



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 6/13/2022

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Office of Equity

Staff Name and Phone Number: Alegría De La Cruz, 707-565-8980

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Professional Services Agreement with Equity First Consulting, LLC, to provide facilitation and strategic planning support for Office of Equity Core Team and Steering Committee

Recommended Action:

Delegate Authority to the Director of the Office of Equity to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Equity First Consulting, LLC for consulting services for \$218,000 for a 3-year term ending on June 30, 2025.

Executive Summary:

The Office of Equity (OOE) is leading the implementation and further development of the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Pillar in the County's 5-year Strategic Plan. In order to successfully implement and prioritize this work, the OOE requires strategic planning support and expert facilitation to expand its capacity to meet the different goals and objectives listed under the RESJ Pillar of the Strategic Plan.

The OOE is seeking Board approval to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Equity First Consulting, LLC for the consultant to facilitate and support the establishment of a Core Team Steering Committee, which will lead the creation of a Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) that will be presented to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for approval and adoption. Through the creation of a REAP, the OOE will have an actionable roadmap to continue the ongoing development and/or achieve the following *five* Strategic Plan Objectives out of the 11 objectives that are part of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Pillar.

Racial Equity and Social Justice Pillar:

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

Discussion:

The Sonoma County Office of Equity, established in August 2020, is supported by a total of 5 full-time employees (FTE), of which 2 are time-limited and dedicated to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) duties. The remaining 3 FTE include the office director, an administrative aide, and a program manager, who supports the County-wide Racial Equity Learning Program. In order to expand the capacity of this small team to deliver and respond to the goals and objectives associated with the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan Pillar, the OOE requested Strategic Plan funds to engage a consultant to support and facilitate the creation of a Core Team Steering committee, which will support the Office and lead the creation of a Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) that will be presented to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for approval and adoption at the end of Fiscal Year 23-24.

According to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), "[Racial Equity Action Plans](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-action-plans-manual/) [<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-action-plans-manual/>](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-action-plans-manual/) can layout the approach to operationalizing" jurisdictions commitments toward racial equity. In this case, the REAP will help create a roadmap to "achieve meaningful and measurable results" envisioned in the RESJ pillar of the County's Strategic Plan.

The [Equity Core Team](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-core-teams-the-engines-of-institutional-change/) [<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-core-teams-the-engines-of-institutional-change/>](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-core-teams-the-engines-of-institutional-change/) was created in the Spring of 2021, with nearly 80 members representing 25 County Departments. The work of establishing this learning community was just the beginning of the Office's work. 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. In June, 2021, the Office of Equity entered into a contract with Equity and Results ([<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4969649&GUID=A6B37AB3-D783-4F86-B162-1413196B1204&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4969649&GUID=A6B37AB3-D783-4F86-B162-1413196B1204&Options=&Search=>)) to deliver the first version of our Racial Equity Learning Program for Core Team members, which was divided in two main phases. In Phase 1 a first cohort of Core Team members went through racial equity affinity and foundations learning and began to develop a common understanding of key concepts and predictable patterns in racial equity work, as well as an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in disrupting racial inequities as public servants. In Phase 2, participants were offered three additional skill-development opportunities including, which are part of the contracted work with Equity and Results:

- Anti-racist Results-based accountability training: This rigorous seven step process is designed to

achieve equitable outcomes. It begins by teaching participants about impact and then backs into solutions that focus on addressing the roots of inequities and require people to ask whether Black, Indigenous and communities of color are better off in response to those solutions.

- **Train the Trainer:** Three-day intensive learning experience to expand Core Team member's toolbox of facilitative moves and build greater muscle and practice to navigate and lead race conversations in groups. Participants in this training will support the creation and delivery of a Racial Equity Training for County leadership, including department heads and elected officials. (RESJ Pillar Goal 1; Objectives 1, 3, and 4)

Since its creation, and through April 2022, Core Team members reported more than 3,000 hours of training together. As the Office launched this work, staff recognized the need for a smaller guiding body (of trained Core Team members) to coordinate the work, direction, and capacity of the Core Team (currently 71 members), and as a response, presented the idea of the creation of a Core Team Steering Committee. The Core Team Steering Committee will act as a group of strategic leaders that will support relevant work such as finalizing the values, vision, and mission statement of the OOE, and expediting the implementation of several other goals and objectives of the RESJ Pillar of the County's Strategic Plan through the creation of a Racial Equity Action Plan (RESJ Goal 3; Objective 1 and 2).

