

Journeying to Advance Equity in San Mateo County

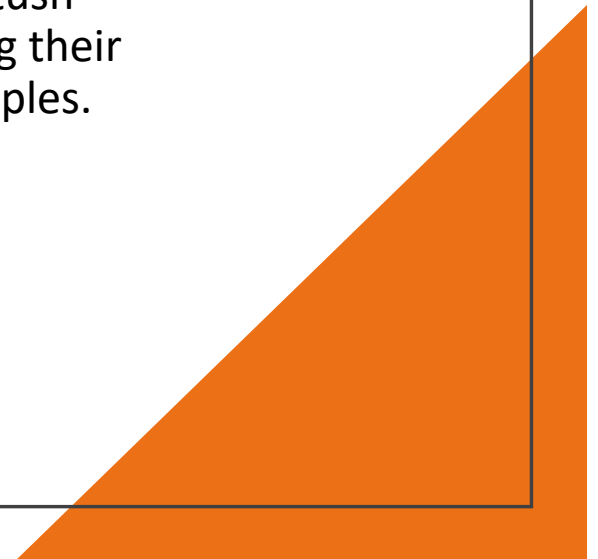
Shireen Malekafzali (she/her) | Chief Equity Officer

Thrive CEO Luncheon | July 28, 2021



Acknowledging
the land our
County sits on.
Land of the
Ramaytush
Ohlone People

We wish to pay our respects by
acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders,
and Relatives of the Ramaytush
Community and by affirming their
sovereign rights as First Peoples.



Forum Overview

Equity Framework Presentation

- A little about me
- Defining equity
- State of equity in San Mateo County
- Early equity efforts
- What's required of us

Q/A

Discussion

Closing

About me - -

I am from...

I am from the womb of a depressed warrior

From a land of empire, oppression, and poetry

From a climate of black outs, bombs, and instability

I am an immigrant.

A fresh lens on America – an awkward sense of self and belonging

I am from the ingredients of the American Dream –

from hard work, sacrifice, and loss,

school lunches, ESL, and luck,

emergency rooms, student loans, and struggle,

from strength and hope, and pain and more luck

A reluctant warrior – an introvert, a mom, a learner

I am from the skies of privilege and opportunity

Flying the spirits of ancestral hope

Afloat on the waters of anxiety

A unique blend of apple pie – a splash of rosewater, a dash of pomegranate, with a foreign texture

I am the scars and ambitions of my parent's dreams

I am a shadow of the American landscape

A collage of diverse hands reaching towards the center, symbolizing unity and equity. The hands are of various skin tones and are arranged in a circular pattern, with some hands reaching from the edges towards the center. The background is dark, and the word "UNITY" is faintly visible in the background.

Understanding Equity

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Defining Equity

Equity is the goal of *just and fair inclusion* into a society in which *all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.*

- PolicyLink

To achieve equity, we must *create the conditions* that allow all to reach their full potential.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion - Belonging

Diversity: a fact –people being different from one another.
Can relate to ability, capacity, race/ethnicity, ideology, gender, communication styles, or other characteristic or identity.

Equity: a goal—where everyone can reach their full potential.

Inclusion: a practice –to make space for people and ensure people are included

Belonging: a sense of authentic participation and power in the design or development - to not just be included in other people's spaces but to be a welcomed agent in the creation of the space with equitable distribution of power

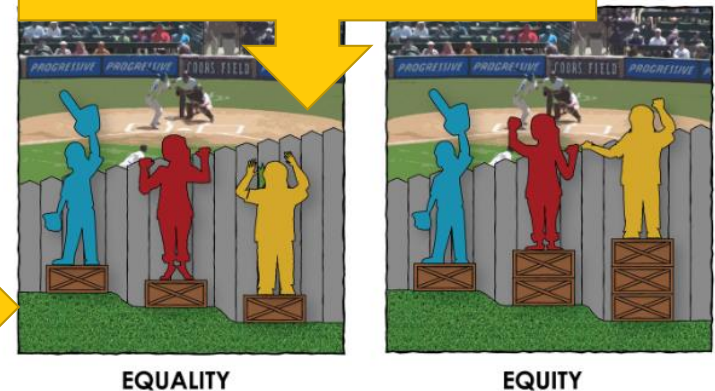
Equity versus Equality

- Equality doesn't allow everyone to succeed
- Equity can be measured when a person's identity including race/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or expression, immigration status, does not determine their life outcomes or opportunities.



Not only do people start at different levels of opportunity but there are more barriers in front of many that further challenge the chances of a person to reach their full potential.

We don't start with the same advantages and opportunities. There are generational differences in opportunity. These disadvantages limit opportunity from the beginning of a person's life.



State of Equity in San Mateo County



Root Causes of Inequities:

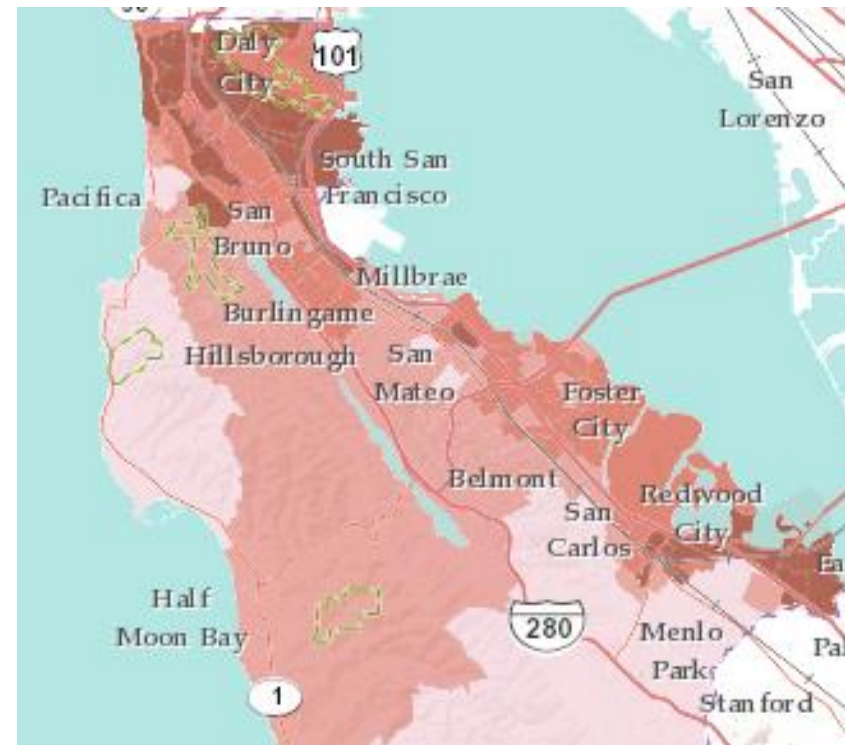
Important to remind ourselves before we look at disparate outcomes because many often blame personal responsibility without a reminder of historic and recent inequities



