Racial Equity Analysis for Significant Board Items

Board Item Date	6/3/2025
Board Item Name	Contract Awards for Local Homelessness Programs
Department/Agency (Lead)	Department of Health Services
Person(s) Completing Analysis	Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Manager

1. **Overview: Describe your program or policy and the desired results and outcomes?**
    a. What is the program or policy decision under consideration?
    b. What are the desired results (in the community) and outcomes (within your own organization)?
    c. What does this proposal have an ability to impact?

    ☐ Children and youth   ☒ Health
    ☐ Community engagement   ☒ Housing
    ☐ Contracting equity   ☒ Human services
    ☐ Criminal justice   ☐ Jobs
    ☐ Economic development   ☐ Parks and recreation
    ☐ Education   ☐ Planning / development
    ☐ Environment   ☐ Transportation
    ☐ Food access and affordability ☐ Utilities
    ☐ Government practices   ☐ Workforce equity
    ☐ Other _____

    > This item includes authorization of local homelessness services contracts under the purview of the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (Continuum of Care) and the Continuum of Care Lead Agency, Department of Health Services. This analysis is adopted from last year's approved submission, and a new analysis will be created next year prior to selections being made. 27 projects, totaling $6.1 million in funding, are included for operation in fiscal year 2025-2027. Outcomes include support for the local homeless system of care to address homelessness by providing permanent housing, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, street outreach, and navigation services. All contracts are for one year to address homelessness in Sonoma County, including addressing racial inequities, particularly in Black and Native communities. Funds from state, federal, and local sources are utilized for contracts and are approved by the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (Continuum of Care) Governing Board.

2. **Data: What's the data? What does the data tell us?**
    a. Will the proposal have impacts in specific geographic areas (neighborhoods, areas, or regions)? What are the racial demographics of those living in the area?
    b. What does population level data, including quantitative and qualitative data, tell you about existing racial inequities? What does it tell you about root causes or factors influencing racial inequities?

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    c. What performance level data do you have available for your proposal? This should include data associated with existing programs or policies.

    d. Are there data gaps? What additional data would be helpful in analyzing the proposal? If so, how can you obtain better data?

The contracts address the entire geography of Sonoma County. All 5 geographic regions of the County have dedicated service providers serving their area and many organizations serve the entire county. Additionally, underserved areas such as the Sonoma Valley and far North County and BIPOC communities are served by regional providers. Finally, one project operated by Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians serves the tribal community in Northern Sonoma County. Data shows that Black and Native communities have inequities in the local system of care as they are overrepresented in the homeless population compared to the general population. Additionally, Black and Native communities are less likely to gain access to permanent housing than other populations. Root factors include structural and systemic bias and racism, especially with regard to accessing housing on the rental market.

Performance data is compiled annually via the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and reported to the State of California Department of Housing Additionally, the Ending Homelessness Team regularly provides updates on performance measures including equity measures to its committees and Board under the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition. There are no current gaps in data, and contracts will also include requirements to collect and report on equity measures to the County.

Outcomes include (mandated by State and Federal funding):

- Overall reduction in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness

- Reduction in length of time homeless

- Increase in exits to permanent housing

- Reduction in returns to homelessness from permanent housing

- Increase in retention of housing

- Increase in earned and total income

- Decrease in number of individuals in BIPOC communities experiencing homelessness

- Decrease in number of individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time

- Increase in number of individuals exiting to permanent housing from street outreach programs

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3. **Community Engagement: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?**

    a. Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with or have experience related to this proposal? How have you involved these community members in the development of this proposal?

    b. What has your engagement process told you about the burdens or benefits for different groups?

    c. What has your engagement process told you about the factors that produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this proposal?

