Boards and Commissions, leading to a lack of clarity about the role and scope of the groups and, ultimately, a perceived lack of impact or influence over policy decisions.
- Qualitative data indicates that Board/Commission members (including individuals who serve on Boards and Commissions or attend meetings) who are White, of older age, retired, and possess greater resources than those of the community at large, are overrepresented in the system. This makes the underrepresentation of diverse identities across Boards and Commissions a key challenge to the effective functioning of these groups and their ability to adequately share a range of diverse perspectives with elected officials on relevant issues.

On [June 10, 2024 <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6720198&GUID=95000944-B15F-4055-A1DC-2E9DB17736B1&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6720198&GUID=95000944-B15F-4055-A1DC-2E9DB17736B1&Options=&Search=>), the Board of Supervisors adopted the 'Countys Board and Commissions Plan <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6720198&GUID=95000944-B15F-4055-A1DC-2E9DB17736B1&Options=&Search=>, which seeks to expand access and participation in County Boards and Commissions for communities who have not traditionally participated in these bodies, with particular regard for underserved communities of color and low-income communities. The OOE was then tasked with the implementation of the Boards and Commissions Plan, which is comprised of a total of 21 strategies in five key strategic areas, and at a high level proposes that the County:

1. Conduct an assessment (Assessment) across all Boards and Commissions to develop recommendations on how to improve community member recruitment and selection processes, stipend payment processes, and connectivity to County priorities;
2. Provide training for existing Boards and Commission members and assigned County staff on culturally responsive engagement, recruitment, and appointment practices and processes;
3. Develop and deliver a culturally sensitive Civic Education curriculum and training for community members interested in better connecting with their local government;
4. Create and convene a Learning Cohort for County staff to foster cross-departmental resource sharing and support for existing and upcoming community engagement efforts

During Budget Hearings FY 2024-25, the BOS authorized a one-time allocation of \$150,000 for the OOE to perform the assessment mentioned as part of the first item above.

Request for Proposals (RFP) and Selection Process:

On October 30, 2024, the OOE released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a contractor to expand the

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

Office's capacity to conduct the Assessment. The RFP was available on the Sonoma County Purchasing Supplier Portal through December 10, 2024, at 2 pm, and provided general information about the OOE, Boards & Commissions Plan description, services required, and project timeline. Two proposals were received, and the review committee, consisting of previous and existing Board and Commission members and staff who have provided administrative support to Boards and Commissions, determined that neither of the proposals met the qualifications to effectively conduct the Assessment.

As a result, the OOE re-issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) on January 14, 2025, on the Sonoma County Purchasing Supplier Portal, and proposals were accepted through February 28, 2025, at 2 pm. To reach additional solicitors, the RFP information was shared through OOE's monthly newsletter upon publication. Three proposals were received, and a comprehensive evaluation was conducted by the same review committee that evaluated the initial RFP. The Justice Collective proposal prevailed based on their competitive proposal cost, extensive experience conducting assessments, intentional focus on racial equity, and their demonstrated ability to complete the work outlined in the RFP. The Justice Collective has successfully worked with the County of Contra Costa and San Mateo County on similar projects, showcasing their relevant experience and preparation to support the OOE with the Boards & Commissions Assessment. Information on the work to be conducted by the consultant can be found on the scope of work included in the Professional Services Agreement (Attachment A).

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

- January 30, 2024, Community Engagement Plan Workshop: Findings, Recommendations, and Strategies for Consideration
- June 10, 2024, County's Boards and Commissions Plan and Community Engagement Toolkit

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$45,303.50	\$129,819.50	\$4,500
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$45,303.50	\$129,819.50	\$4,500
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$45,303.50	\$129,819.50	\$4,500
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$45,303.50	\$129,819.50	\$4,500

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The total cost of the contract with The Justice Collective is \$179,623, which will be spent through December 2026. The Office of Equity will be using \$150,000 of general funds approved as part of the FY 24-25 Budget approved by the Board of Supervisors and \$29,623 from Salary Savings accrued in FY24-25.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- A. The Justice Collective Professional Services Agreement
- B. Alcance del trabajo y presupuesto Español/ Spanish Translation: Scope of Work and Budget
- C. Informe Resumido Español/ Spanish Translation: Summary Report

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A