The creation of a REAP, with the leadership of the Core Team Steering Committee, is critical to ensuring that the indicators we will use to track our progress in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the RESJ pillar in the county's Strategic Plan, actually generate better outcomes for our employees of color and local communities of color. Particularly, for Goal 2; Objective 1 of the RESJ pillar, the OOE will work in collaboration with the department of Human Resources to elevate the lived experiences of the Steering Committee and full Core Team, as we determine which metrics would be accurate indicators of better outcomes for staff of color in the organization.

The REAP will also set the framework for the utilization of a racial equity analysis tool (Goal 3; Objective 1) and County public reporting on the progress of racial equity programs and services (in alignment with the RESJ pillar) and whether those are generating better off outcomes for staff and local communities of color (Goal 3; Objective 2).

While the first two activities (Train the Trainer and Antiracist RBA trainings) are part of the ongoing contract with Equity and Results, which is managed by the Office of Equity, and funded with Department General Funds, the Steering Committee option was unfunded.

Recognizing these challenges, in 2021, the OOE submitted a Strategic Planning Funding Request for a consultant to assist the Office in meeting the ongoing needs (RESJ pillar Goal 1/Objective 1). While the request recognizes the Core Team has been created, the OOE has an ongoing responsibility to keep Core Team members engaged, supported, connected and aligned with countywide equity initiatives, particularly the achievement of the RESJ pillar goals and objectives. The [Board approved \\$240,000 <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10423647&GUID=258DED1E-BF59-456E-B347-D2384B2DE523>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10423647&GUID=258DED1E-BF59-456E-B347-D2384B2DE523) over 3 years for this effort during its Strategic Planning Funding Request item on February 1, 2022.

The OOE will continue to work with Equity and Results on the Antiracist Result-based Accountability training

through FY 22-23, which constitutes Phase 2 of the contracted responsibilities. While the contractor was able to partner with a trusted subcontractor to facilitate the foundational learning (Phase 1) of the program, the OOE identified the need to engage a different contractor to solely focus on the strategic operationalization of racial equity principles in the County of Sonoma, conducive to achieving the goals and objectives of the RESJ pillar. The OOE also identified challenges of working with contractors who are not local and is placing emphasis on leveraging a local contractor to support its work. Of the list of 13 contractors meeting MQs, only two consultants appear 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 are 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.

Given these considerations, the Office of Equity would like to contract with Equity First Consulting, LLC to facilitate strategic planning with the Office and with the Core Team Steering Committee. This work includes documenting the co-design process and creation of the Core Team's Steering Committee, providing facilitation services for the ongoing meetings of the Steering Committee, providing facilitation services for the overall Equity Core Team as needed by the Office of Equity, as well as providing team coaching sessions, technical assistance, and leadership training to the Steering Committee. With a functional and well-developed Core Team Steering Committee, the Office will be able to finalize and present its Values, Mission, and Vision. The support of this consultant will also expand our capacity to begin the planning and co-design of the County-wide Racial Equity Action Plan (directly linked to the achievement of the RESJ pillar goals and objectives) which will be supported by the establishment of a racial equity analysis tool and the creation of a framework for public reporting on the progress of racial equity initiatives.

Of the total requested, \$218,000 (90%) will be applied towards the Equity First Consulting contract with this Item, which includes 120 hours (\$30,000) of capacity building support for the Office over 3 years. The remaining \$22,000 (10%) is set aside for ongoing program needs associated with this contract such as meeting materials, translation, food, etc.

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.

Prior Board Actions:

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

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$218,000	\$22,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$218,000	\$22,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$218,000	\$22,000	
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$218,000	\$22,000	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

During the February 1, 2022 strategic plan update, your Board allocated \$240,000 from General Fund to the Office of Equity for Core team support over three years starting FY 21-22. Appropriations were added to the FY 21-22 Adopted Budget during the 2nd Quarter Budget Adjustments.

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

Agenda Date: 6/13/2022

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Professional Services Agreement

Strategic Planning Funding Request

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None