

Grass-roots Racial Equity Movement Building:

**Forming the Office
of Racial Equity and
Social Justice in
Contra Costa County**



**The Core
Committee of
the Office of
Racial Equity
and Social
Justice**

May 2026

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This report and all of the Core Committee's work is dedicated to our beloved Contra Costa communities. To each and every person who participated in the community engagement process. Who participated by belief and trust, AND by ambivalence and uncertainty. Who took on and took in the necessity, vulnerability, and beauty of healthy struggle, risk-taking, mistake-making, and truth-telling.

This report, this process to form, launch, and realize this Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice belongs to us.

May it affirm, reveal, heal, and remind us of our power.

In Remembrance

We keep alive and present the spirits, hearts,
and legacies of Core Committee beloveds we
lost during this time.

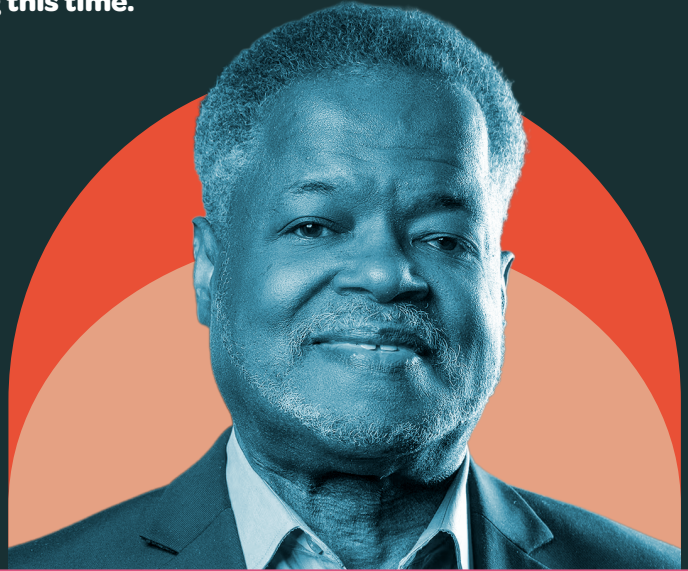


Latrece Martin

Latrece Martin was the heartbeat of the Core Committee. She loved on us unconditionally. She moved us through moments of struggle, uncertainty, and harm with tender and clear reminders that this work is life or death for too many people, that our collective work is a sacred gift and responsibility. She held us to stay in the moments of joy and connection a little (or a lot) longer, to not shortcut celebration and togetherness. She showed us what it means to move at the pace of trust and healing and how to live the equity and justice we are fighting and striving for.

**Latrece reminded us
that the only way is us.**

In her honor, we continue this work for all of us, even those not yet ready or resistant to us.



Supervisor Federal Glover

Supervisor Federal Glover stewarded the Board of Supervisors to acknowledge the need for the ORESJ and to authorize its creation. As the first and only African American on the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Glover had a knowing of what the ORESJ would mean for this county like no one else on the dais, past or present. Both in private and in public meetings, Supervisor Glover shared his personal experience as a Black man in Contra Costa County in a way that inspired and grounded our work. He, along with Supervisor John Gioia, walked with the Core Committee in strategy and spirit, and never stepped away from the struggles that arise when government and grassroots come together.

**He understood this
struggle IS the work,
and he stayed in it.**

We stay committed to the struggle in his honor.

Acknowledgements

Labor Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the labor of enslaved, kidnapped, displaced peoples, of immigrants of refugees, those who have been made undocumented, incarcerated, and stateless. We are indebted to all this labor that allows us all to be here today.

We remember that our country is built on the labor of enslaved people who were forced to the “Americas” from the African continent.

We acknowledge the foundational, innumerable, and ever-present ways in which our culture, our economy, our nationhood is **‘made**

possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and ascendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow. We acknowledge all labor, including voluntary, involuntary, and trafficked peoples who continue to serve within our labor force’.

Dr. TJ Stewart

nativegov.org/resources/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are each residing on tribal lands of those who have lived on this land time immemorial. We pay respects to their elders past and present.

Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today.

We recognize the resilience of those past and present, who work to build a strong and sovereign nation where Tribal members live their values and culture.

**Text your zip code to
1(907)312-5085 to learn
more about the Tribal lands in
your area.**

Harm Acknowledgement

The Core Committee acknowledges any and all harms that we caused, contributed to, and/or allowed in the process to get here, known or unknown. While intent can lend context, impact is what matters, always and especially in matters of justice. We apologize for harms of exclusion, extraction, tokenization, and/or undue distress that were enacted upon and/or felt by our community members in this process. We appreciate the grace and space for our missteps and mistakes. We stay committed to showing up, being, and doing rightfully and righteously as we continue this journey.



Executive Summary

Contra Costa County's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) represents a landmark effort to build a community-led model for advancing racial equity within local government. Emerging from the racial justice uprisings and public health crises of 2020, the office was designed not only to address longstanding inequities in county systems, but also to transform how government engages with communities most impacted by systemic racism and exclusion. Rooted in decades of organizing by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, the ORESJ was envisioned as both a government institution and a broader movement for structural change, healing, and shared power.

This report documents the development, implementation, achievements, and ongoing challenges of the ORESJ between 2020 and mid-2025. It was co-written by Core Committee members and reflects our experiences, a coalition of community leaders, nonprofit representatives,

residents, organizers, and county partners who guided a two-year planning process involving more than 3,300 residents. The report also assesses progress made since the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the committee's recommendations in 2022.

The recommendations called for the establishment of the ORESJ as an independent county department with two Co-Directors: one focused on internal county equity efforts and one focused on community engagement. The plan also included hiring six foundational staff positions in the first year, eventually expanding to 13 positions, creating regional racial equity zones and mobile offices, establishing an interdepartmental equity committee, forming a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB), and developing a public complaint and accountability process.

The success of the planning process rested on a number of practices and principles adopted by the Core Committee. One key principle was maintain-



ing a deeply community-centered approach throughout the project. We invested heavily in relationships, conflict resolution, and collective accountability. This emphasis on healing and trust-building helped sustain the effort through difficult political moments and strengthened solidarity among participants.

Our success also rested on an extensive level of community engagement. More than 3,300 residents directly shaped the recommendations through surveys, listening sessions, and public forums. This process not only generated valuable data but also built political momentum. More than 80 residents testified at the final Board hearing, contributing to the unanimous approval of the recommendations.

