

## **Equity Committee**

### **Record of Action for June 30, 2025**

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Supervisor Ken Carlson, BOS District 4, Committee Chair; Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston, BOS District 5, Committee Vice Chair

#### **Staff Present:**

Kendra Carr and Peter Kim, Co-Directors, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (Staff to Committee); Ann Elliot, Director, Human Resources Department; Rhonda Smith, Assistant to Chief Executive Officer, Health Department; Jamie Schechter, Homeless Services Chief, Health Department; Susan Psara Benisa, Program Manager, Health Department; Anissa Basoco Villareal, Deputy Director, Employment and Human Services Department; Ali Saidi, Stand Together CCC, Public Defender's Office; Sonia Bustamante, Chief of Staff, District 1; Jill Ray, Field Representative, District 2; Lisa Chow, Chief of Staff, District 4; David Frasier, Chief of Staff, District 5.

#### **Public Attendees:**

Kerby Lynch (notetaker); Gigi Crowder; Phil Arnold; Maria Dominguez; Phyllis Howard; Zelon Harrison; Mariana Moore; Deb Vinson. Teresa Pasquini, Lauren Rettaglia; Sara Gurdian; Shomari Colver; Tamara Shiloh; Media Ministry; Willie Robinson; Roxanne Carillo-Garza; Michelle Hayes; Johanna Gurdian; Rachel Rosekind; Annabelle Kasembe, Pastor Ed Harris, Cornelius Johnson, Odesssa LaFrancois, Velma Wilson, Cameryn Mabry, 925-431-2981.

#### **Introductions**

*Supervisor Carlson convened meeting at 1:00 PM.*

*Supervisor Carlson, Committee Chair, and Supervisor Scales-Preston, Committee Vice Chair, introduced themselves.*

#### **Public Comment**

*Teresa Pasquini: mother of a son living out of county due to challenges for youth experiencing disability and behavioral health issues; want to expand and strengthen the infrastructure, we need to do all we can to accept the funds available.*

*Gigi Crowder: I echo Teresa's comments. Served on BCHIP committee. We are anxiously waiting to hear if we will get the renewal.*

*Lauren Rettagliata: BCHIP has to be project ready. BH Dept worked hard on getting this forward. It is up to BOS to approve the funds and accept these much needed funds. Site deficiencies. Advocate on July 8 with us.*

- 1. RECEIVE and APPROVE the Record of Action from the May 19, 2025 meeting of the Equity Committee, with any necessary corrections.**

#### **Public Comment**

*No comment.*

*Committee received and approved the Record of Action with no corrections.*

*Vote was taken – two (2) ayes. This item was passed.*

## **2. RECEIVE updates on Services and Access For Everyone (SAFE) Center development.**

*Ali Saidi, Stand Together CCC and Public Defenders Office, presented update on SAFE Center. See attached PPT slide deck presentation.*

*Discussed history and context of need and purpose of the SAFE Center. Intergenerational cultural exchange, one-stop shop for all services, and safe, welcoming environment. Backbone organization for County's existing services, not a replacement and not trying to provide the services themselves. Support the network through coordination, fund development, advocacy and policy changes.*

*Immigrant rights movement recognizes the anti-blackness that has existed in our spaces in the past, and will be intentional from beginning to address and engage Black communities and Black immigrants. We welcome the partnership needed to ensure true radical welcoming and inclusion. Still looking for a physical location for service site. Aiming for December. Immigrant Action Network will lead this. Founded by Susun Kim and Ali Saidi, both immigrants. By immigrants and for immigrants.*

*Carlson: Regarding health services, will it include behavioral health? And how many Letters of Intent have been signed?*

*Saidi: Yes, absolutely. Several Letters of Intent and MOUs already signed or being developed, at least 10 verbal commitments (e.g. Centro Legal de la Raza, La Concordia, Empowering Refugees and Immigrants) to bring their services to the center. Waiting on final 501c3 status to sign off. We have been instructed by County to seek Philanthropy support, and CA Endowment has committed \$175K.*

*Carlson: Are we working with Jewish Family and Community Services and the Refugee Resettlement Agencies?*

