

Attachment 3:

To: California Strategic Growth Council and Members of the Public

From: California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Secretary Lourdes Castro
Ramirez

Reporting Period: August 2020 – April 2021

Staff Lead: Update on Racial Equity Resolution Implementation

History/Background

The California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency (BCSH) includes California Housing Financing Agency, Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Department of Real Estate, and Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC).

- BCSH oversees departments and supports equitable public policy that protects consumers, promotes and preserves affordable housing, prevents and ends homelessness, and guards the civil rights of Californians. Together, we work towards a thriving and equitable California where safe housing, consumer protection, and civil rights are assured.
- We are committed to fostering equitable outcomes - especially for Black, Indigenous and People of Color - deepening our knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting these populations and acting to reverse decades of discrimination and underinvestment in communities of color.
- With over 6,000 employees across 11 departments, BCSH is dedicated to providing training and learning opportunities for staff at all levels. Last year, approximately 470 Agency and department staff participated in GovOps' Implicit Bias Training with Dr. Bryant Marks. BCSH also held a speaker series called "Building and Learning Together: Conversations on Racial Equity" to engage its Executive Leadership Team in discussions on race, diversity, inclusion, equity and economic justice.

Highlights

- CalHFA is actively participating in the 2020-2021 CCORE Cohort, where staff are being trained in racial equity best practices and developing a racial equity action plan.
- HCD is reviewing the implementation of its 2018-2020 racial equity action plan developed as part of its participation in the Government Alliance for Race and Ethnicity (GARE) training program.
- Administered by HCD, [Homekey](#) was created as an opportunity for local public agencies to purchase motels and other housing types to increase their communities' capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Homekey applicants included response plans to address inequities in their respective communities. While all applicants included a general statement of non-discrimination in their response plan, some provided additional program design components to help their projects reach populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including implicit bias and cultural competency training for staff,



use of data to identify disparities and target funding to those most impacted by homelessness, promoting lived experience hiring practices, use of racial equity frameworks to identify the needs and the creation of racial equity surveys.

- BCSH and HCD launched the [CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Program](#) on March 15, 2021 to provide rent and utility assistance to landlords and low-income tenants for arrears and future payments. The program is designed to target those most impacted by COVID-19 and utilizes a local partner network, made up of over 100 community-based organizations, to provide culturally-relevant outreach to hard-to-reach communities.
- BCSH and HCFC collected qualitative data from grantees for their [annual report](#) for HHAP and HEAP grants which was released February 2021. Some grantees developed tools to support racial equity work and meet racial equity goals and many grantees incorporated input from people with lived experience and/or individuals from communities disproportionately impacted through community engagement, creating specific boards and committees, and by establishing decision-making positions for these communities' members.
- BCSH and HCFC have developed and posted [equity resources](#) for Homeless Providers on our website, including a [guidance](#) on how to strategically use funds to reduce homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on equity.
- On March 23, HCFC approved the [Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in California](#), the state's first-ever long-term plan to address homelessness in California. This Action Plan centers racial equity as a key principle and advances HCFC's mission through a full suite of strategies and interconnected activities--- spanning from homelessness prevention efforts, to meeting the immediate needs of people who are currently unsheltered, staying in shelters or interim housing, to ending people's homelessness through access to permanent affordable housing and the supportive services they need to succeed.
- In partnership with Stop AAPI Hate, DFEH recently held a virtual webinar series dedicated to understanding and preventing anti-Asian bias. [The webinars](#) were about bias prevention as it applies to employees, tenants, consumers, community members and social service organizations.
- On April 21, 2021, the DFPI hosted its inaugural Economic Equity Conference, a half-day virtual event for banks and credit unions. The conference will include a keynote address from a nationally renowned diversity consultant and a panel of bank executives discussing strategies for closing the racial wealth gap.

Next Steps

- BCSH will continue to develop its strategic plan to ensure equity is integrated across Agency leadership, operations, programs, policies, and practices, and explore the opportunity to create a dedicated executive-level staff position to lead equity efforts on behalf of the Agency.
- BCSH and HCD will closely monitor the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Program to understand which populations are being served by the program. Outreach will be adjusted as necessary to ensure those hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic are served.
- BCSH will continue to build relationships across departments and agencies to align efforts and commitments to racial equity.



- BCSH and HCFC will continue to monitor how grantees are advancing racial equity through the funds provided to them and incorporate racial equity into its guidance and other resource documents for local communities.