The creation of new county infrastructure also marked a significant achievement. The Core Committee helped shape innovative hiring processes that emphasized lived experience, transparency, and community participation. More than 200 applicants, the majority of whom were people of color, applied for the initial positions. Community members also participated directly in reviewing applications and interviewing finalists, representing an unprecedented level of public involvement in county hiring.

Despite these accomplishments, implementation of the ORESJ has lagged significantly behind the original vision. While the Board approved a six-position staffing model in the first year and a long-term plan for 13 staff members, only five positions have been filled over three and a half years. At the same time, the office has been assigned additional responsibilities, including grant administration and oversight of advisory bodies, without corresponding increases in staffing or funding.

This mismatch between expectations and resources undermines the office's effectiveness and reflects only partial institutional commitment to racial equity. We are also concerned with the decision for the ORESJ Co-Directors to report administratively to the County Administrator's Office rather than directly to the Board's Equity Committee as originally intended. We believe this weakens the office's independence and accountability.

There has also been a lack of progress on establishing a countywide complaint and accountability process for residents harmed by county systems. Inadequate staffing and infrastructure have prevented implementation of this key recommendation.

The growing national backlash against diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives also threatens the office. We fear that shifting political conditions and organizer burn-out could further weaken support for the office and stall progress.

Looking forward, we call on the Board of Supervisors to fully fund the 13-position staffing plan, establish the Lived Experience Advisory Board, create a complaint system, and recommit publicly to racial equity. Community organizers and members are encouraged to build a broader countywide racial equity movement through convenings, expanded outreach, and stronger coordination. Philanthropic organizations are urged to continue to support racial equity efforts, and to provide long-term flexible funding for organizing and systems change efforts.



The creation of the ORESJ is a historic achievement, but only a beginning. Sustained political commitment, community organizing, accountability, and long-term investment will be necessary to realize the original vision of a county where racial equity, healing, and shared power are embedded into our communities and government.

Background & Purpose

Contra Costa County is home to many social justice movement leaders, activists, and organizations. There is a rich history of organizing across multiple movements and generations. Contra Costa County is also home to entrenched inequities, discrimination (de jure and de facto), over-surveillance, under-resourcing, and exploitation of Black, indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC) communities. These conditions are often felt, expressed, and allowed within and by county governance and departments.

The pandemic and racial reckoning of 2020 exposed and amplified the insidiousness of white supremacy culture and racial inequity within our health, mental health, education, criminal legal, social service, child welfare, and other systems. It has also amplified the resistance to and demand for radical transformation of our county systems.

In November 2020, The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, led by Supervisors John

Gioia and the late Federal Glover authorized the development of an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) that would be informed by and launched after a community engagement process. A Core Committee was formed to lead this community engagement and recommendation development process. In November 2022, the Board unanimously approved the recommendations from the Core Committee, ultimately launching the ORESJ as developed through the community engagement process (See Appendix A for the full history).

The creation of this new county office was a huge accomplishment for Contra Costa. More than 3,300 community members contributed to the recommendations that were delivered to the County Board of Supervisors and were deeply involved in the political process to get them approved.

The outcomes of the Core Committee's work were accomplished in large part to the relationships that



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were developed and Committee members' shared passion for racial justice, deep love for community, and an unshakeable commitment to making tangible progress toward equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Recognizing this achievement, the Core Committee members have written this report.⁰¹ It is based on our shared memories and stories—information that was collected and compiled through extensive interviews and group discussions conducted in mid-2025.

This report shares the work that took place during the 2 year community planning process and the three and a half years since the Board approval to create the Office. This work has been a labor of love, struggle, celebration, grief, loss, and healing. It shares the successes and set-backs in launching the Office, including which recommendations have been implemented, and which are still unrealized.

Most importantly, this report offers a call for action: for cross-sector and cross-system partners to support and sustain the ORESJ, and to reinvigorate and expand the community-led and centered movement for racial justice that is critical to any and all systems transformation.

01 Current Core Committee members include: Kimi Barnes, Solomon Belette, Donte Blue, Sonia Bustamante, Roxanne Carillo Garza, Kanwarpal Dhalliwal, Angela Irvine, Kerby Lynch, Karen Ijichi Perkins, Willie Robinson, and Robert Rogers. Past Core Committee members include: Gigi Crowder, Teki Flow, Isabel Lara, Latrece Martin, Jose Rizo, and Ali Saidi.

The Timing of this Report

This report is being developed and shared in a time of growing authoritarianism, direct and escalated threats and violence against our communities, and grave disregard and divestment from the already fragile safety net. In many communities and jurisdictions across the Country, Contra Costa County included, these conditions are portending retrenchment and contraction of power, resources, and information, while diminishing community-led and centered priorities, needs, and engagement. We understand these responses (to decimation of health, housing, and safety net resources and investments) stem, in part, from the fear and uncertainty our elected officials and public systems are carrying and navigating as they work to protect and procure the resources we deserve. AND they also reflect an emboldenment of those in office and leading our systems who already oppose and/or don't understand the necessities and benefits for all of shared power, meaningful community engagement, and sustained investments.

The ORESJ and the community-led and centered work that made it happen are just as relevant, if not more, in these times.

We hope this report offers hope, inspiration, guidance, and accountability to fully realize the original recommendations that were unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Original ORESJ Recommendations

After an extensive community planning process, the Core Committee developed and documented their recommendations into a report and presented it to the Board of Supervisors in October 2022 (See Appendix A for the full history). The recommendations were unanimously approved after a six hour community meeting.

The approved recommendations included the following:

1.

In the Office's first year, the ORESJ shall hire the following positions:

- **Two Co-Directors:** one Director to focus on coordinating and expanding the equity work of county departments and one Director to focus on working more directly with the community. An Equity Committee of the Board of Supervisors (the existing Hiring Outreach Oversight Committee will be expanded in scope and renamed the Equity Committee) will work with the County Administrator's Office to develop the hiring process for the two Co-Directors with meaningful community input. The Co-Directors will lead the efforts to form the ORESJ and hire the remaining staff.
- **Language Equity Coordinator** to finalize development and implementation of a County-wide Equity Language Plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by county departments.
- **Reconciliation Coordinator** to focus on strategies and actions to address historical harms and inequity.
- **Data Analyst** to gather and analyze data to identify and address systemic disparities and enhance inclusivity
- **Budget and Policy Analyst** to develop strategic recommendations for equitable budgeting and policy development practices.

2.

The ORESJ shall be established as a separate county department that reports directly to the Board of Supervisors with regular oversight by the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee; the Equity Committee shall ensure that the ORESJ is effectively staffed and operated to achieve the objectives of the Office.

3.

The ORESJ will establish a central office, mobile offices, and four regional Racial Equity Zones to be implemented over three years.

4.

Upon the hiring of the ORESJ Co-Directors, the ORESJ shall form an interdepartmental committee of representatives from each county department. This interdepartmental committee shall assess, support, and coordinate existing equity efforts across the county and develop a plan to expand this equity work in partnership with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors.

5.

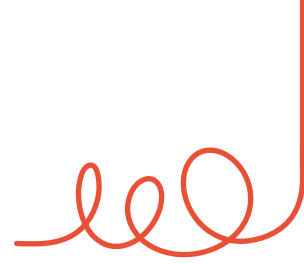
In order to create continuity within the ORESJ governance, the Core Committee shall serve as an advisory body to the ORESJ until the Office is fully phased into the Lived Experience Community Advisory Board in the Office's second year.

6.

The ORESJ will work with the County Administrator's Office and the Board of Supervisors Equity Committee to develop a plan to implement the other recommendations in the Core Committee Report.

Current Status

Many of these recommendations as well as the specific priorities for the first three years have been slower to implement than originally recommended (see Appendix B for the recommended priorities). This delay is largely due to a lack of funding and the addition of new assignments from the Board of Supervisors. This report lists the successes and challenges experienced in the three and a half years since the ORESJ was created as well as recommendations for the work that should be done moving forward.



Recommendation

Current Status

1.

Hire 6 staff within first year

Incomplete

Due to lack of funding, 5 staff hired (2 Co-Directors, 1 budget analyst, 1 data analyst, 1 administrative services specialist) over 3.5 years.

2.

New county office reporting to BOS

Complete*

The ORESJ Co-Directors report to CAO instead of the Equity Committee.

3.

The ORESJ will establish a central office and 4 regional offices and mobile office

Incomplete

Central office established.

4.

Upon hiring Co-Directors, the ORESJ shall form an interdepartmental committee

Incomplete

5.

In order to create continuity the Core Committee will serve as advisors until LEAB is formed

Incomplete

While the co-directors have proposed the formation of the LEAB to the Equity Committee, there has been a lack of agreement about what stipend will be provided to community members.

6.

The ORESJ will work with CAO and Board of Supervisors on how to implement remaining recommendations

Incomplete

Achievements

A comparative study of other offices of racial equity across the country showed that most offices were created through internal government processes. These offices hired directors and then created community advisory boards to elicit community feedback.

The ORESJ in Contra Costa inverted this process. It began with a Board resolution to form a community-

led process. This process was designed to compile community feedback that would become the basis for recommendations on how and where to form the office.

As such, the formation of the Contra Costa ORESJ is innovative and unique. The six most significant achievements to emerge from the formation and implementation of the ORESJ include the following:



Core Committee Commitment to a Relationship- and Community-Driven Process



Remaining Assertive in Principles



Establishing a Framework for Identifying and Addressing Conflicts and Harms



Seeking Unprecedented Levels of Community Input and Data Collection



Building a New County Government Infrastructure



Securing Philanthropic Funding



Core Committee Commitment to a Relationship- and Community-Driven Process

While the Core Committee was responsible for creating recommendations for the creation of the office, the success of the planning process rested on a commitment to build relationships with one another and to lift the voices of community. The Core Committee maintained their relationships even when the path grew difficult due to the challenging and complex nature of anti-racist work. This commitment is conveyed in a quote from a long-time Core Committee member:

“Just as important, maybe even more so, than the tasks and timelines of the process, are the culture and relationships we cultivate in service to and as part of the work. How we show up with each other when there is challenge or struggle. How we make sure to make room to celebrate and see each other. How we maintain the energy to be and stay in this work, in principled struggle, with each other amidst systems and structure that rely on tiring us out and lashing out at each other. Culture work is the work of racial equity and social justice, of solidarity.”

There were times that investing in relationships slowed down the timeline. However, working through misunderstandings and ensuring that all of the Core Committee members felt like they had been heard kept work productive and positive and ultimately led to success. This unity was particularly helpful at times that the Core Committee was presenting updates

or recommendations to the Board. With consistent messaging, the Core Committee was able to apply clear political pressure that ultimately led to unanimous approval of the final report and recommendations.

The relationships between Core Committee members stayed consistent over the four year planning and implementation process. After the Board of Supervisors’ approval of the recommendations, the Core Committee met bi-monthly to assist with hiring the Co-Directors in Fall 2023. This group of community leaders continues to work together as they plan the transition to broader county-wide racial equity strategies that reinforce and complement the work of the ORESJ.

Throughout the planning process, the Core Committee members invested in building strong relationships with one another and with the larger universe of residents, other community stakeholders, supportive county staff, and philanthropy. Relationship-driven organizing was also applied to interactions with the Board of Supervisors. The Core Committee maintained integrity of purpose and language while building constructive and respectful relationships with Board members, including those who expressed skepticism about the project’s aims. These relationships were key to securing the Board’s unanimous approval of the Core Committee’s report and recommendations.

The Core Committee also developed and maintained relationships with leaders from other racial equity offices around the country; this information-gathering yielded invaluable lessons from their own processes and provided an ongoing source of advice and support in the period before the ORESJ’s Co-Directors were hired.



Remaining Assertive in Principles

While the Core Committee were steadfast in building positive relationships with one another, they also maintained a commitment to their core principles. For example, while the Core Committee was tasked with developing recommendations for the creation of the ORESJ, they felt responsible for integrating and representing the experiences and opinions of the broader community.

In order to accurately reflect the experiences, needs, and priorities of impacted communities, the Core Committee made intentional decisions about providing stipends to individuals whose time was not compensated by another organization so that there would be community representation within the governance structure.

The Core Committee also established restorative justice and trauma-informed group agreements in order to manage conflict. These agreements did not prevent conflict, but they allowed discussions about disagreements to occur with integrity, and kept the group moving forward in their work.

The Core Committee also prioritized using the clear and direct language about racial equity and social justice that emerged from community conversations. For example, the final report referred to Contra Costa County's history of white supremacy. This term almost derailed the final Board vote as some of the Supervisors disagreed with its use. The Core Committee could have chosen to remove the term for political expediency, but did not because they wanted to remain true to their principles and to the expressed opinions of the

community. In response, community members spoke up strongly at the Board meeting in support of the report and the Core Committee. Dozens of people testified at the final vote, with many people setting aside their prepared statements in order to specifically question how Supervisors could dismiss their lived experiences through the rejection of the term white supremacy. This wave of political support aggregated into five hours of testimony that ultimately led to a unanimous vote in favor of the recommendations.

Having a community-led, principles driven process provided opportunities for individuals and the community to heal. Individual Core Committee members who had been harmed by government agencies feel healed by participating in this collective experience.

This wave of political support aggregated into five hours of testimony that ultimately led to a unanimous vote in favor of the recommendations.





Establishing a Framework for Identifying and Addressing Conflicts and Harms

The framework for identifying and addressing conflicts and harms incurred within the Core Committee was a success in itself. Holding onto the value that, “there is no transformation without struggle,” the group committed to slowing the pace of work as needed when there was conflict in order reach lasting resolution while preserving relationships. Additional meetings were held specifically to work through disagreements. The Core Committee adopted a consensus voting model, inviting members to vote using a five-point scale: Complete disagreement, disagreement, neutral, agreement, or complete agreement. In using this methodology over several years, there were a small number of members whose complete disagreement informed their decision to step down from the Core Committee. The majority of members chose to stay, believing that discord, while sometimes uncomfortable, indicates the collective commitment to the depth of the work. Those

who stayed developed a respect for multiple perspectives and held the view that differing opinions ultimately strengthened the work.

Beyond the Core Committee, the planning process also included structured and intentional support available for community members to share their trauma and lived experience in a supportive setting. The Core Committee’s community listening sessions and community cafés incorporated care rooms and breakout rooms. The Core Committee’s chosen timeline for sharing the findings from these listening sessions was also intentionally slowed, in recognition that hearing about so much aggregated community harm was itself traumatizing for many people. The work, however, never stopped. The supports developed within the Core Committee kept the work moving forward through the development of the final recommendations.

...discord, while sometimes uncomfortable, indicates the collective commitment to the depth of the work.



The Core Committee received the Chair of the Board Award in December 2023



Seeking Unprecedented Levels of Community Input and Data Collection

The Core Committee engaged more than 3,300 community members to inform their recommendations for the ORESJ. This was accomplished through the listening sessions (with 400 people), the community survey (2,600 people) and the community cafes (300 people). The surveys were translated into Spanish and there was language interpretation at all of the community cafés to ensure the participation of non-English and American Sign Language speakers.

These community members represented many different perspectives on their experiences of racist systems and resulting racial harms in Contra Costa County. The Core Committee solicited input from residents across all five supervisorial districts, LGBTQ+ people, residents returning to the community from incarceration, people experiencing housing instability, people with incomes below the poverty line, youth, transitional aged youth, elders, people with disabilities, people who experienced limited access to services because of their immigration status, and communities of color. In fact, the majority of listening session facilitators, listening session participants, and survey respondents were people of color. For example, 2,000 of the 2,600 survey respondents were people of color, and 38% were Black.⁰²

Notably, this information-gathering process was iterative, braiding community engagement

with data collection and analysis. Participants describe these sessions offering healing, a method for disrupting the status quo, and closure from past trauma in ways that government processes have never provided. Residents also expressed gratitude for being part of a movement that made a concrete change.

In turn, the stories that people shared about the harms they experienced within county agencies and the violence they experienced within their lives helped to form the community survey questions. The survey results were then shared within community cafes, where people could hear the survey results and make meaning together within more conversations. With such a high survey response rate from people of color, community members expressed that the data collection and analysis was a racial equity effort in itself. Ultimately, the Core Committee was able to quantify the racial harms experienced by residents and described on their own terms and in their own language.

This iterative sharing of stories and reflection on data that described personal experiences engaged community members in a new way and fueled engagement in the political process. The high level of community presence and participation at the Board of Supervisors meeting ensured that the recommendations were unanimously approved. The work to build the political base for the ORESJ led to 80 people providing public comments that lasted approximately five hours. After the final vote, Core Committee members received messages from county employees thanking them for making the bold and values-driven public statements that the employees felt they could not themselves make due to perceived risks to their employment status.

⁰² This set of demographic data shows that this community survey was groundbreaking. The ORESJ Core Committee was able to solicit feedback from the communities most impacted by social and racial injustices. Survey researchers often have the most difficulty reaching Black communities due to longstanding and rightful distrust. For this survey, the largest number of respondents were Black or Central, East, South or West African. At the same time, we were able to reach people who are immigrants, LGBTQ+, houseless, and living with disabilities.



Building a New County Government Infrastructure

Creating a new county office required more than a Board vote. The intricacies of creating job descriptions, hiring directors and analysts, and onboarding and retaining staff required sustained effort and attention to detail.

Prior to the vote, the Core Committee conducted detailed research in order to recommend an office structure that would be effective and sustainable. They insisted that the agency be led by Co-Directors: one director that would be responsible for internal county racial equity efforts and one director that would be responsible for community engagement. This recommendation emerged through conversations with existing racial equity offices across the country that were experiencing high rates of burnout due to the compounded undermining and resistance by external leaders with political power.

The Core Committee also worked with Supervisors Gioia and Glover to solve an inherent tension. Community members expressed a preference to establish an office outside of the county government structure. At the same time, the Core Committee recognized that embedding the Office within the county structure would provide a more stable source of funding and accountability. In the end, they recommended the formation of a new Board of Supervisors Equity Committee that would oversee the work of the ORESJ Co-Directors in order to create a degree of independence from the County Administrator's Office.

After the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the Core Committee's recommendations, Core Committee members worked for the next year with the newly formed Equity Committee of the Board of Supervisors, the County Human Resources Department, and the County Administrator's Office to create new job descriptions and salary levels for the ORESJ Co-Directors and analysts. Through ongoing advocacy, these job descriptions explicitly

centered the lived experience of applicants and moved beyond the traditional required education levels. These new job descriptions and salary levels are now part of the permanent county HR job classifications list.

The Core Committee also worked with the County Human Resources Department to create new hiring practices. Given that it is difficult for some community members to access county job announcements and descriptions, the Core Committee helped develop easier to read informational materials. These included announcements about the new jobs, simple to understand FAQ sheets and technical assistance on how to upload applications to the county website. The Core Committee also used their own informal network to reach prospective employees. In the end, the county received over 200 applicants who were majority people of color. This response was unprecedented and proves that departments offering well-paid positions that clearly value lived experience will receive a multitude of experienced applicants.

