



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

---

**Department:** HUMAN RESOURCES

**File #:** 16-435

Board Meeting Date: 8/8/2017

---

**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Donna Vaillancourt, Human Resources Director  
Michelle Park, Equal Employment Opportunity

**Subject:** Presentation on County Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept and affirm leadership support for County Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative

**BACKGROUND:**

Diversity and Inclusion are core values at the County of San Mateo and fast becoming business imperatives for any organization that wants to work smart, innovate and promote equity.

To that end, the Human Resources Department (in collaboration with County leadership, stakeholders and advisory groups) is launching a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic ("D&I") Initiative. The D&I Initiative will be a multi-year process and opportunity for Departments to learn, gather information, set priorities, and develop D&I action plans to advance their diversity and inclusion efforts. Over the next several years, we will work with Departments to assess their recruitment and other policies and practices, identify and address challenges and obstacles to inclusion, increase self-awareness, expand training, and better serve the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.

The County of San Mateo will thus make a renewed commitment to its longstanding values of diversity and inclusion. Through this initiative, we will take a more proactive approach to assessing our needs and opportunities for improvement, and building a shared commitment to diversity and inclusion.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Department began the process for the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative by reviewing the County's current and future workforce and how to better serve the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce. San Mateo County is one of the most diverse communities in the nation - and the diversity of our community and workforce is increasing.

We looked at data and research regarding the benefits of diversity when it is a core value and vital

part of the organization's business strategy. Studies show that organizations with ethnically and gender diverse workforces outperform industry standards. Organizations that reflect the community can increase customer satisfaction, reduce conflict, and improve collaboration and problem-solving.

We also found that diversity alone was not enough. Inclusion was essential to unlocking the most beneficial results of a diversity plan. Diversity, when coupled with inclusion, can lead to improved employee engagement, retention, connectedness, and satisfaction. We found there are clear benefits when an organization makes D&I a priority and part of its strategic business plan.

Studies conclude that a commitment to diversity and inclusion must be embraced by leadership at the highest levels of an organization to succeed and be sustained as a long-term priority and commitment.

**Core Goals:** We start with the following core goals as we embark on this journey to reinforce diversity & inclusion as a core County value and strategic imperative to better serve an increasingly diverse workforce.

1. Assess and learn about County workforce diversity & inclusion needs, priorities, challenges/ limitations, and competencies
2. Identify barriers and challenges to diversity and inclusion to remove them and/or develop solutions; create policies or practices that advance diversity and inclusion
3. Attract and retain a diverse workforce that is reflective of the community
4. Promote proactive measures by assisting Departments develop and implement Diversity & Inclusion Action Plans

**Next Steps:** We anticipate this being a long-term strategic initiative conducted in phases over the next several years, beginning with a pilot with 3 - 4 Departments or Divisions. The phases will include 1) assessment and learning through on-line surveys and employee feedback regarding priorities, needs, competencies, and challenges; 2) development of Department Diversity & Inclusion Action Plans; 3) implementation of D&I Plans, and 4) evaluation, assessment, and replication to other Departments.

The County Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by promoting and valuing a diverse workforce.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Costs associated with this initiative are included in the Human Resources Department FY 2017 - 2018 budget.