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The most affected community members are individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. All meetings for funding decisions are public and community members have the chance to advocate for applications and funding for underserved communities. In this funding cycle, the NOFA (Notice of Fund Availability) specifically invited proposals from BIPOC communities and applications were scored on how they addressed racial and gender inequities. Staff and the community have identified a need for more targeted outreach from the Coalition Board (CoC) to agencies serving BIPOC members and a need for more representation on decision making bodies that make funding decisions. There is also a need for more representation from BIPOC members on decision-making bodies, including the Coalition Board and the Funding and Evaluation Committee that reviews funding proposals.

4. **Analysis and Strategies: What are your strategies for advancing racial equity?**
    a. Given what you have learned from research and stakeholder involvement, how will the proposal increase or decrease racial equity? Who would benefit from or be burdened by your proposal?
    b. What are potential unintended consequences? What are the ways in which your proposal could be modified to enhance positive impacts or reduce negative impacts?
    c. Are there complementary strategies that you can implement? What are ways in which existing partnerships could be strengthened to maximize impact in the community? How will you partner with stakeholders for long-term positive change?
    d. Are the impacts aligned with your community outcomes defined in Step #1?

All projects being funded are required to address equity in their performance measures related to the performance measures below:

- ·   Overall reduction in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness
- ·   Reduction in length of time homeless
- ·   Reduction in returns to homelessness from permanent housing
- ·   Increase in exits to permanent housing
- ·   Increase in retention of housing
- ·   Increase in earned and total income
- ·   Decrease in number of individuals in BIPOC communities experiencing homelessness
- ·   Decrease in number of individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time
- ·   Increase in number of individuals exiting to permanent housing from street outreach programs

Each project collects data on racial equity in each category via demographic information pulled from the HMIS system. Performance measures include decreasing inequities, and data collected over the year informs staff of continuing inequities. A potential unintended consequence could be a project that receives funding but does not sufficiently address inequities, resulting in a continuation of communities of color especially experiencing homelessness. If a project underperforms and scores poorly on annual evaluation for funding, the funding can be reduced or eliminated the following year and allocated to other projects

The Ending Homelessness Team staffs a new Racial Equity Committee that will advise the Coalition Board and other homeless providers on equity issues and also provide input into reviewing funding applications. This group, comprised of individuals from the BIPOC community, homeless providers, and individuals with lived experience of homelessness, will be critical in maximizing impact and providing feedback to staff, other stakeholders, and contracted providers.

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5. **Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?**

Describe your plan for implementation:			
Implementation of contracts begins on July 1, 2025 and runs through the full fiscal year to June 30, 2026. During the year, outcome data on equity and system performance will be collected quarterly and also reported to State and Federal funders.			
Is this implementation plan:	Yes	No	I'm Not Sure
Realistic?	☒	☐	☐
Adequately funded?	☐	☒	☐
Adequately resourced with personnel?	☒	☐	☐
Adequately resources with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement?	☒	☐	☐
Adequately resourced to ensure on-going data collection, public reporting, and community engagement?	☒	☐	☐
If the answer to any of these questions is no, what resources or actions are needed? We have less funding than needed to address the overall need in homelessness.			

6. **Accountability and Communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?**
   a. How will impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having impact in the community?
   b. What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance racial equity?
   c. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities to make sure your work to advance racial equity is working and sustainable for the long-haul?

Outcomes will be evaluated on a quarterly and annual basis via required quarterly reports to County staff, quarterly reports to State funders, and annual reports to County staff and State funders. Additionally, information from the annual Homeless Point in Time Count will provide broad data on racial equity that can be compared to project level data. Data is also reported to HUD and the federal government via annual System Performance Measure submissions. Additionally, the Coalition and County staff have a communications strategy as part of the Board approved 5 Year Coalition Strategic Plan. In 2025, a new data dashboard, including equity measures, will be incorporated onto the CoC's website (May/June 2025). Finally, the previously mentioned Racial Equity Work Group will support accountability via analysis of annual and quarterly reporting. Additionally, more stakeholders from the BIPOC community will be recruited to join Coalition committees and working groups, particularly the Funding and Evaluation Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee.