

Building a Racial Equity Strategy



Introductions



- ▶ Neftali Miller-Rubio, *Racial & Cultural Equity Manager*
- ▶ Monique Upshaw-Smith, *Program Manager II - Health & Nutrition Services*
- ▶ Eric Kanaga, *Program Manager II - Regionalization*
- ▶ Ryan Bishop, *Deputy Branch Director - Social Services Branch*

Ice Breaker





Humboldt County Profile

- ▶ Population of 136,101
- ▶ 7 incorporated cities, ~50% of population living in unincorporated areas
- ▶ 4,052 Square miles
- ▶ 5 National Parks, 15 State Parks
- ▶ 3 Higher Ed. Institutions
- ▶ 8 Federally Recognized Tribes



Population
living
in a rural area

29.8%

(5% Statewide)

Households
Receiving

Medi-Cal **42%**

CalFresh: **22%**

Households paying
30% or more of
gross income on
housing

29.8% owners

40% renters

Living Below
Poverty line

19.7%

ACEs Score of
2 or more

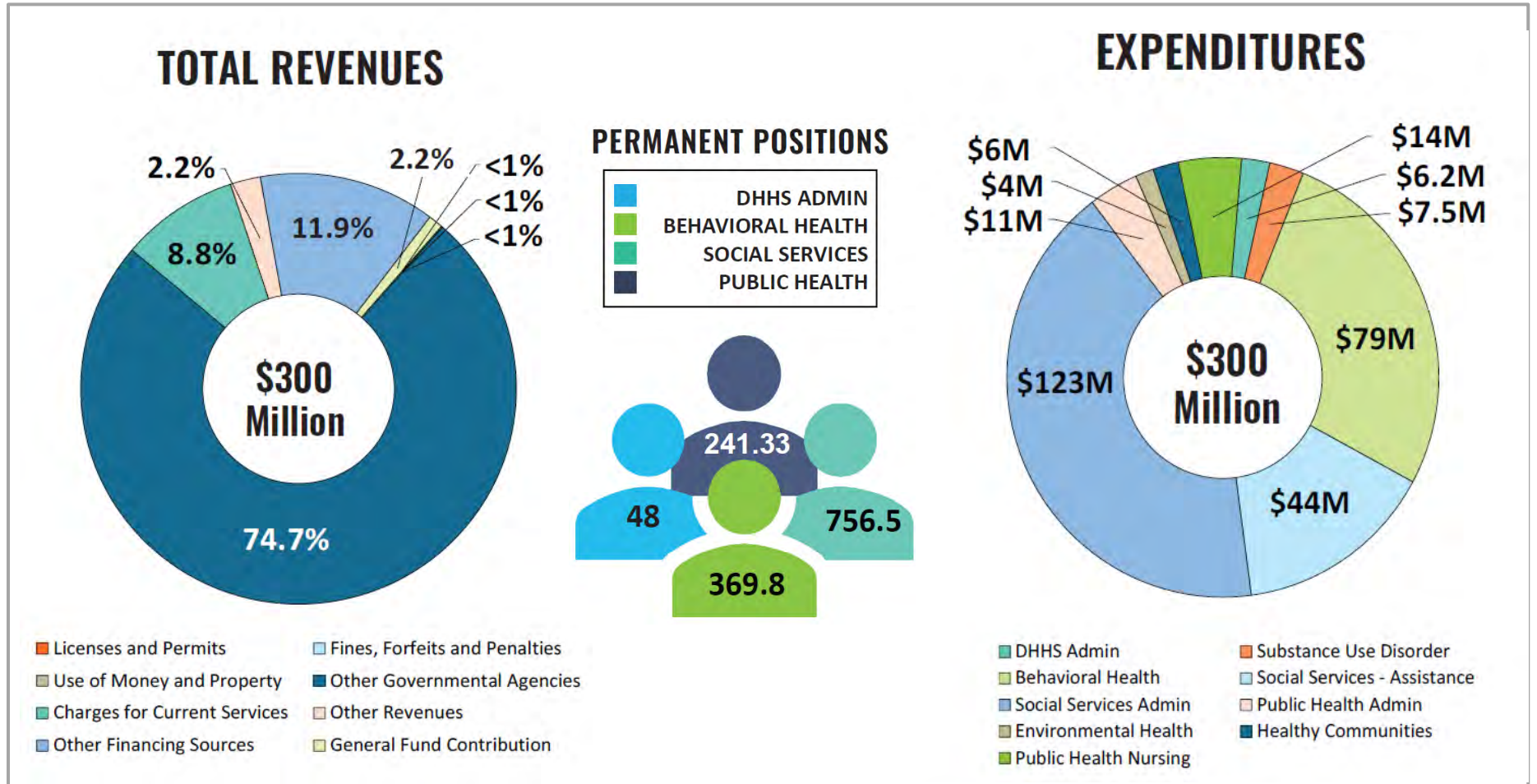
29%

(15% Statewide)