Another significant change implemented was the involvement and participation of community members in the selection process for the Co-Directors. Select community members, many from the Core Committee and all possessing relevant lived-experience, worked with the HR Department in reviewing and assessing all 200+ applications and then whittling the list down to the top six candidates. Those six finalists were then invited to a community-led preliminary interview panel process which was open to the public. The final round of interviews conducted by Supervisors Gioia and Glover also involved community members as co-interviewers. This process was an unprecedented effort to involve community members in co-creating and co-leading county processes that honored lived-experience and community expertise while also ensuring transparency and accountability in county decision-making.



Securing Philanthropic Funding

An intentional strategy of securing initial funding for this planning work from foundations rather than county government allowed the Core Committee to build a racial equity movement that was independent of government control. This gave the Core Committee the freedom to create the governance structure and community input process that they wanted without undue pressure from county employees or elected officials.

Working outside of government structures also created more efficient processes. For example, incentives for the community listening sessions and surveys were distributed quickly using a local fiscal sponsor rather than having to go through lengthy approval required by a government department.

Yet the creation of the Office was not guaranteed. While the Core Committee could ensure that the work to organize the community would always be centered around racial justice, they also understood that their final recommendations might not be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Fortunately, the philanthropy partners providing this important seed funding understood and trusted that working towards the establishment of a new ORESJ offered opportunities that were bigger than the Office itself, and related to building community



They valued the community organizing, culture-change, and system-transforming work that resulted from robust, values-driven and community-centered planning processes.

agency, power, and trust. These funders supported this larger, longer-term vision and goal. They valued the community organizing, culture-change, and system-transforming work that resulted from robust, values-driven and community-centered planning processes.

This early financial support was a key to being able to stay committed to the Core Committee's relationship-building and organizing principles. The investment paid off. The ORESJ recommendations were ultimately approved by the Board of Supervisors and the community base-building created significant structural and cultural change.

challenges & Tensions

During the planning process

Through the process of developing recommendations for the Board of Supervisors, the Core Committee experienced the following challenges or tensions:

Deciding whether to recommend that the Office be inside or outside the county structure.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the Core Committee was creating a structure for the Office that would make community members feel comfortable. The community survey indicated that many different groups of people, spread across all of the supervisorial districts, had experienced harm from county agencies. During the community cafés, participants stated that they do not trust the county and were worried that a new agency would be co-opted by the Board and the County Administrator's Office (CAO) if the ORESJ was created inside the county infrastructure. At the same time, other community members worried that the ORESJ would not be taken seriously by the county or be adequately funded if it was created outside the county infrastructure. In the end, the Core Committee recommended that the ORESJ be created within the county, but that it would report to an Equity Committee rather than the CAO in an effort to create some political protection and operational independence.

Balancing inside and outside organizing strategies.

As community leaders committed to racial equity and social justice, most of the Core Committee members participate in multiple organizing efforts. Some of these efforts can be considered "inside" organizing strategies because they require work within government and institutional structures. Examples include working towards Board resolutions

or department policies. Other efforts can be considered "outside" organizing strategies because they involve resistance and protest against government and institutional structures. Examples include disseminating letters of dissent, writing oppositional letters to the editor, or staging protests in Board meetings. In order to get a majority of votes from the Board, the Core Committee intentionally balanced inside and outside organizing strategies in order to keep community members that don't trust the county engaged while also recognizing that creating the ORESJ required a formal political process.

Holding responsibility in a high-stakes political environment.

While Core Committee members had the active support of Supervisors Gioia and Glover through the process of developing recommendations, and while the racial reckoning created momentum for organizing the community around racial equity and social justice, the Core Committee was still oper-

... the Core Committee intentionally balanced inside and outside organizing strategies in order to keep community members that don't trust the county engaged while also recognizing that creating the ORESJ required a formal political process.

ating in a high-stakes political environment. There was pressure to develop the recommendations quickly while the Core Committee had momentum. Most of the other racial equity offices across the country experienced political resistance and financial pressure once they were established so the Core Committee wanted to develop a model that could avoid the pitfalls experienced by others. There were also no guarantees that the Board would accept the recommendations of the Core Committee. The Committee took these responsibilities to heart and did their best to balance a commitment to long-term racial equity goals while developing a lasting model for the ORESJ.

The Core Committee could ensure that the work to organize the community would always be centered around racial justice...

Balancing obligations to funders and maintaining the well-being of the Core Committee.

As the Core Committee worked on the recommendations, they needed resources to support their time. Funding was therefore set aside for stipends and paid administrative and facilitation support. At the same time, taking funding introduced schedules and deliverables. Supervisors also felt a sense of urgency to deliver recommendations to the community. The Core Committee felt this

urgency and responsibility but were also committed to maintaining their well-being. They needed the emotional space to work intentionally and with tenderness. They also wanted the work to emerge organically from the community rather than following an institutional timeline.

Addressing active and passive county opposition throughout the process.

The Core Committee observed active and passive county opposition throughout the process. Through the community cafes, there were county staff members that questioned the validity of the listening session and survey data. There were specifically pointed questions about whether respondents had truly experienced harm from county agencies such as the sheriff department, the health department, the child welfare department and probation departments. There were times that Core Committee members observed a misuse of points of order and weaponizing technicalities to deny permission for slide decks and other supporting documents to be included in the Board agenda packet. Finally, in the last meeting approving the recommendations, there was explicit denial of the existence of white supremacy. These actions and opinions communicated an opposition to the ORESJ.

Meeting virtually.

Most of the work creating recommendations for the ORESJ was done during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, all of the Core Committee meetings, subcommittee meetings and community cafes were done virtually. While positive relationships were still developed between members, in-person meetings would have built relationships more quickly and possibly aided communication at times of conflict.

The impact of the pandemic on the timeline and the loss of Core Committee members.

COVID-19 also slowed the progress of the Core Committee as individuals and their staff members became ill. As the needs of community members increased, there were additional pressures put on organizations providing direct service, which also kept some people from attending regular meetings. These pressures built to the point that some members chose to leave the Core Committee.

Navigating naysayers and disruptors with different organizing priorities.

Outside of the Core Committee, there were community members that disagreed with the chosen organizing priorities. Some of these community members were active at Board meetings and created some opposition to the recommendations. While the recommendations were ultimately approved, some tension remains between different interest groups working towards racial equity in Contra Costa. The Core Committee could ensure that the work to organize the community would always be centered around racial justice, they also understood that their final recommendations might not be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Fortunately, the philanthropy partners providing this important seed funding understood and trusted that working towards the establishment of a new ORESJ offered opportunities that were bigger than the Office itself, and related to building community agency, power, and trust. These funders supported this larger, longer-term vision and goal. They valued the community organizing, culture-change, and system-transforming work that resulted from robust, values-driven and community-centered planning processes.