*Saidi: Yes, working with all the Bay Area refugee support agencies already. Also looking to develop cultural activities (e.g. dance, song, arts, welcoming dinners, elders/youth activities).*

*Scales-Preston: Regarding supporting people of African descent, I want to be sure they will be able to access these services. No matter what culture, African descent are often treated differently and negatively all around the world. East CC has a large Nigerian immigrant population.*

*Saidi: Yes, working with many African immigrant orgs, and seeking an African immigrant for our Board. An example is in our planning for support groups, will start off with 4 different language/cultural groups, but having them share the same space. Latina Center, libraries, and other orgs have offered space.*

### **Public comment:**

*Gigi Crowder: NAMI service population is 25% immigrants. So very excited and in full support. But also a stark contrast from the length of time that it's taken for the AAHWRH to develop, and a reflection of the anti-blackness in CCC that makes Black communities wait so long for services by requiring exhaustive studies.*

*Carlson: I appreciate the comment, and want to recognize that CCC relied on the AAHWRH studies for the SAFE Center.*

*Willie Robinson: Afro-Caribbean immigrants in East and West County often face the anti-blackness described, and NAACP Richmond is open and willing to help identify Black immigrants and support how their voices are incorporated into the SAFE Center planning.*

*Phil Arnold: The presentation was very comprehensive, and appreciate the attention to inclusivity and belonging. I also agree that efforts for Black communities take too long. Native American children in boarding schools are an example of another group that has been harmed and traumatized but continue to be ignored and unheard.*

*Maria Dominguez: I echo comments regarding parallels with AAHWRH, and disappointed about rumors of delays about the AAHWRH, and do not want there to be competition; In Concord, a new city ordinance for street vendors that threatens them with misdemeanors for not having the right permitting or paperwork. I hope CCC works with Concord to resist this oppressive treatment.*

*Vote was taken – two (2) ayes. Update was accepted.*

### **3. RECEIVE updates and PROVIDE direction on Implementation Planning for the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub.**

*Kendra Carr and Pete rKim, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, presented update. See attachments.*

*Scales Preston:*

- *Always mention the \$1M we already gave out. Lift that up and be sure community is aware of the total investment.*
- *Can we create a 501c3 status now? Can we hire an attorney now to create that sooner than later? We have funders who are ready to support now, and will need that established.*
  - *Will need to create a Board for that and identify certain members.*
- *Can we move sooner than 2028 for a Hub?*
- *I agree with the \$1.5M ongoing allocation.*
- *Mobile hubs from CCH? Can we embed and wrap in into the Hub? To build trust and credibility for County services.*
- *Clarify and write out acronyms for RFP/RFQ (Request for Proposals/Request for Qualifications).*
- *And for existing services already out there, how do we get the word out? The details, the logistics, the availability? Let's start with the 13 orgs we are funding now. Everyday folks need to see it now.*

*Carlson:*

- *Is there already an organization that already exists that we can enlist for 501c3? To not do a competitive process?*
- *Do an RFQ for a lead agency while same time leading a process on our own (via BOS listening sessions) to vet interest and expertise.*
- *How do we address the mistrust and barriers to access services from the County? How do we outreach and build their capacity to hire and assign POC, and do cultural competency training?*
  - *We can look for funds in other pots and in depts' budgets, and not drain from this investment.*
- *Worry about timing, keep hearing it's taking time, even though we have made investment on front end, if we assist with 501c3 will it delay? I'm hesitant with sending it out for RFQ, T-CAB would need to have strong voice in whatever lands if a 501c3 already exist let get a bite before creating one, parallel tracks and see what can be done in community – is there a measure of interest to become a lead agency. Trust us critical.*
- *I lean towards an RFQ for lead agency, and an RFP for services. Regardless, I want to plan to lock this down in July Equity Committee for discussion at August full Board.*

**Public Comment:**

*Gigi Crowder: A micro-managed approach, assumes that there will not be any qualified existing orgs, or a coalition of orgs, that could apply. Why not just release an RFP and then trust in Black community? It is insulting to us that we cannot do for ourselves. This is breaking down trust as you move on this process.*

