



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 12/12/2023

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Office of Equity

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Alegría De La Cruz 707-565-8709

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

First Amendment to Equity First Consulting Professional Services Agreement

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the Department Head to execute an amendment to the agreement with Equity First Consulting, LLC to increase the current contract total of \$218,000 to a not-to-exceed amount of \$238,000, through June 30, 2025.

**Executive Summary:**

On June 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Equity First Consulting, LLC to support the Office of Equity's Core Team Steering Committee members and Office staff with the creation of a countywide Racial Equity Action Plan (Action Plan) in an amount of \$218,000 through June 30, 2025. This work has included documenting the co-design process and creation of the Core Team's Steering Committee, leadership training and facilitation services for the ongoing meetings of the Steering Committee, providing guidance and resources to the Office of Equity (OOE) and Steering Committee, and drafting the Action Plan.

The intentional process of establishing the Steering Committee (SC), and conducting several phases of work, including research and engagement around the Action Plan has taken more hours and support than expected for the Countywide deliverable. Additionally, since its creation, the Steering Committee has also lost four members, all of whom have left the County organization, increasing the workload of the remaining nine Steering Committee members and reducing the speed of progress. The reduced capacity can be addressed by extending support from our consultants to go through the writing and final engagement phases of our work with the Action Plan. Department management requests authorization to increase the contract amount by \$20,000 through June 30, 202 by redirecting from the contract's \$22,000 administrative allowance to gain additional 80 consultant direct work hours.

**Discussion:**

To expand the capacity of the OOE team to deliver and respond to the goals and objectives associated with the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan Pillar (RESJ), the OOE requested Strategic Plan funds to engage a consultant to support and facilitate the creation of a Core Team Steering committee (SC). The purpose of the SC has been to establish a smaller guiding body of trained Office of Equity Core Team members to act as a group of strategic leaders using an Anti-Racist framework to work with the OOE to co-develop the Racial Equity Action Plan, in furtherance of the County Strategic Plan's Racial Equity and Social Justice Pillar, Goal 3, Objectives 1 and 2. The Action Plan is a formal commitment to achieving racial equity by organizing an

iterative road map of action items, goals, measurable outcomes, and accountability measures to implement institutional and structural changes within County government.

The OOE partnered with the Human Services Department (HSD) to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Race and Social Equity Consulting on January 5, 2021. From that solicitation process, 13 proposals met Minimum Qualifications (MQ) to conduct the desired work of training the Core Team. The OOE also identified challenges of working with contractors who are not local and placed an emphasis on leveraging a local contractor to support its work. Of the list of 13 contractors meeting MQs, only two consultants appeared to be based and active in Sonoma County, and while many of them did Human Resources consulting and organizational development consulting, only a few of them were grounded in racial equity principles. The Office determined that Equity First Consulting, LLC would provide the best support for the projected work as the firm is focused on racial equity principles and the consultant can leverage local knowledge to support and cater to the particular audience that is the Sonoma County Equity Core Team.

On February 1, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved \$240,000 in Strategic Plan funds over three years for this effort and on June 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$218,000 contract with Equity First Consulting, LLC for the creation of the Action Plan. The remaining \$22,000, which is equivalent to 10% of the \$240,000 contract was set aside for ongoing program needs associated with this contract.

Since then, the Consultant has supported the Office with the intentional selection process of 13 Steering Committee members, who started their work in February 2023 with a Leadership training and since then have been supported by the consultants, who have facilitated ongoing meetings, and provided resources and guidance to both the OOE and Steering Committee.

Over the last 10 months, the Steering Committee has achieved the following accomplishments.

- Building the foundational relationships to do racial equity work in multiracial space;
- Researching and analyzing existing countywide survey results and other available data to understand gaps and opportunities around racial equity in the County;
- Implementing the Anti-racist Results-based Accountability methodology on their research findings by identifying root causes of inequities and developing solution strategies to address those issues;
- Conducting a first phase of engagement around the Action Plan in the County, including presenting their work to DAHA and conducting 10 focus groups with County staff and external stakeholders.