DHHS TODAY

- County's largest Department:
 - Approximately half of all County employees - approx. 1200 staff
- Budget of approx. \$300 million for FY2023-24





Social Services



Behavioral Health



Public Health

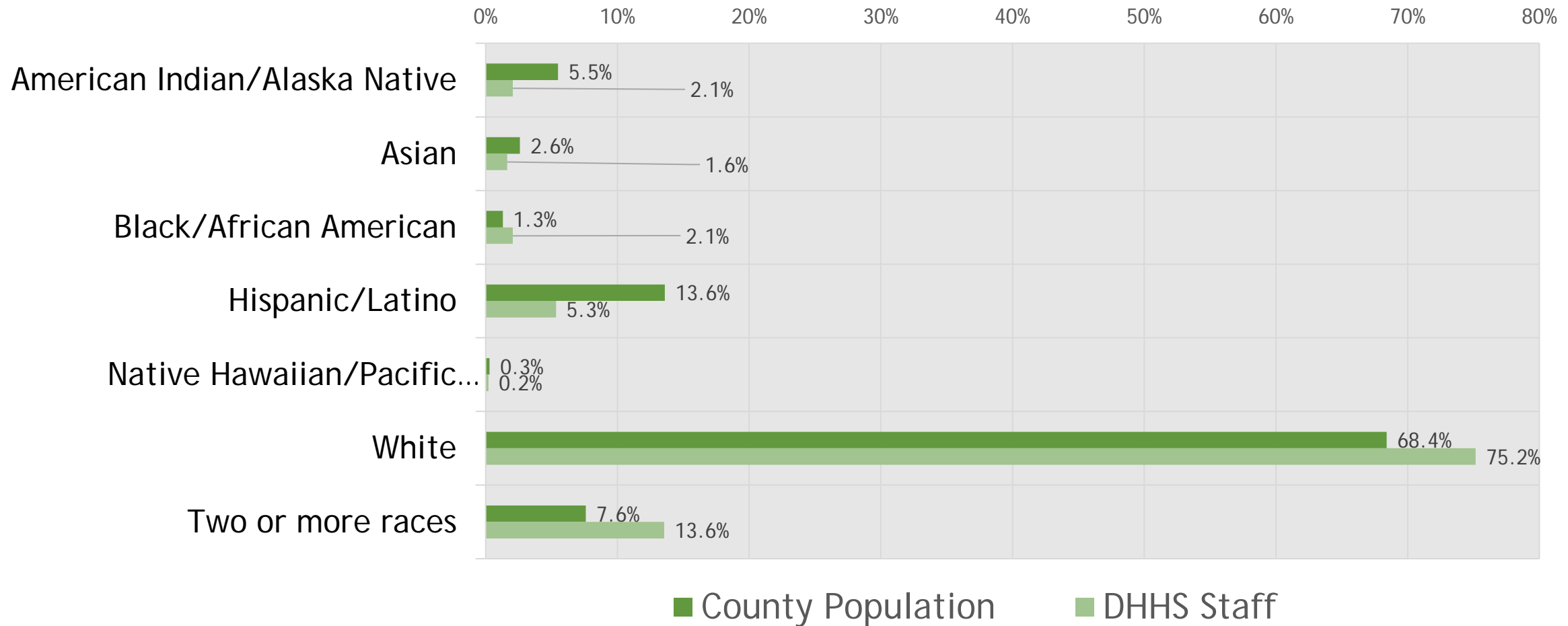


Administration

DHHS is an integrated agency

- ✓ Decentralizing services
- ✓ Reduces barriers
- ✓ Increases client involvement
- ✓ Increases supports for diverse cultures
- ✓ Service delivery based on community values
- ✓ Providing accountability
- ✓ Reduces duplication

Staff & Community Racial Demographics



NAVIGATING RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGY IN A RURAL COUNTY





▶ In the beginning

HOW IT STARTED

- ▶ *Until recently, DHHS' equity work primarily grew from mandates*
 - ▶ *Public Health*
 - ▶ *Behavioral Health*
- ▶ *George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's murders in 2020, were catalysts*
- ▶ *Turned the lens inward to see how we can improve white supremacy culture and inequities within the department*
- ▶ *DHHS Racial Equity Steering Committee*



Steering Committee

Steering Committee Makeup

- ▶ Selected by leadership
- ▶ Representatives from all branches of DHHS
- ▶ Representatives from various classification in DHHS
- ▶ All have a passion to move this work forward
- ▶ Cultural coaches
- ▶ Humboldt Area Foundation
- ▶ The Equity Alliance of the North Coast
- ▶ Stepping Stone Consulting



Four key deliverables

EARLY DELIVERABLES

- Develop a Racial Equity Steering Committee Charter and link back with the DHHS Executive Leadership team
- Exploration of Racial Equity work already going on within branches of work across DHHS and how these integrate
- Develop early "Get Started Training" within and across DHHS, in partnership with coaches from Humboldt Area Foundation and link back with DHHS Executive Leadership