*Zelon Harrison: There are no resources that serve our community. There was a resource booklet, but it didn't have any of those. So can we create that list of existing orgs now so we can build the network and access services now?*

*Kerby Lynch: We are in a national climate where DEI is being attacked, yet here in CCC we have dedicated funds and a place-based approach. But this approach is risky and vulnerable, to create a non-profit in this climate. We need to hold this in-house, and hold our systems accountable. We cannot shift responsibility. We need a long term plan that rewards outcomes and proof of work, not personality or loud advocacy. This requires both systems and CBOs.*

*Willie Robinson: I'm pushing to have this process heard, realizing that we are building the plane as we fly it, which is always a challenge and a risk.*

*Velma Wilson: Disgusted that we are not moving forward. To create another organization is a slap in the face to those of us who have done this work for decades. We have waited too long to be heard and to be served, and now to be slowed down by creating a new organization. Stop wasting time and money on a new organization.*

*Phil Arnold: After all is said and done, more is said than done. The current \$1M allocated is not enough, and no one's received enough to do anything of significance. Let's get moving and make a decision, don't need a qualified entity other than those who currently exist.*

*Phyllis Howard: Really frustrated, having been in the trenches as a County RN. The work has been done, why are we still waiting? Just another slap in the face. Capitalize on the work that has been done and be about it and stop talking about it.*

*Debra Vinson: Despite the many established orgs, many do not serve Black people effectively. There needs to be an assessment to determine how well orgs respond to and serve African Americans. Acknowledge the existence of white supremacy and anti-blackness in CCC.*

*Scales-Preston: Let's move faster, have something ready. Provide a governing structure for how it will be ran, regardless of how you do it.*

*Carlson: I'm for two new solicitations and getting the money out into the community asap (Jan 2026). So bring that back to Equity Committee in July. A concrete plan to send to the Board that includes an RFQ for lead agency, and RFP for services and a Spending Plan. Take out the alternatives. Once we do the work in getting it off the ground, then we don't want to hold the work moving forward. And be sure there is attn to experience serving black communities. In regard to \$1.5M ongoing allocation that is proposed, we will need to discuss further with the rest of the Board of Supervisors.*

*Scales-Preston: I'm in support of a dedicated line item of \$1.5M, and willing to discuss in the appropriate way and process with the BOS.*

*Vote was taken – two (2) ayes. Update was accepted and direction was to bring back to the next Equity Committee a recommendation that includes a single recommendation of two procurement processes - one for a lead agency and one for services.*

**4. RECEIVE and DISCUSS the findings and recommendations from the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice FY 25/26 Budget Equity Statement Review.**

*Staff presented, see attachments.*

*Carlson: As we put equity more forward, would depts be more open to receiving feedback on how budget decisions help or hinder equity efforts?*

*Staff: Yes, a lot more room to learn and educate our depts to depoliticize equity and rather to push a better way to do business.*

*Staff: Trying not to add more work, but support things that they are already working on, and shifting how we see and approach a problem. Though we are trying to weave in ability and language justice into these conversations.*

**Public Comment:**

*Kerby Lynch: A core recommendation is to institutionalize and operationalize equitable operations, how do we incorporate equity tools and templates (i.e. look at Wash State's agency level equity tools; their use of equity liaisons that work directly with CAO).*

*Gigi Crowder: appreciate this work of the ORESJ, it's what gives us hope. Shout out to Budget Justice Coalition and Sara Gurdian and Roxanne and others who work on these issues and others including Results Based Accountability. To focus on more than just giving out dollars, but focused on outcomes.*

*Sara Gurdian: I want to thank ORESJ for taking this on at the early stages of their office, and demonstrating alignment. Their continued support in developing a shared language towards budget justice. We look forward to continuing to work with ORESJ on developing a budget tool for the County.*

*Vote was taken – two (2) ayes. Update was accepted.*

**5. RECEIVE updates from the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice**

**Public Comment:**

*No comment.*

*Vote was taken – two (2) ayes. Update was accepted.*

**6. Next Committee meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2025 at 10:30 AM.**

**7. Adjourn**

*Meeting was convened at 3:26 PM.*