

# RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

## PHASE 1 EVALUATION

### Economic and Workforce Development Observations and Recommendations for Progress Report

As a City, we are collectively and individually accountable for racial equity. This written feedback is intended to support your department in fulfilling that accountability as you continue to implement and update your plan, and as you reflect on change and obstacles in your next progress report.

Observations and recommendations for your department's Racial Equity Action Plan ("plan") are summarized below. This is a holistic view of the plan document submitted by the department in January 2021, taking into consideration the dimensions of **Spirit, Data, Roadmap, and Transformation**.

The Racial Equity Action Plan is a strategic document to baseline dignity, justice, access and belonging in your department. It reflects your department's intentions and next steps as documented on paper at only a single moment in time, and should be continuously revised and updated as your department grows. The implementation will not be one directional or linear, and will always be a work in progress.

#### SPIRIT

The plan states: "Government has played a critical role in creating and perpetuating negative outcomes and disparate impacts for BIPOC. We acknowledge that OEWD, as part of this governmental ecosystem, has contributed to racial inequity in San Francisco and that, to right these wrongs, it is essential to make this acknowledgement clear and to prioritize racial equity in the language we use, programs and partners we promote, and funding we distribute."

Beyond this, however, the plan does not further discuss racial injustice in its programs, services, or department. Additional context around this would have helped to ground the plan. Any plan to address racial equity must be grounded in truth and genuineness. In order to solve a problem, we must understand how we got there in the first place. **The department should demonstrate a clear understanding of how racial injustice is created within its sector of work, as well as within its organization.** These are not yet fully acknowledged in the narrative. In the words of James Baldwin: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

#### DATA

The plan provides minimal quantitative data about its workforce. While the data is disaggregated by race and gender, the analysis lacks an intersectional approach when discussing and comparing key data indicators such as pay, employment type, and classifications. **The department should prioritize completing an intersectional analysis of its workforce and ensure that the implementation steps in the plan are updated to address the causes of specific disparities. Additionally, in order to have a better understanding of current workforce inequities, the department should use specific racial identities in its data analysis instead of generalizing across all BIPOC groups.**

The plan summarizes results from a department racial equity survey in 2020. The department sent the survey to all 124 employees and 89 people participated - a 72% completion rate. The analysis was not race-centered or intersectional in its approach. The survey results are not consistently disaggregated by race, and not at all disaggregated by gender, classification, or employment type. **The department needs to gather robust and meaningful qualitative data from employees. As with the quantitative data, the department should disaggregate this data in more intersectional ways to inform the implementation steps.**

**The plan should state what data will be used to create metrics and dashboards to measure performance and support decision-making on an ongoing basis. The implementation steps should also note processes that will be used to maintain, secure, analyze, and share quantitative and qualitative data.**

## ROADMAP

The plan includes goals for each section that are relevant to the department. The goals were identified by staff through a collaborative process documented in an appendix. **The department should also set goals that are specific to racial disparities within the department and that are measurable and baselined against existing data. Without specific and measurable goals, it will be difficult to assess progress.**

All of the actions in the template are included in the plan. The department added actions around paying bilingual employees for translation and re-authorizing the Workforce Community Advisory Committee. In some sections, the plan identifies specific processes and tools it will use to implement each action. In others, though, the implementation steps are broad. For instance, one implementation step states that the department will “continuously share [the] Action Plan, or specific actions, to each unit for feedback and upkeep annually or as needed.” To increase transparency and accessibility, it would be helpful to include details around when and how this will happen. **The plan should describe how information that is used to implement each action will be shared and validated with staff who are most likely to be affected by decisions.**

The plan shows the number of months required to complete each action is listed in the plan. However, no start or end dates are included. **Every action in the plan should have a clear and timely start and end date.**

The plan names teams that are responsible for each action. However, often multiple teams are listed. The teams are also very broad - for instance, one action states that “BIPOC staff” will serve as the lead. **The plan should clarify who is accountable for final decisions on each action as well as who will be called on to provide support.**

The resources for each action are not consistently estimated in the plan. For some actions, the specific teams that will be involved are listed as resources, while for others, the only resource identified is “staff time.” A few material resources, such as project management software, training, and online platforms, are included in the plan, but not for all actions. Overall, the number of staff hours and budget amounts needed are not estimated, and it is not clear which resources are available or yet to be secured. **The resources for each action, such as staff and budget, should be scoped in further detail. It is important to ensure that staff who are named in the plan as responsible are actually equipped with the resources and decision-making authority to successfully make change.**

Lastly, consider adding risk mitigation or contingencies to the plan. **Plan implementation could include steps for monitoring, avoiding, or mitigating identified and potential risks and unexpected issues that may arise from addressing racial inequities within the department.** For instance, besides resource and schedule needs, this may

need to involve accounting for people’s internal motivations, understanding external sociopolitical movements, and socializing new ideas and processes.

## TRANSFORMATION

Ultimately, the purpose of racial equity work is to move our City towards **Transformation**. While this was not an individual section of the Racial Equity Action Plan template, we offer these additional reflections to inform your department’s continued work:

The plan includes some creative actions, such as “intraoffice working groups focused on deconstructing racial traumas within government processes.” Overall, however, the plan does not identify specific racial inequities to be addressed, and the implementation steps do not name or center issues facing BIPOC employees. **Every aspect of making BIPOC employees “net better off” in the workplace should be addressed in tangible ways in the plan: financially; emotionally and mentally; relationally; physically; and purposefully.** Every employee is a person, not only a worker.

Throughout the plan, the department delegates several important actions and decisions to the Department of Human Resources without describing how employees will be involved. **The department should reflect on how to shift internal decision-making structures to repair trust and empower BIPOC employees.** It requires both intention and commitment to change the harmful and unequal distribution of power in our status quo systems. The people closest to the pain should be closest to the power, as they have the knowledge and expertise that is required to address the department’s racial equity challenges.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

We appreciate that the department formed a working group of 22 division leads and seven sub-committees of 35 staff to develop the plan, and the hundreds of hours they devoted to this work.

We were also encouraged to see the following outlined in your department’s plan:

- Naming actions that are priorities, such as developing a formal and transparent process for raises and promotions;
- Documenting issues that will be included in an exit interview or survey, including racial equity, gender bias, discrimination and harassment, team dynamics, relationships with management, skills and leadership development, and work distribution and out-of-classification responsibilities;
- Implementing flexible work plan and project management tools;
- Ongoing monthly meetings of the Racial Equity Working Group and sub-committees.

Along the continuum of becoming an anti-racist organization, the Racial Equity Action Plan indicates that the department is emerging into the “symbolic change” stage. As you continue implementing the Racial Equity Action Plan, we urge you to continuously measure and reflect on progress towards **Transformation**:

- **How will you revise your indicators to measure actual outcomes for BIPOC employees, rather than technical outputs?**
- **How will you ensure the implementation steps are addressing the root causes of racial disparities?**
- **How will you center racial equity in the department’s treatment of its BIPOC employees, rather than settling for the appearance of racial diversity?**

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We understand that the Racial Equity Action Plan can only capture what is planned at a moment in time. We know that over the last year your department has been implementing and adapting your plan. We look forward to learning more about the meaningful changes your department is making for employees, especially those who are Black, American Indian, and People of Color, in your March 2022 progress report. Thank you for your continued partnership in this transformational work.