



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 21-908

Board Meeting Date: 11/16/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Manager

Subject: Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Report, "Diversity and Racial Equity - How Can San Mateo County Change 'Talk the Talk' to 'Walk the Walk'?"

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Report, "Diversity and Racial Equity - How Can San Mateo County Change 'Talk the Talk' to 'Walk the Walk'?"

BACKGROUND:

On August 17, 2021, the 2020-2021 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled "Diversity and Racial Equity - How Can San Mateo County Change 'Talk the Talk' to 'Walk the Walk'?" The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters over which it has some decision-making authority within 90 days. The Board's response to the report is due to the Honorable Amarra A. Lee of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, no later than November 17, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury made 12 findings and 5 recommendations in its report. The Board responses follow each finding and recommendation that the Grand Jury requested that the Board respond to within 90 days.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: In 2020, the Board of Supervisors and the County Manager's Office made public commitments to racial equity in San Mateo County.

Response: Agree.

Finding 2: The Department of Human Resources maintains data on the racial, ethnic, and gender

identity of SMC government employees, through a robust online enterprise human resources management platform, to report on racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of employees in all job categories and departments of San Mateo County government.

Response: Partially Agree. The Department of Human Resources maintains a human resources information system (HRIS), which includes personnel and other employment information for employees. Reporting on racial/ethnic and gender diversity of employees, if available or provided, in all job categories and departments is available via this system. Race/ethnicity and gender are self-reported by employees during onboarding and/or updated through the HRIS. For some employees, the gender and/or race/ethnicity fields are blank, and no data is available.

Finding 3: The Department of Human Resources has reported significant underrepresentation of specific racial, ethnic, and gender categories of employees at management levels within the San Mateo County government workforce, relative to the San Mateo County government workforce overall, and the causes of these variances should be analyzed.

Response: Partially Agree. The County agrees that the Department of Human Resources has submitted federal reports indicating a variance of more than 2% in some management job categories with respect to some racial/ethnic and gender categories which the federal government defines as significant underrepresentation. Internal review and reporting of various job categories, including management levels, within the County workforce does indicate that there are variances between job categories and require further review. The County's Equity Officer and interdepartmental Core Equity Team is in the process of developing a Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan, in collaboration with County leadership, the Department of Human Resources, and other Departments, which will include a review and analysis of variances of certain management level classifications and efforts to ascertain the causes of variances. In addition, the County's annual Workforce Planning Report will be expanded to include more information on the workforce's racial/ethnic and gender categories, including management levels.

Finding 4: The Department of Human Resources reports significant underrepresentation of various racial, ethnic, and gender categories of employees for different job categories within the San Mateo County government workforce, relative to the available San Mateo County workforce, and the causes of these variances should be analyzed.

Response: Partially Agree. The County agrees that the Department of Human Resources has submitted federal reports indicating a variance of more than 2% in some job categories which the federal government defines as significant underrepresentation. The County's Office of Equity is in the process of developing a Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan, in collaboration with County leadership, the Department of Human Resources, and other Departments, which will include a review and analysis of variances with respect to some job categories and efforts to ascertain causes of variances.

Finding 5: San Mateo County's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, published every four years, is outdated and does not communicate sufficient timely information to the public, lacks clear, measurable goals, and lacks accountability mechanisms.

Response: Partially Agree. The County's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan document is current but is not intended to contain and outline such specific and timely information to the public. As previously noted, the County is in the process of developing a Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan which will communicate information to the public and include measurable goals and accountability mechanisms.

Finding 6: The Department of Human Resources' work related to diversity and inclusion is focused on legal compliance and recruiting and training for other departments, and the Department of Human Resources depends on other departments and San Mateo County government leadership for guidance on racial equity initiatives.

Response: Partially agree. The Human Resources Departments collaborates with County departments on diversity and inclusion initiatives. Various initiatives and responsibilities reside within the County's organizational structure, including where the dedicated full-time staff and budgets for positions and related work reside. Consistent with recommended approaches to racial equity, a new Chief Equity Officer position was funded whose sole responsibility is to support the County in advancing racial and social equity work, including an action plan and related equity initiatives as capacity allows. Prior to the onboarding of the Chief Equity Officer in May 2021, over the last several years, Human Resources staff spearheaded a substantial number of Countywide DEI initiatives, policy changes, and trainings, including coordinating a County Leadership Forum on Racial Equity, countywide training on Implicit Bias, developing the County's first Transgender Policy and training in collaboration with the Pride Center and LGBTQ Commission, developing a Lactation Accommodation Resolution in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, expanding recruitment efforts relating to diverse hiring with respect to people of color and women, establishing internships programs for underserved youth including emancipated foster youth and other youth residing in San Mateo County, creating the County STARs Diversity and Inclusion Award, and organizing a Women's Leadership Conference for thousands of community members and staff, among other DEI efforts. Much of this DEI work will continue or be expanded upon as the County continues to expand its commitment to equity through Departmental and countywide efforts. The Chief Equity Officer will continue its efforts on racial equity initiatives in collaboration with County leadership, the Department of Human Resources, and other County Departments.

Finding 7: The Health Department's experience implementing cultural competency, organizational change, and services delivery utilizing a racial equity lens provides examples of organizational best practices that could be used as models by other San Mateo County government departments.