- Slavery
- Indigenous Genocide
- Racial property deed restrictions
- Home loan discrimination (redlining)
- Urban renewal
- Exclusion from the GI Bill Benefits
- Deindustrialization
- Housing discrimination
- Employment Discrimination
- School segregation
- Residential segregation
- Funding disparities
- Structural poverty
- Incarceration inequities
- Implicit bias
- Zero tolerance disciplinary policies
- Predatory lending
- Loan discrimination
- Residential segregation
- Housing and employment discrimination
- Complaint-based systems
- Voter suppression
- Limited pipelines into leadership
- Voter Suppression
- Internment camps

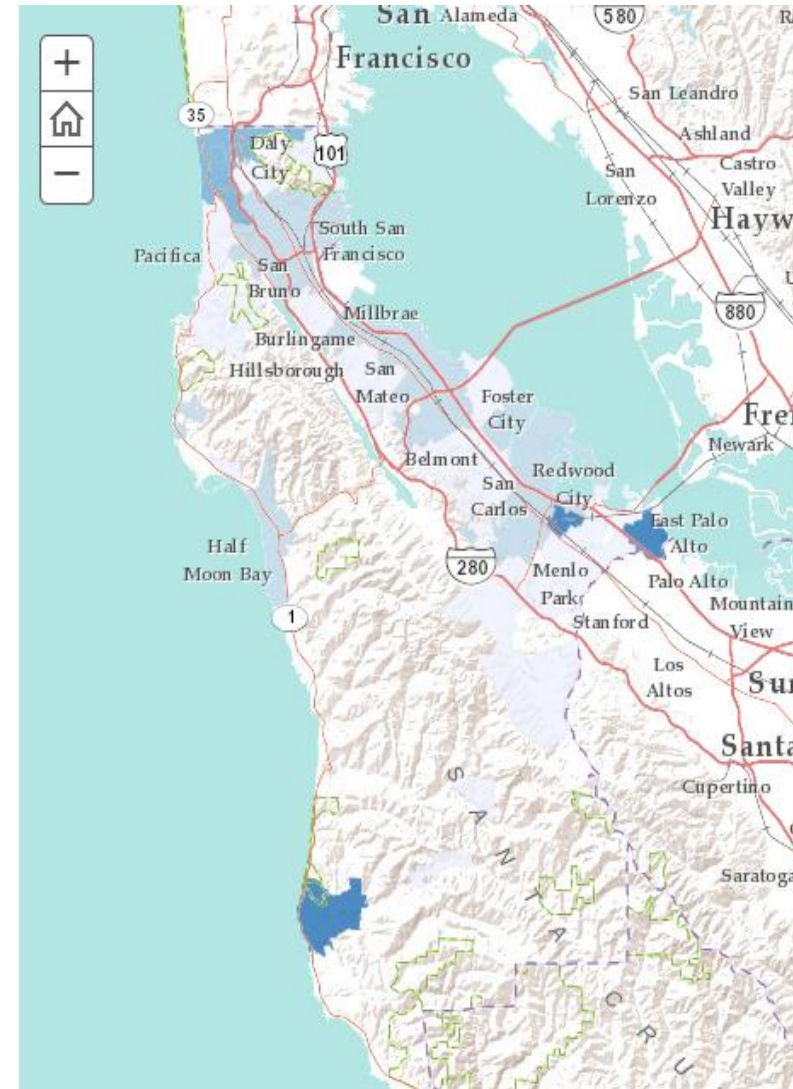
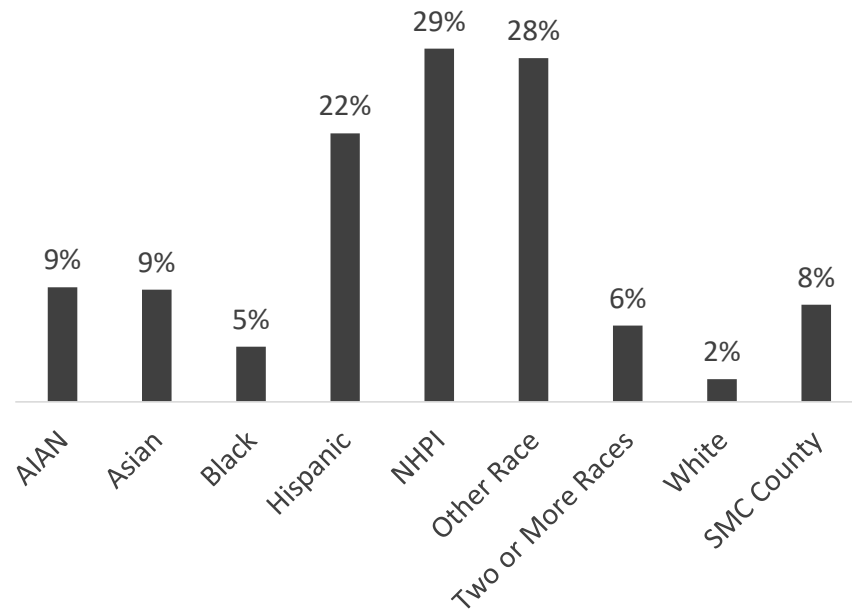
County Context