... working towards the establishment of a new ORESJ offered opportunities that were bigger than the Office itself, and related to building community agency, power, and trust.

Since the approval of the recommendations

Since the recommendations have passed, the Office and the Core Committee have experienced the following challenges or tensions:

Hiring of the ORESJ staff has stalled.

While the Core Committee outlined in the ORESJ recommendations that six positions be filled in the first year, the overall recommendations included a staffing plan that ultimately included 13 total staff positions. While the Board approval of the recommendations did not come with a funding guarantee, this staffing plan was intentionally developed to avoid pitfalls experienced by racial equity offices in other jurisdictions. The Core Committee predicted that there would be tremendous political pressure on the ORESJ given the need to guide county agencies to develop racial equity plans while also meeting the needs of the community. The 13 staff positions were included in order to meet all of the other recommendations. Since the recommendations were unanimously approved by the Board, hiring has stalled. Only five staff positions have been filled. This does not provide the ORESJ with the human resources and departmental capacity it needs to fulfill their responsibilities. The expectations heaped on the Office is beyond what five staff members can do.

Developing a method for addressing complaints never started.

One of the most important recommendations within the ORESJ report was the creation of a process to compile and address community complaints. There has been no work since October 2022 on this goal. The primary challenge to meeting this goal is the lack of staff capacity and infrastructure to create, implement and maintain a responsive and effective complaint system.

The BOS has given the ORESJ other projects not originally listed in the recommendations.

While not fulfilling the full recommended list of staff, the Board has also delegated responsibilities that were not originally listed in the recommendations. For example, the Board asked the ORESJ to complete a comprehensive feasibility study, and later an implementation plan, for the

creation of an African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub. Related to this, the Board also tasked the Office to distribute an additional \$1 million in one-time, one-year grants for African American supportive services. Without a doubt, these are honorable and well-needed projects aimed at addressing urgent needs. However, this required the Office to release at least three competitive solicitations during its first two years, all while the Office remains under-staffed and under-resourced. Another example is the Board's assigning ORESJ to coordinate and administer three advisory bodies - Equity Committee, Racial Justice Oversight Body, and the community advisory body for the aforementioned African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub - each requiring considerable amounts of time, labor, and capacity. New projects and additional administrative assignments overwhelm the time and capacity of the Co-Directors and staff and ultimately undermine the success of the Office.

County funding has not kept pace with plan or need.

The underlying reason that hiring has stalled is because county funding has not kept pace with the schedule outlined in the recommendations or the additional responsibilities that have been delegated to the Office. This lack of funding suggests that the county is only superficially committed to the Office and the recommendations that were unanimously approved.

The ORESJ Co-Directors report to the CAO.

The Core Committee specifically recommended that the ORESJ Co-Directors report directly to the Board of Supervisors rather than the CAO. The ORESJ has an intentional and distinct role from other departments in that its charge is to assess, convene, collaborate, support, and steward RESJ across and between ALL County Depts. This includes the CAO's Office. It is critical that the ORESJ can work with and in mutual support and accountability with the CAO, but not be supervised by it. The community engagement process forcefully and clearly lifted up concerns about the County's power structure and wanting to ensure the ORESJ was set up to address and release the entrenchment of supremacy with County governance, not be ensnared by it. The shift in reporting is counter to and undermines the aims of the ORESJ.

Outside pressure from the Core Committee has declined.

The majority of Core Committee members spent a tremendous amount of time in general meetings and sub-committee meetings while forming recommendations for the creation of the ORESJ. After the Board voted in support of the recommendations, Core Committee members spent another intensive year hiring the Co-Directors. Since the Co-Directors have been hired, meetings have been more sparsely attended due to a combination of burnout and expanding community responsibilities under the Trump administration. This has led to a reduction in outside pressure from the Core Committee on the Board to ensure the implementation of the recommendations and that the Office is adequately funded.

National attack against DEI has undercut support for the Office.

Since Trump took office, there has been an intensely focused effort to undercut efforts that were previously called "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)" as well as anything that appears to be an effort to create equity across race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status. In this broader political climate, the Core Committee has observed a decline in support for racial equity and social justice within county agencies and some of the Supervisorial districts. The Core Committee is also concerned that the national context will undercut a commitment to fully fund the ORESJ. These feelings of ambivalence or resistance may begin to shift as Democrats regain their political footing between November 2025 and November 2026.



Moving Forward

The Core Committee developed recommendations for the Board of Supervisors, community organizers, funders, policy advocates and researchers.



Board of Supervisors

The Core Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- Provide a commitment to long-term funding of the Office. This would include creating a long-term budget for the 13 recommended staff members. These were recommendations that were unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2022. The Core Committee would like to see the full plan implemented.
 - Fully embrace its past and current commitments, both as individual Supervisors and as a full Board, and be stronger and more unified champions for racial equity in Contra Costa, as evidenced in Board culture, priorities, funding decisions, and policy formation.
 - Support the creation of a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) that represents all of the Board districts by approving a budget and policy that ensures full participation and engagement of residents that reflect the county's communities most impacted by racial and social inequities. This includes county allowance of funds to be used for honorariums/stipends, food, and full language access for LEAB members. Funding for the LEAB should also
- include funds to publicize meetings and minutes in order to keep community members educated about any progress being made.
 - Usher in an ORESJ community complaint process as recommended in the original report by approving a budget and policy that ensures adequate staffing and infrastructure that allows ORESJ to receive, process, and respond to complaints and inquiries in a timely and efficient manner. This also requires granting ORESJ with sufficient access and authority to follow up and investigate all complaints and requiring county departments to cooperate and comply with ORESJ requests and inquiries.
 - Support ORESJ efforts to develop and achieve racial equity goals within and across county agencies by approving a budget and policy that ensures adequate staffing and infrastructure that enables ORESJ to coordinate and convene cross-department teams of equity champions and equity staff on collaborative efforts and projects. It also requires Board approval and direction of all county departments to prioritize their efforts toward expanding equity for their most marginalized and vulnerable program participants, clients, and customers, and when necessary, approving budget decisions that enable departments to succeed in those equity efforts.