The SC members went through an anti-racist selection process, in which participants submitted applications sharing information about the level of support they receive in their department, the different skills and lived experiences relevant to this leadership role, learning experiences in the changing roles they have had as equity champions, as well as ideas to effectively embed racial equity across County service provision. The OOE relied on this process to intentionally select a group of 13 members who, together, would make the best configuration for this working group of leaders. Since February 2023, SC members have gone through several leadership development sessions together, as well as through technical training sessions to develop the pieces of the Action Plan that have been completed so far, including a first round of internal engagement and a considerable amount of research leading to the creation of several draft strategies for the Action Plan. However, since its creation, the Steering Committee has also lost four members, all of whom have left the County organization, increasing the workload of the remaining nine Steering Committee members who have

received departmental support to engage in this work, and reducing the speed of our operations. The initial commitment made by Steering Committee members and their home department was for 2 years. While SC members and the OOE have had discussions about the Steering Committee's diminished collective capacity as a result of the loss of the four members, we do not believe that there is capacity, nor that it would be feasible or time-efficient to deploy another selection process to fill the four vacant seats and provide the onboarding needed to offset the last 10 months of work that the current members have gone through together.

While staff anticipated the bulk of the Steering Committee work would be wrapping up around December 2023, the reduced capacity due to losing Steering Committee members, has created a need to expand the timeline through 2024. Staff expects to present a first draft of the Racial Equity Action Plan in April of 2024, and the final Action Plan to the Board of Supervisors for approval in June of 2024. To create a meaningful and actionable Plan and meet the aforementioned deadlines, the Office and Steering Committee require extended support from our consultants to go through the writing and final engagement phases of our work with the Action Plan between January and July of 2024. As a result, the OOE seeks to add \$20,000 of the \$22,000 that was set aside for administrative costs to allow for an additional 80 consultant hours focused on the final development phases of the REAP. The remaining \$2,000 will continued to be reserved for administrative costs associated with the program.

**Strategic Plan:**

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal:** Goal 1: Foster a County organizational culture that supports the commitment to achieving racial equity.

**Objective:** Objective 1: Establish an Equity Core Team by mid-2021 to advance equity initiatives across all departments in collaboration with the Office of Equity.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal:** Goal 1: Foster a County organizational culture that supports the commitment to achieving racial equity.

**Objective:** Objective 4: Develop a shared understanding of key racial equity concepts across the County and its leadership.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal:** Goal 2: Implement strategies to make the County workforce reflect County demographic across all levels.

**Objective:** Objective 1: Identify opportunities to enhance recruitment, hiring, employee development, and promotional processes to reflect the value of having the perspectives of people of color represented at all levels in the County workforce.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal:** Goal 3: Ensure racial equity throughout all County policy decisions and service delivery.

**Objective:** Objective 1: Establish a racial equity analysis tool by 2022 for departments to use for internal decision-making, policy decisions and implementation, and service delivery.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal:** Goal 3: Ensure racial equity throughout all County policy decisions and service delivery.

**Objective:** Objective 2: Establish regular and publicly available reports on racial equity in County policies, programs, and services.

**Racial Equity:**

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

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

June 13, 2022: Board approved a Professional Services Agreement with Equity First Consulting, LLC, to provide facilitation and strategic planning support for Office of Equity Core Team and Steering Committee in the amount of \$218,000 through June 30, 2025.

February 1, 2022: Board Update: Legislative Affairs, Strategic Plan and Climate Action & Resiliency

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY23-24 Adopted</b>	<b>FY24-25 Projected</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$20,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>		
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF	\$20,000		
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>		

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Original contract was funded with from Strategic Plan funding. There are sufficient appropriations in the 2023-24 Adopted Budget for this contract adjustment as it is within the total funded amount.

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None.

**Attachments:**

Professional Services Agreement First Amendment

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

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**Agenda Date:** 12/12/2023

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None.