- Over 60% People of Color
- Median rent for a 1-bedroom apartment has increased 126%
- Median household income in Atherton is about 4 times that of East Palo Alto
- Median HH income for White and Asian households is 2x that of Black and Latinx HHs
- San Mateo County life expectancy gap between Black and White is 4 years
- 18% of EPA does not have computer or broadband access



Place & Race matter

Overcrowding in San Mateo County, 2014-2018



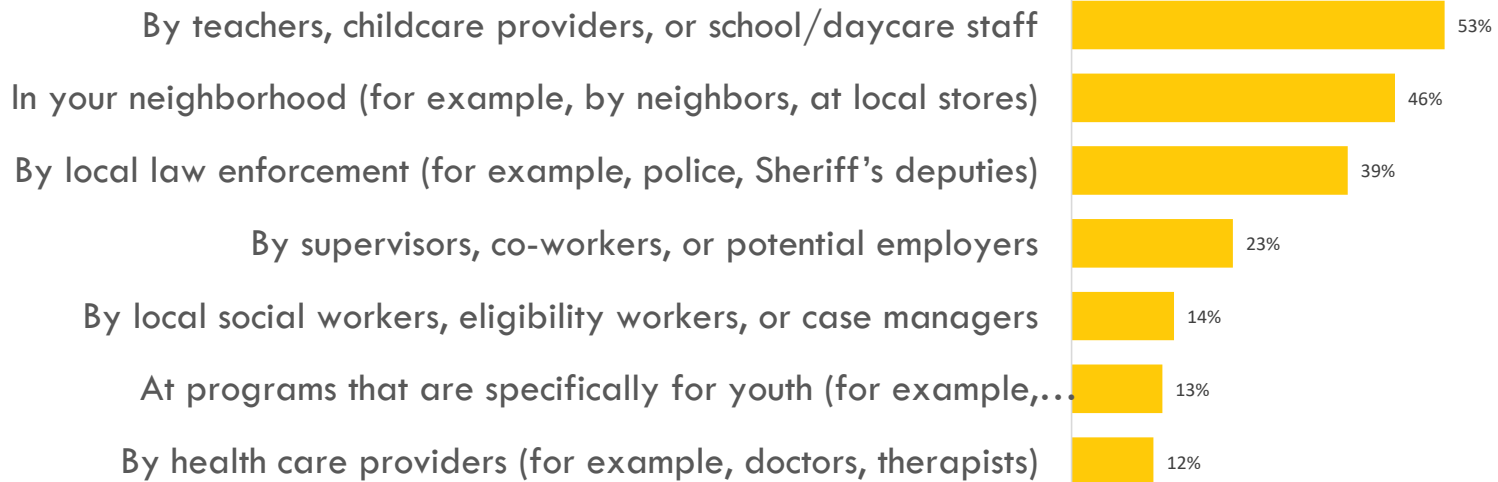
NFO/RWC

Structural and Institutional Racism

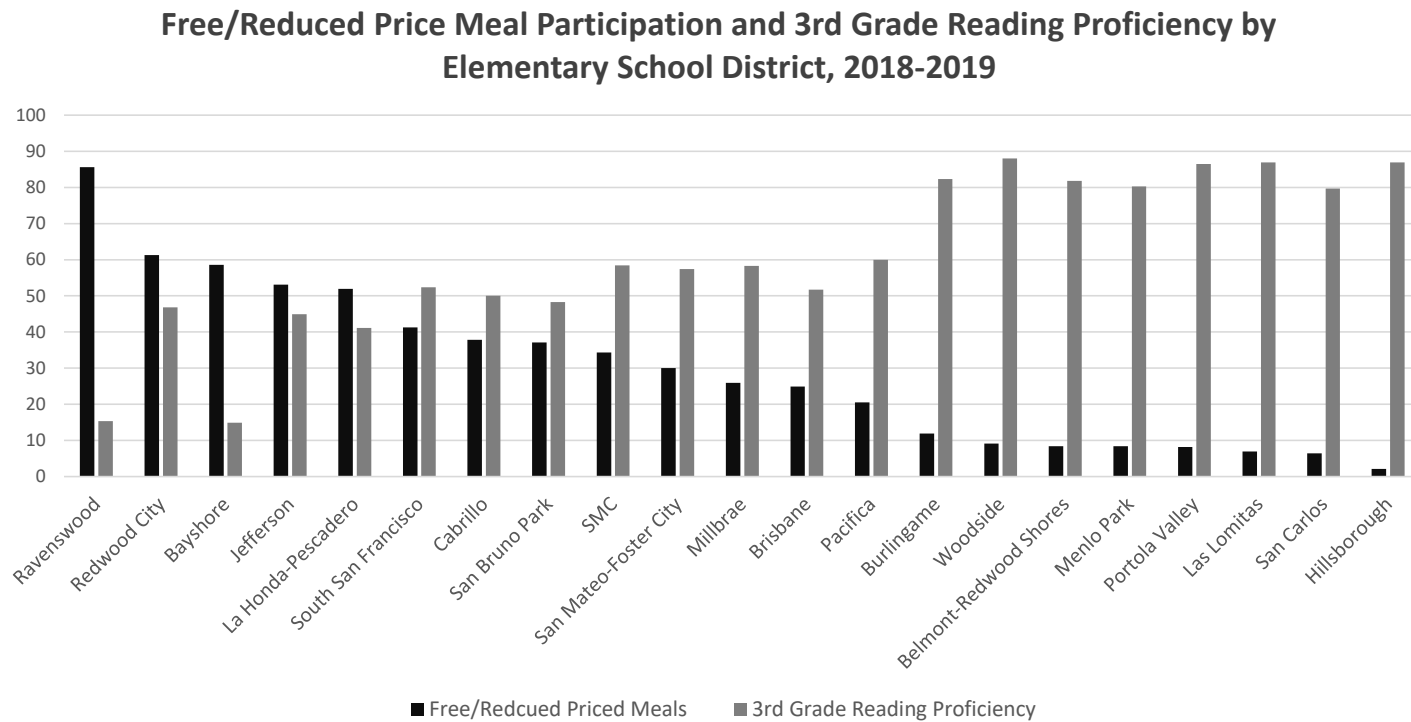
[My experience in school would have been better] if teachers supported and believed in everyone the same.