Response: Partially agree. The Health Department has found that the most valuable step and basis for progress is learning about cultural humility and racial equity frameworks, acknowledging challenges, and striving for continuous improvement. Some Health Department practices could be used as models for other departments and others may be less relevant depending on the specific context of a department's services. The County's mobilization of a Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) cohort as well as establishing a Chief Equity Officer will be helpful in identifying best practices for all County government departments.

Finding 8: The training in racial equity that Health Department personnel began in 2017, and currently continues, has been a valuable step for the Health Department to help build capacity and expand its racial equity activities.

Response: Agree

Finding 9: Health Department personnel have specific training, institutional knowledge, and experience with Countywide Racial Equity Planning and administration that could be adapted by other departments for their racial equity objectives.

Response: Partially agree. The specific context, needs, and capacities of every department must be considered when identifying strategies to achieve racial equity objectives. Most of the Health Department personnel involved in planning racial equity work within Health were not hired with that training and experience, but they were interested in racial equity and volunteered to participate in trainings through the Government Alliance for Racial Equity and other training opportunities. A subset of these personnel designed the foundational training in racial equity that has been offered to all Health employees. A cohort of County staff from other departments is undergoing similar trainings.

Finding 10: The Health Department's Cultural Competence Plan and annual strategy updates effectively demonstrate how a department can monitor and administer ongoing efforts to achieve racial equity objectives.

Response: Partially agree. The specific context, needs, and capacities of every department must be considered when identifying strategies to achieve racial equity objectives. The Health Department's Cultural Competence Plan is a Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) plan that is updated annually as part of the BHRS accountability to the State for services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries. This Multi-Cultural Organizational Development (MCOD) Action Plan is a detailed framework, plan, and training BHRS has used to advance equity, diversity, and principles of cultural humility and inclusion in the workplace. Staff with experience in MCOD have been involved in the Health Department's broader efforts and influenced the Department's Racial Equity Action Plan.

Finding 11: The Health Department's Racial Equity Action Plan is a useful example of how a department can plan for organizational change while incorporating measurable performance indicators and organizational accountability.

Response: Partially agree. While the specific context, needs, and capacities of every department must be considered when identifying strategies to achieve racial equity objectives, the Health Department's Racial Equity Action Plan is a useful example of how a department can plan for and prioritize organizational change. The Health Department's Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget contains its most improved effort to-date to incorporate measurable performance indicators and organizational accountability aligned with racial equity goals. The Health Department has been updating its Racial Equity Action Plan to capture the organizational change priorities that can drive those performance indicators. This update is not yet complete.

Finding 12: The Health Department's Health Equity Initiatives are designed to promote racial equity in the delivery of services to communities being served.

Response: Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Diversity-Related Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager's Office to create, and annually present, a report detailing the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of management and leadership positions within the San Mateo County government workforce, change from prior years, and the effectiveness of specific programs to remediate any gaps, by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented in that the Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2022. Thereafter, there will be ongoing review of the progress of the Plan, including information regarding demographic changes from prior years and effectiveness of programs or initiatives to remediate any gaps, among other relevant information. The Plan will provide a shared vision with the goal of driving institutional and structural change, and it will include coordinated efforts and actions in various areas throughout the County. In addition, the County's annual Workforce Planning Report will also be expanded to include more workforce demographics including race/ethnicity and gender by management levels and other job categories.

Recommendation 2: The Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager's Office to require an annual report from each department of San Mateo County government (including performance measures, and accountability), detailing the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of that department's workforce and the efficacy of its programs to remediate any gaps, by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented in that the Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2022. Thereafter, there will be ongoing review of the progress of the Plan, including information regarding demographic changes from prior years, effectiveness of programs or initiatives to remediate any gaps, among other relevant information. The Plan will provide a shared vision with the goal of driving institutional and structural change, and it will include coordinated efforts and actions in various areas throughout the County. In addition, the County's annual Workforce Planning Report will also be expanded to include more workforce demographics including race/ ethnicity and gender by department.

Recommendation 3: The Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager's Office to create, and annually present, a report recommending potential improvements to San Mateo County's current practice of reporting to the public on the status of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the San Mateo County government workforce, and associated performance goals, by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented in that the Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2022. The Plan will provide a shared vision with the goal of driving institutional and structural change, and it will include coordinated efforts and actions in various areas throughout the County.

B. Racial Equity-Related Recommendations

Recommendation 4: The Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager's Office to develop a set of recommendations, such as a model racial equity action plan, to help departments accomplish organizational change promoting racial equity in their work, by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented in that the Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2022. The Plan will provide a shared vision with the goal of driving institutional and structural change, and it will include coordinated efforts and actions in various areas throughout the County.

Recommendation 5: The Board of Supervisors should discuss, in an open public meeting, the advisability and practicality of the measures identified as best practices in the Discussion section of this report, by January 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented. The County is in the process of developing its Countywide Racial and Social Equity Action Plan and will undertake this endeavor in collaboration with County leadership and Departments. The County will tailor its goals, action steps, and efforts with County and Departmental goals, priorities, and needs. The Plan will provide a shared vision with the goal of driving institutional and structural change, and it will include coordinated efforts and actions in various areas throughout the County. The Plan will be brought to the Board of Supervisors in early 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the acceptance of this report.