Community Organizers and Residents

The Core Committee would like to see the racial equity movement in Contra Costa reinvigorated and expanded. Specific efforts should include:

- Building a more coordinated racial equity movement in the county. This work could start by the Core Committee hosting a county-wide racial equity convening to coordinate existing efforts including California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI), Participatory Budgeting, the Racial Justice Oversight Body (RJOB). Goals of this convening could be:
 - Document existing racial equity efforts and build a racial equity map so that different groups can understand where their allies are working on different efforts.
 - Compile organizing priorities for the racial equity movement. This could start by reviewing the recommendations from October 2022 and where progress has stalled. Moving forward, we could also list priorities that have emerged over the past three years, particularly under the Trump administration.
 - Establishing a Racial Equity Coordinating Council that could become an umbrella task force to coordinate racial equity efforts moving forward.
- Expanding the racial equity movement to include community members that have not yet participated. Using fresh outreach strategies, new leaders could be recruited from churches, grassroots organizations, public housing residents, unhoused community members, seniors, and individuals from the reentry community. Utilizing community newspapers and local media outlets to increase awareness of the mission and importance of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice would also help revitalize the movement.
- As the larger racial equity movement grows, the Core Committee recommends that community members continue to value relationships over political wins. Adrienne Maree Brown writes that social change is “successful when smaller fractals of society live the life they envision for greater society.” Intentionally valuing one another in Contra Costa is the first step towards the change we want to see.
- The Core Committee hopes that the larger racial equity movement finds inspiration despite a national political backlash to the racial reckoning of 2020 and local resistance to our work. How do we actively resource and connect this amazing community as an anchor to the work in the headwinds of Trump? We need a large base to keep pushing. We need to take sustained and active work to build the world we want to live in. We need people to take action. Show up for your neighbors. Put your voice into the public. Take a risk for others.

We need a large base to keep pushing. We need to take sustained and active work to build the world we want to live in. We need people to take action. Show up for your neighbors. Put your voice into the public. Take a risk for others.





Philanthropy

The Core Committee recommends that philanthropy:

- Remain committed to funding racial equity work. Studies have shown that philanthropic investment in racial equity work is in decline. Foundation grants are essential in this moment in which the federal government and philanthropic boards are retreating.
- Provide funding for long-term racial equity organizing in the county. This includes resourcing a county-wide Racial Equity Coordinating Council and other efforts outside county government. Philanthropy should also provide support for the community organizing goals held by the ORESJ. This would create more independence for the ORESJ to more radically support strategies such as collecting and addressing complaints about harms caused by the county. These investments have to be deeper, multi-year investments so that organizers are not chasing funding each year. Additionally, providing general operating support and eliminating reporting requirements provide opportunities for organizations to spend more time on their work.
- Continue to support organizing and structural change in more public ways. The Core Committee asks that funders directly pressure the CAO and BOS to fund the ORESJ and remain committed to the recommendations that they voted on unanimously.
- Provide radical thought partnership. As billionaire oligarchs dismantle federal funding streams and strengthen suffocating capitalist practices that reduce salaries and increase housing costs, the Core Committee asks philanthropy to support the development of alternative economic models for non-profit organizations. For example, funders could help lobby the state to create new cooperative tax free business structures that could be more financially sustainable than traditional 401c3s.
- Support funder briefings so that racial justice organizers can expand their base of funding.
- Provide in-kind capacity building and training.
- Stay committed to organizing despite swings in state and national politics. This holds true for program officers as well as philanthropic boards.
- Challenge white supremacy and capitalist culture within your own organization.



Challenge white supremacy* and capitalist culture within your own organization.

**White supremacy is a belief system and ideology that (falsely and harmfully) positions white people and whiteness as dominant, superior, more worthy, and more precious than Black people, indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC). A fuller discussion of how we define white supremacy can be found on page 11 of the original ORESJ recommendations.*

Policy and Research

The Core Committee recommends that policy advocates and researchers help the ORESJ implement the policy and research recommendations in the original report:

- A top priority is to work with the ORESJ to create data dashboards to make county outcomes available to all.
- It would also help to support the Office as they create a shared definition of equity as well as racial equity tools that could be used by county agencies and the community.

Dissemination

The next steps for this work revolve around disseminating this report. The Core Committee plans to:

- Share this report locally within Contra Costa residents. The Core Committee will be planning a local racial justice convening. The findings from this report will be shared with the community in order to collaboratively identify gaps and strategies for building a broader racial equity movement.
- Share this report nationally to share our successes and challenges

**in the
hope of
inspiring
new
offices
across
the state
and
country.**



Appendix A: History of the ORESJ

In 2017, Contra Costa County began participating in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) network. From this group, a Race Equity Action Plan (REAP) was presented to the Public Protection Committee in 2019. This REAP called for a community process for improving racial equity and social justice.

In 2020, the Gateways for Growth project under the County Employment and Human Services and Health Services Departments completed a research brief on how the county should improve services for immigrants.⁰³ This was also the year that the country experienced a shelter-in-place order for COVID-19. Communities began to experience a racial reckoning with the state-sanctioned murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery as well as the catalyzing of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

During this trailblazing time, Supervisor John Gioia began reaching out to Contra Costa community leaders about efforts that the county could undertake to support the local racial equity movement. Conversations coalesced around the possibility of forming a county office focused on racial equity. However, community advisors did not want the county to take the lead, insisting that the formation of the Office be a community-led process and that initial funding come from philanthropy so that the process could be independent of the County Board of Supervisors.

As work began, County Supervisors John Gioia and Federal Glover attended the initial community meetings. Community leaders developed a written overview to explain the project's goals to potential funders. The Supervisors then partnered with community leaders as they requested funding from the Contra Costa Funders Forum and other foundations in the region.

In November 2020, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to declare that racism is a public health emergency, that the County Health Department continue to play a leading role in addressing and mitigating racial inequities in health outcomes, and that the county form an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. At the community's

insistence, the Board resolution included language that required a community-led planning process to:

1. Develop the final structure, roles, and responsibilities of the Office;
2. Develop a plan that reflects the community's stated priorities for the work of the office and
3. Create mechanisms to hold the Office transparently accountable to the public.

In December 2020, funding for the planning process was secured. Together, the Board and community leaders engaged local philanthropic partners to invest in the community engagement process, with a clear aim to develop the ORESJ, and also to build more coordinated and collectivized movements for justice in the county.