Youth living in
NFO/RWC

Youth of Color who reported that they had been discriminated against Always, Most of the Time, or Sometimes in the past year...

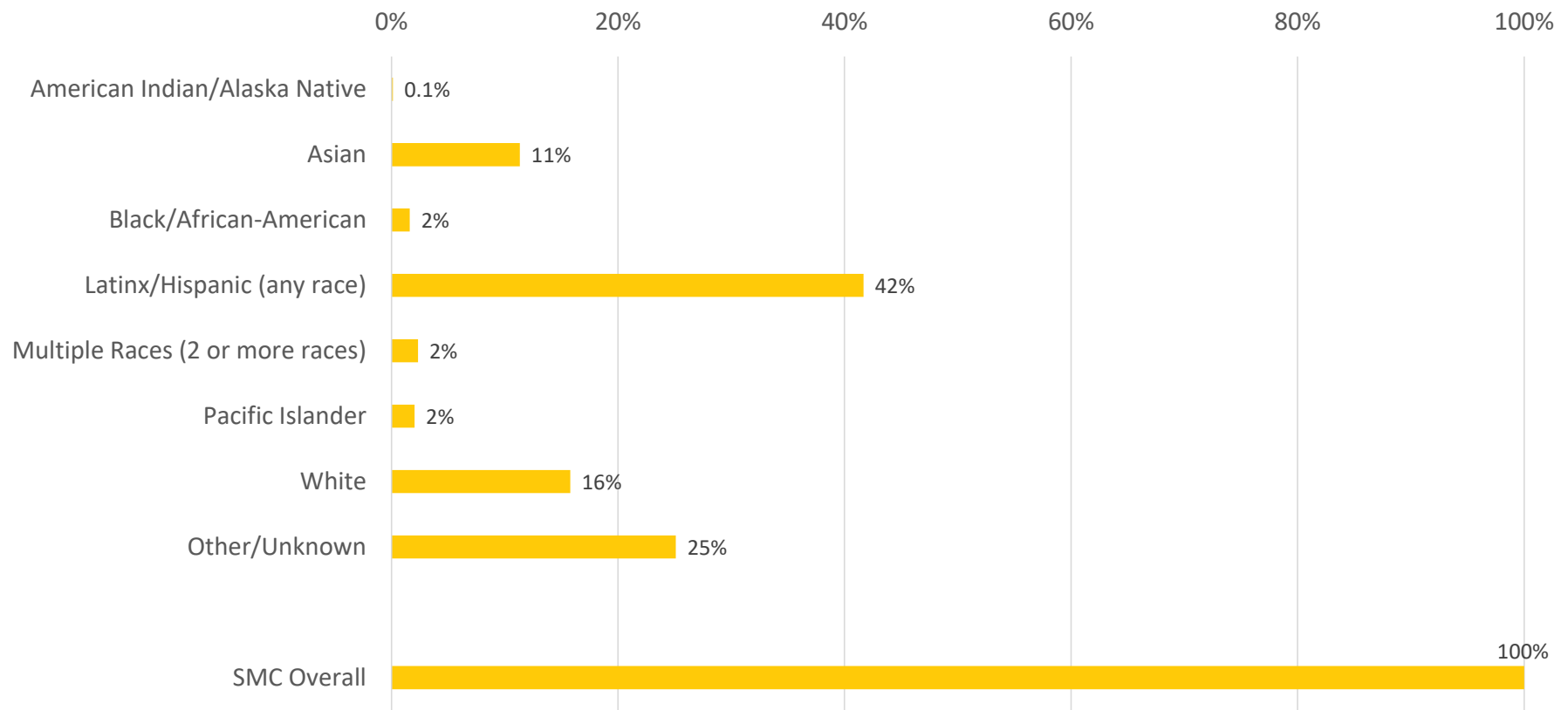


School Challenges: Cycle of Inequity



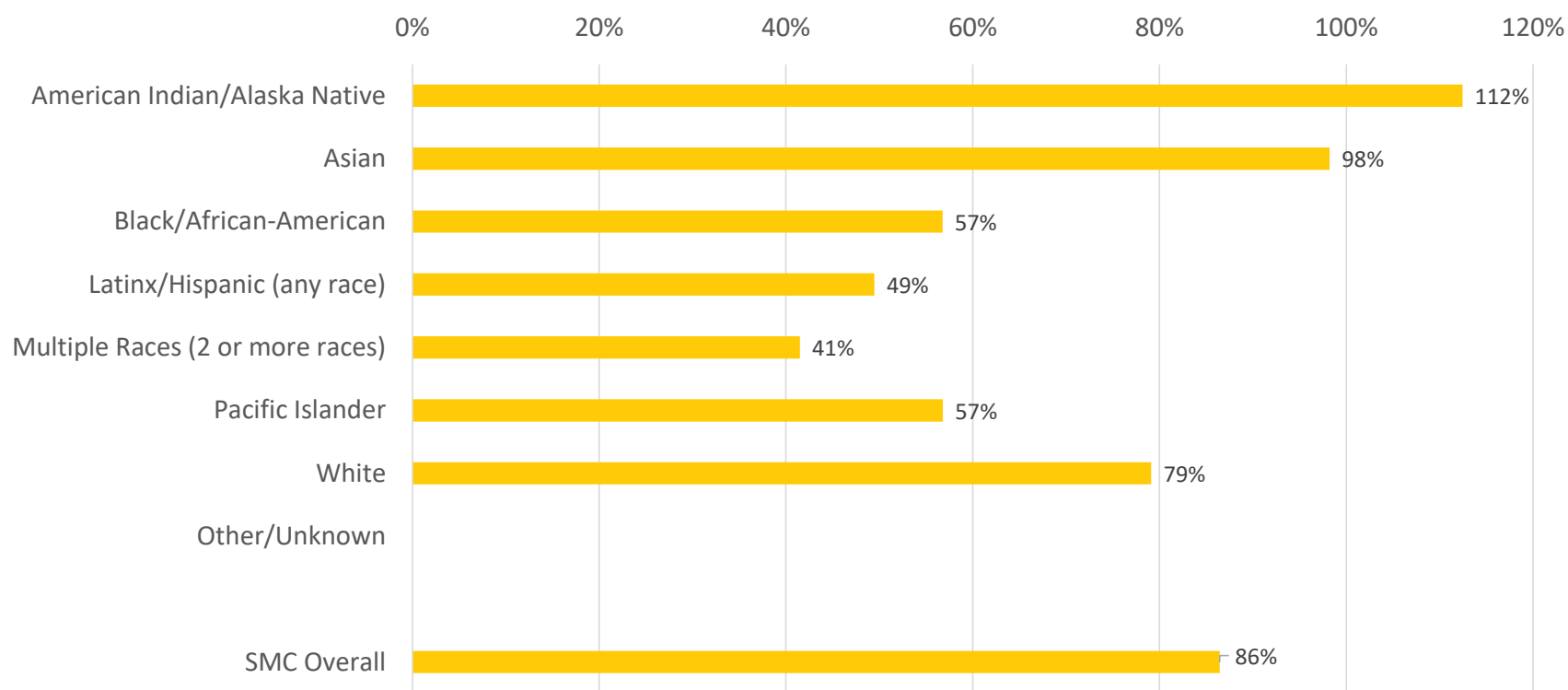
Source: California Department of Education. Free and Reduced Meal Participation (2018-2019), California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (2019)

Race/Ethnicity of SMC COVID-19 Cases



Data as of June 30, 2021

Percent of SMC 12+ Population with One or More Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine by Race/Ethnicity



Data as of June 30, 2021

Community Assets Run Deep & Wide

- Deep social capital
- Ownership of the community
- Community leadership
- Activism
- Family connections
- Power from the people
- Recognition of our fates being tied together
- Diversity of rich ancestral knowledge
- Resilience
- Culture and Art
- History
- Community Organizing - Organizers



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An illustration featuring a dense collection of hands of various skin tones (brown, tan, orange, yellow, and light skin) raised in the air. The hands are wearing different colored sleeves (blue, green, yellow, orange, and grey) and some have accessories like rings and bracelets. The background is a solid purple color.

Chief Equity Officer Efforts: A Start

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Purpose & Key Pathways for Chief Equity Officer

Purpose: Support and engage San Mateo County to build and drive more equitable and accountable systems, in order to produce more equitable outcomes for our communities.

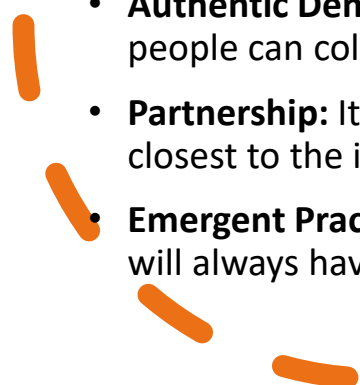
Pathways to achieve purpose:

- Support development of a vision, values and framework for an equitable San Mateo County structure with stakeholders
- Support development of a plan for workforce education and training to build staff capacity to identify, create and strengthen equitable practices
- Support County leaders in their review of policies, procedures, and protocols to improve equity in process and outcome
- Support development of accountability structures and systems
- Develop a new Office of Racial and Social Equity
- Creating pathways for partnership, council, and support to advance equity amongst staff and with community