Though it may seem counter to the efforts and need for county investment and infrastructure, this was an intentional strategy to ensure deep and broad community engagement. County funds would have tethered us to the pace and deliverables of the system, not the pace and priorities of the community. We leveraged philanthropic dollars so that we could take the time needed and deserved to gather, listen, inquire, and reveal a truer and fuller picture of what resources are needed for the ORESJ to achieve its intended aims.⁰⁴ A few of our initial funders have continued to invest in the Core Committee's work after the Office was approved and launched. These resources have been critical, allowing the Core Committee to stay connected and active in the launch of the Office (developing and participating in the hiring of the Co-Directors, supporting their onboarding, and monitoring the implementation of the Office), and also plan for the shift from the ORESJ Community Engagement Core Committee into a more collectivized eco-system of social justice efforts, initiatives and campaigns across the county. These investments are also allowing us to document, disseminate, and share this work with others connected and considering such work.

Throughout this process, we have remembered and re-

⁰³ See <https://www.gatewaysforgrowth.org/about-g4g/> for more information.

⁰⁴ We thank the following funders who invested in the ORESJ Community Engagement Process: The CA Endowment, The Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation (funder and fiscal sponsor), Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, The East Bay Community Foundation, John Muir Community Benefits, John Muir Health Foundation, RCF Connects, Republic Services, San Francisco Foundation, YH Soda Foundation, Zellerbach Foundation

Appendix A: History of the ORESJ

mind ourselves and each other that public and philanthropic resources already belong to our communities. Our collective responsibility is to ensure just (re)distribution and allocation of all our resources, whichever coffers they sit in.

From January-March of 2021, community members created a governance structure for the planning process. A Host Table was identified, composed of 30 representatives from community organizations, members of the County Board of Supervisors, representatives from key county agencies, and eight individual community members. The majority of these Host Table participants were Black, indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC).

The Host Table also began soliciting input from the broader community, including developing an inquiry guide to use in a Community Listening Campaign. A smaller group from the Host Table committed to leading the day-to-day work of planning, community engagement, and development of recommendations. This smaller group came to be known as the Core Committee. This committee primarily included BIPOC resident leaders and BIPOC-led organization representatives. There was also diverse representation geographically and across immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

- The Core Committee committed to radical inquiry from the beginning. All work was infused by a core set of values:
- We center the priorities and lived experiences of residents and families most vulnerable to systems' harm and inequity.
- We disrupt racism and injustice that exist in our institutions and systems.
- We center healing, justice and equity.
- We engage in healthy struggle so that we are accountable, innovative and creative, and in the end, stronger.
- We learn and adapt through radical listening, inquiry and reflection.
- We advocate for resources through an equitable, humanizing and transparent process.

Because the Core Committee identified trust and authentic relationship building with one another and with the community as being even higher in importance than the project deliverables, the process of organizing the work was intentionally non-linear, iterative, and productive.

Host Table and Core Committee members led 40 listening sessions in 2021 with more than 400 community residents and stakeholders. They also sponsored in-depth sessions with racial equity experts and other trainers, including:

- Trauma Transformed, which provided care rooms and supports during the listening sessions to support participants who may (re)experience distress in listening to and sharing their experiences of harm.
- Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy, who provided a session on understanding racial justice.
- Dan Geiger, MBA, who provided a session on participatory budgeting.
- Core Committee members, who organized a training session to improve facilitation skills.
- Ceres Policy Research, who offered a training session on how to collect, analyze, and understand research.

In June 2021, Ceres Policy Research, an organization committed to community-based research, was hired to analyze the listening session data and facilitate the Core Committee's planning process. At this point, the governance structure was expanded, and the Core Committee was organized into subcommittees focused on work streams including project management, communications, and research and information gathering.

Once the findings from the listening sessions were complete, the research committee developed a community survey building on the lessons learned. The survey focused on identifying the forms of harm that community members experienced within county agencies, and on the forms of violence community members experienced in their families, at work, and in their neighborhoods. The research committee collected surveys from more than 2,600 Contra Costa residents, which were then analyzed using advanced statistical analyses.

Once the analysis of the survey was completed, the Core Committee convened five community cafés attended by more than 300 attendees, to share the findings from both the listening sessions and the survey. These community cafés were held online with interpreters that allowed interaction between English, Spanish, and ASL speakers. The cafés provided opportunities for breakout discussions and solicited resident input on recommendations for cre-

Appendix A: History of the ORESJ

ating the ORESJ.

Finally, the Core Committee developed and documented their recommendations into a report and presented it to the Board of Supervisors in October 2022.

The presentation and deliberations lasted six hours, with significant discussion and debate. In the course of the long meeting, the Core Committee was able to address concerns and opposition raised by a few of the Supervisors, concerning both the findings themselves and the language used in the report to convey the types and degree of racial harms experienced by community members. During the hearing, dozens of community members provided public comment, pushing back on the Supervisors' resistance and insisting that the Board follow the lead and experiences of the communities they serve. Through this display of community solidarity and power, and due to the Core Committee standing on its principles and leaning into struggle and engagement with the Board of Supervisors, the recommendations were ultimately unanimously approved by the Board.

Appendix B: Office Priorities

In November 2022, the ORESJ recommendation report listed recommendations for the first year. The report also set out the following Office priorities for years one to three.

Priority

1. Establish an inter-departmental team across county departments. This group will assess and coordinate racial equity and social justice efforts across the county.

2. Set a safe, welcoming, and belonging culture in Contra Costa County. This should include:

- Creating a mechanism to address individual and aggregate concerns/complaints
 - Fostering county agency cultures that promote equity, inclusion, and social justice
 - Finalizing the development and implementation of a Contra Costa countywide language equity plan to ensure that residents and families have a meaningful and equitable opportunity to apply for, receive, participate in, and benefit from services offered by county departments. (See Appendix C for the history of the plan.)
 - Building capacity for youth leadership and engagement.
-

3. Build capacity to establish trust across race, ethnicity, income, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This should include:

- Creating a data dashboard, populated with our community survey results, that can track and aggregate data on community requests, complaints, and trends.
 - Facilitating ongoing conversations with community members about our survey results.
-

4. Conduct a landscape analysis of racial (in)justice. This should include:

- Completing a racial justice audit across county departments.
 - Forming “learning labs” for members of the Board of Supervisors and department heads and staff.
 - Launching a Contra Costa Racial Equity report card that includes aggregated information about community needs and complaints.
-

5. Review the extent to which county budget allocations are aligned with equity and social justice principles to address root causes of inequity. This should include:

- Working with the Budget Justice Coalition to initiate a participatory budget process that might be initially funded through ARPA dollars.
-

6. Reviewing and promoting policies within county agencies that achieve equity, fairness, and opportunity for all.