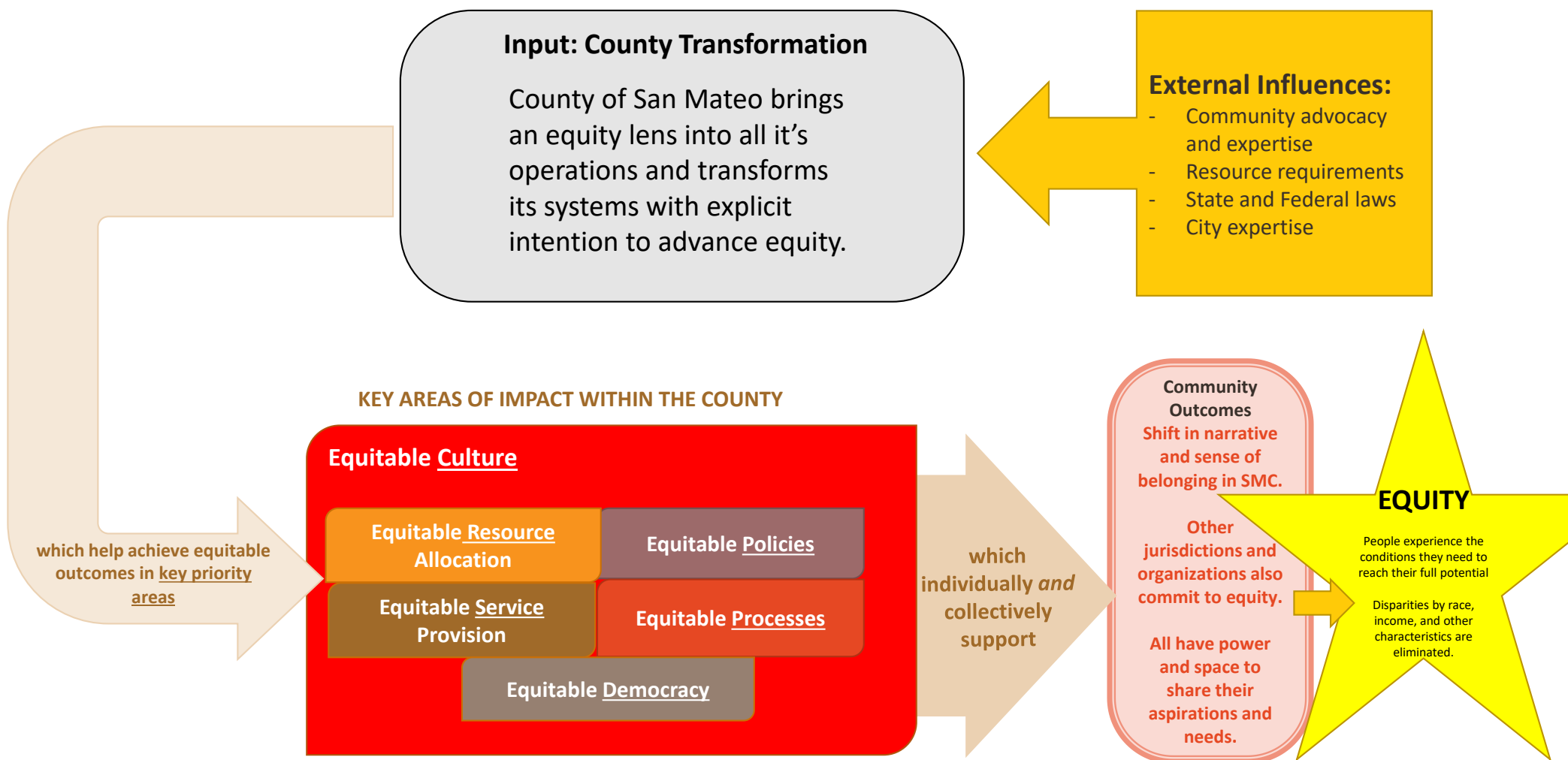


Some of the values I bring into this

- **Structural Transformation:** We will achieve equity and racial justice by working collaboratively across sectors and with community leaders to transform systems and institutions across our County structure.
- **Centering the Heart:** We lead with our humanity and the centrality of our relationships, making space to acknowledge how our bodies and hearts feel. We seek to build a sense of belonging and healing from the traumas of living in systems of advantage and oppression.
- **Racial Justice:** We create conditions for people of color to be healthy and free. We will all only be truly free when we dismantle White supremacy, anti-Blackness, and other forms of intersecting oppression — so that our racial identity, income, gender, sexuality, or ability do not limit our potential to thrive.
- **Authentic Democracy:** We focus on building systems that are responsive to community power so that all people can collectively shape the policies and systems that impact our lives.
- **Partnership:** It will take many people and organizations. Partnering is a necessity and a moral force. People closest to the impact and work can best identify solutions that work.
- **Emergent Practice:** We must be adaptive and take strategic risk to get to fundamental transformation. We will always have much to learn, and as conditions change, we change.



Theory of Change to Achieving Equity



Theory of Change to Achieving Equity

County Transformation: Implementation **DRAFT** strategies:

• **NORMALIZE**

- Listen and learn
- Build County staff capacity discuss, understand and implement racial and social equity
- **Outcome:** Staff are trained across departments and actively engaged on advancing equity

• **ORGANIZE**

- Understand and track data on inequities
- Learn from County staff and community leaders on challenges, needs, and priorities for equity
- **Outcomes:** Vision and values, Racial Equity Action Plan

• **OPERATIONALIZE**

- Develop structures and systems for inclusion of equity into everyday operations
- Review and add policies, procedures, and practices for opportunities to advance equity
- **Outcomes:** Office of Racial and Social Equity, Diversify boards/commission, Racial Equity Tools, Distributed actions

• **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Performance metrics
- Community participation
- Continued learning and improvement
- **Outcomes:** Equity metrics in operations & Community Equity Advisory Council

KEY AREAS OF IMPACT WITHIN THE COUNTY

Equitable Culture

Equitable Resource Allocation

Equitable Policies

Equitable Service Provision

Equitable Processes

Equitable Democracy

which individually and collectively support

Community Outcomes

Shift in narrative and sense of belonging in SMC.

Other jurisdictions and organizations also commit to equity.

All have power and space to share their aspirations and needs.

EQUITY

People experience the conditions they need to reach their full potential

Disparities by race, income, and other characteristics are eliminated.

which help achieve equitable outcomes in key priority areas



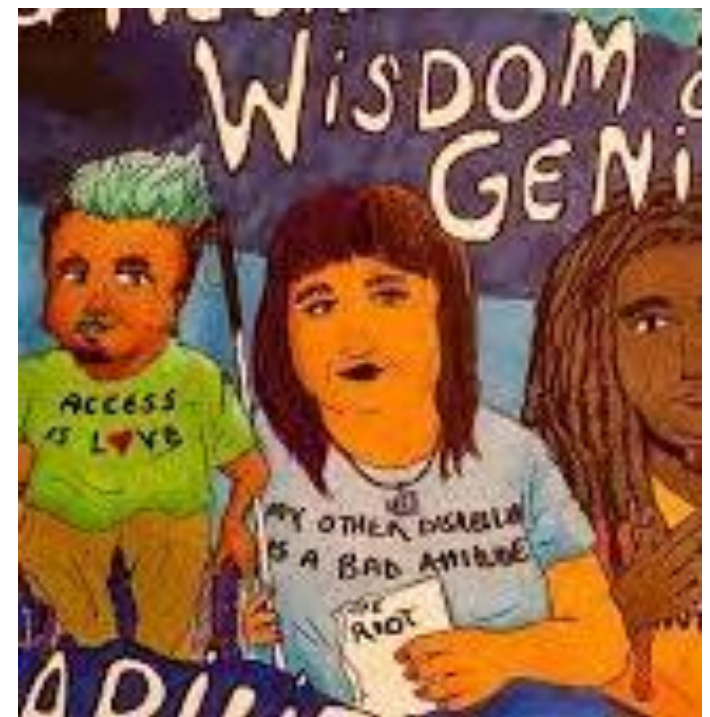
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Right now: Learning and Exploring

- Listening and learning
- Developing core purpose and pathways for position
- Support for state legislation on CA State Office of Racial Equity
- Working with non-profit coalition to align equity frameworks
- Providing support to existing efforts where possible:
 - Program Design Efforts: Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan, Workforce Design
 - Departmental Efforts: Parks, District Attorney's office, Health, Human Services Agency
- Vaccine equity efforts continue in partnership with County Health
 - Vaccine Communication Equity Working Group
 - Coordinating vaccine outreach/engagement efforts

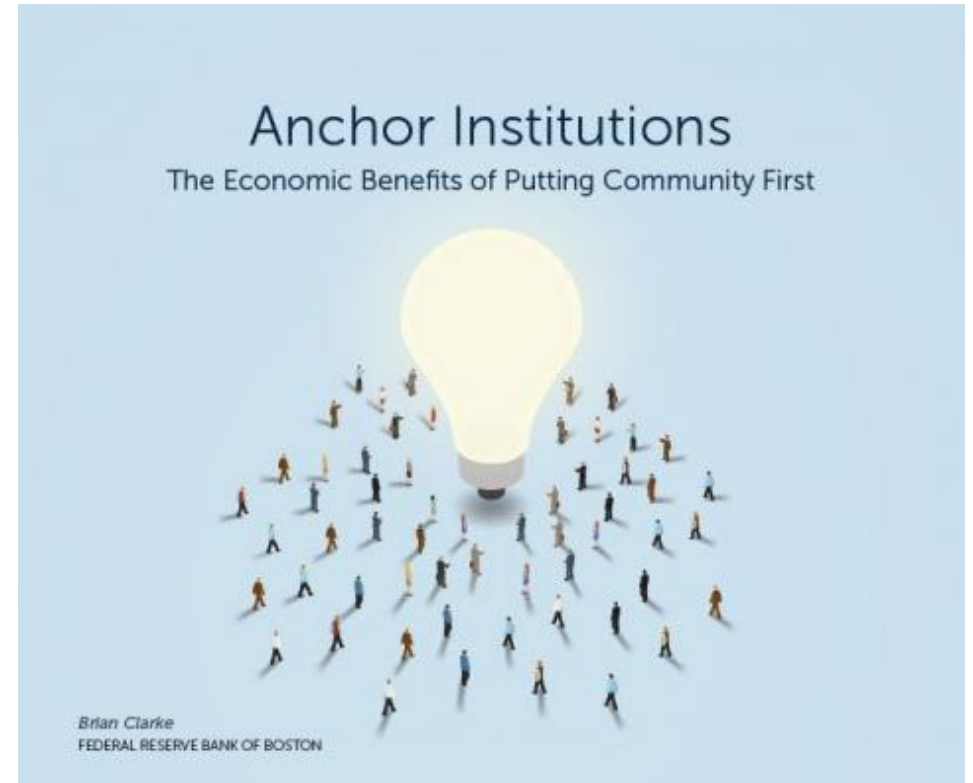
Early efforts and continued planning

- **Performance & Accountability**
 - All departments required to submit equity metric as part of budgeting
 - Increasing department capacity to assess performance
- **Internal Capacity Building**
 - Leadership forums
 - Building equity training incentive program
- **Policy**
 - Anchor Institution Model – equity-focused procurement, local hiring, community-based investments (Supervisor Slocum)
 - Pronouns (Supervisor Canepa)
- **Data:** Inventory of equity-focused data resources across departments and beyond
- **Democratic Process**
 - Diversifying Boards/Commissions and building equity into core training and materials
 - Exploring interpretation options for Board meetings
 - Community input into recovery planning
- **Building Structures**
 - Interdepartmental Core Equity Team
 - Community Equity Forums; Community Equity Council – in late 2021 or early 2022
 - Building an Office of Racial and Social Equity



S. Slocum: Anchor Institution Framework

- Anchor Institutions
 - Place-based, mission-driven entities with an economic presence in the surrounding community
- Framework
 - Inclusive Procurement
 - Inclusive Investments
 - Inclusive Workforce
 - Pipelines in and pipelines up
 - Financial assistance programming and more



S. Canepa: Racial Equity Resolution – Action Items

- An accountable structure for community and stakeholder engagement to support and inform equity efforts in the County in the form of a racial equity community council; and
- Sustainable structures in the County, including the chief equity officer position, Office of Racial and Social Equity, Racial Equity Action Plans, utilization of Racial Equity Tools, and/or other structures and systems.
- San Mateo County Equity Data Profile, County workforce education, and capacity building on equity, and development of equity performance metrics as part of County budgeting process; and
- Board remains committed to our mission of promoting racial equity, inclusion, and diversity in all aspects of county government and program structure;
- **RESOLVE** that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County advances racial equity through all policies of the county and enhances educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing, and combating racism in all forms to promote fairness and justice for our most impacted communities.

Connection and Learning Infrastructure

- Going to events and meetings to share and learn
- County staff:
 - Internal Interdepartmental Core Equity Team
- Community Engagement:
 - Community Equity Forum (July 15th, Aug 26th)
 - Community Equity Council – late in the year or early new year



The background of the slide is a dark, monochromatic illustration in shades of brown and black. It depicts a dense crowd of people, many with their arms raised in a gesture of protest or solidarity, holding flags and banners. The style is reminiscent of political posters or protest art. Overlaid on this background is the text 'What's Required?' in a large, white, sans-serif font.

What's Required?

Bringing our heads and our hearts to this work.

People operate institutions, make decisions about systems, and create the culture. People bring their emotions, and experiences into this work.



Key ingredients towards success

1. **Strong, committed, resilient, and steady leadership**

- Change requires taking risks, providing clear direction, and staying the course
- Our feelings will be hurt, we will be challenged, we will learn and not shy away

2. **Clear vision and values of equity**

- A collective vision and clarity of purpose ensures continued direction

3. **Strong, trusted, and engaged partnerships**

- Those closest to the impact and work are necessary co-designers and partners

4. **Organizational transformation**

- Intentional and focused change is needed across the organization

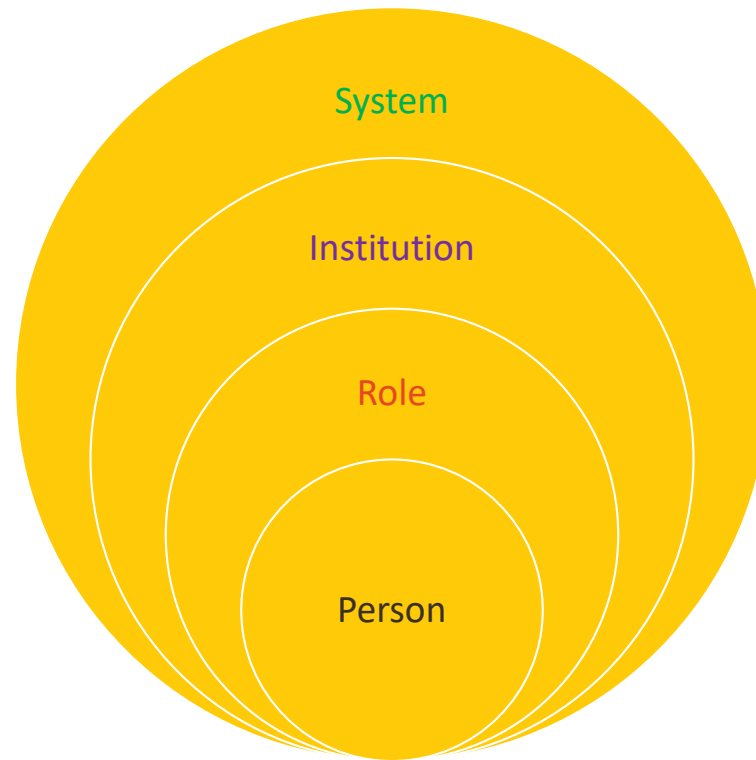
5. **Time**

- Transformation and culture shift takes time so it can be sustainable – but there is an urgency to this work that must be recognized

6. **Accountability**

- A clear plan, performance metrics, and stakeholder engagement

Organizational & Personal Journey



Transformation is necessary

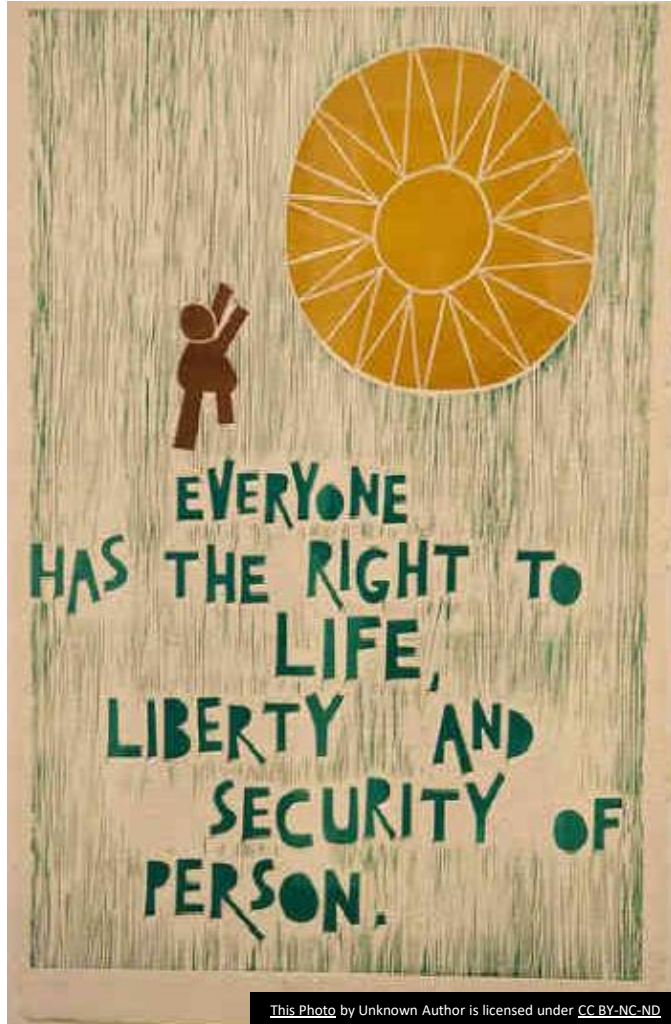
“Instead of holding back we must have the courage to step forward, take our bureaucratic structures down to the studs and rebuild them through the lens of racial and social equity.”

- Marc Ott, Executive Director of Institute for International City/County Management Association (ICMA). December 2020, from forward to “Governing for Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Government”

Q/A & Discussion

- What is your overall reaction to the framework and efforts underway? Any specific feedback?
- What resonates and/or is aligned with organization's existing equity framework? Any specific feedback?
- How can we partner going forward to advance equity across the county?
- Do you have additional ideas for how best to incorporate community voice in a systematic, authentic and accountable way?





Thank you

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