ONGOING DELIVERABLE

- Develop comprehensive Racial Equity Plan for DHHS in partnership with coaches, along with how to implement the plan ongoing

RACIAL EQUITY STEERING COMMITTEE (RESC) APPROACH

The team had various levels of knowledge

Started educating ourselves, each other, and learning from local allies

Learning together activities

Confirm the purpose

Review of county demographics

Ongoing review of existing policies and established work

Utilize a data-driven model of performance management—Objectives, Measures, Targets, and Actions (OMTAs)



HUMBOLDT COUNTY DHHS RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Initially, six high level goals. Spans from 2021-2025.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1

Develop a Permanent Cultural and Racial Equity Team to Facilitate Equity Efforts Across DHHS—Two objectives

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2

Training and Coaching for All Staff—Five objectives

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3

Coach, Support, and Prepare Staff in Supervisory Roles—Two objectives



DHHS RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4

Develop External and Internal Racial Equity Coaching Capacity—
Two objectives

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5

Improve Hiring, Recruitment, and Retention—Three objectives

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6

Listen to Understand and Improve Experiences of BIPOC Staff within DHHS—
Three objectives

RECRUITING AN EQUITY MANAGER

Allocation request to Board of Supervisors approved

- [Legislation Text - 21-1261 \(legistar.com\)](#)

Recruitment video

- [Humboldt County DHHS - Equity Manager recruitment - YouTube](#)

Interactive interview process with two interviews

- First interview—Leadership, RESC representatives, Community Partners
 - Scored
 - Panel consisted of both scorers and non-scorers
- Second interview—Leadership, DHHS Staff, Community Partners
 - Not scored
- Conversational
- All candidates moving to second interview received the Racial Equity Strategic Plan ahead of the interview

NEXT STEPS WITHIN DHHS

Develop Implementation Teams

- Facilitate multi-disciplinary workgroups

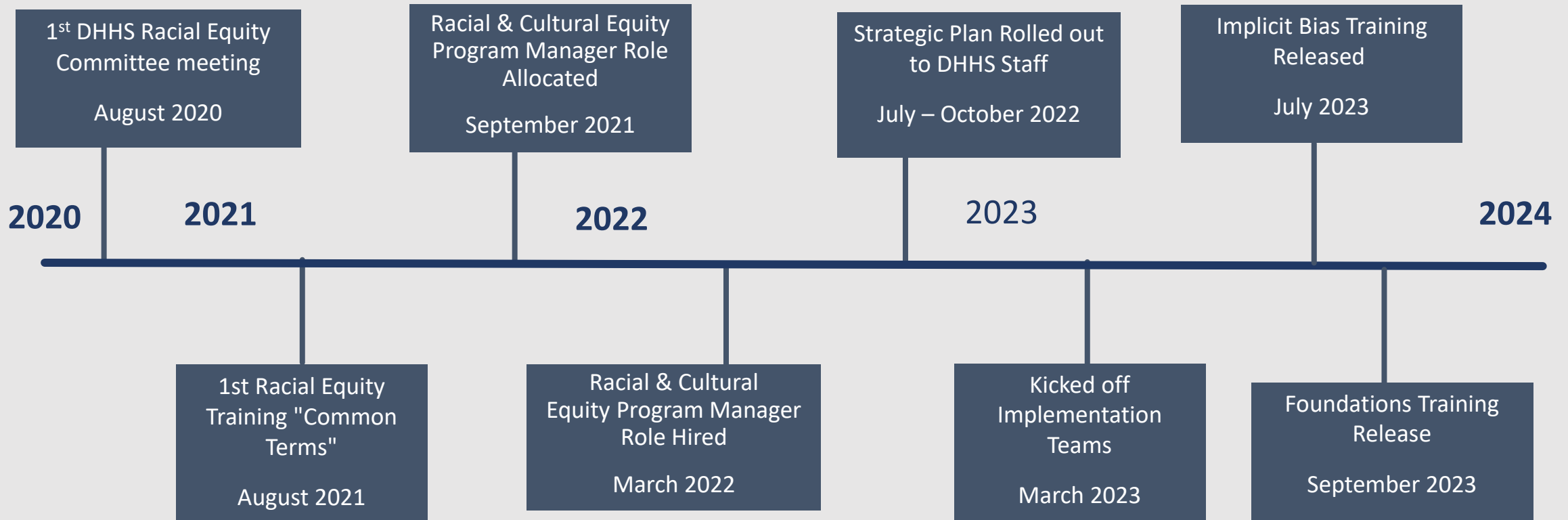
Expand training w/ tiered rollout

- Live session - “Foundations”
- Web-based/Neogov - Implicit Bias for all-staff
- In-Planning → local and indigenous communities

Data & Quality Improvement

- Determine performance measures

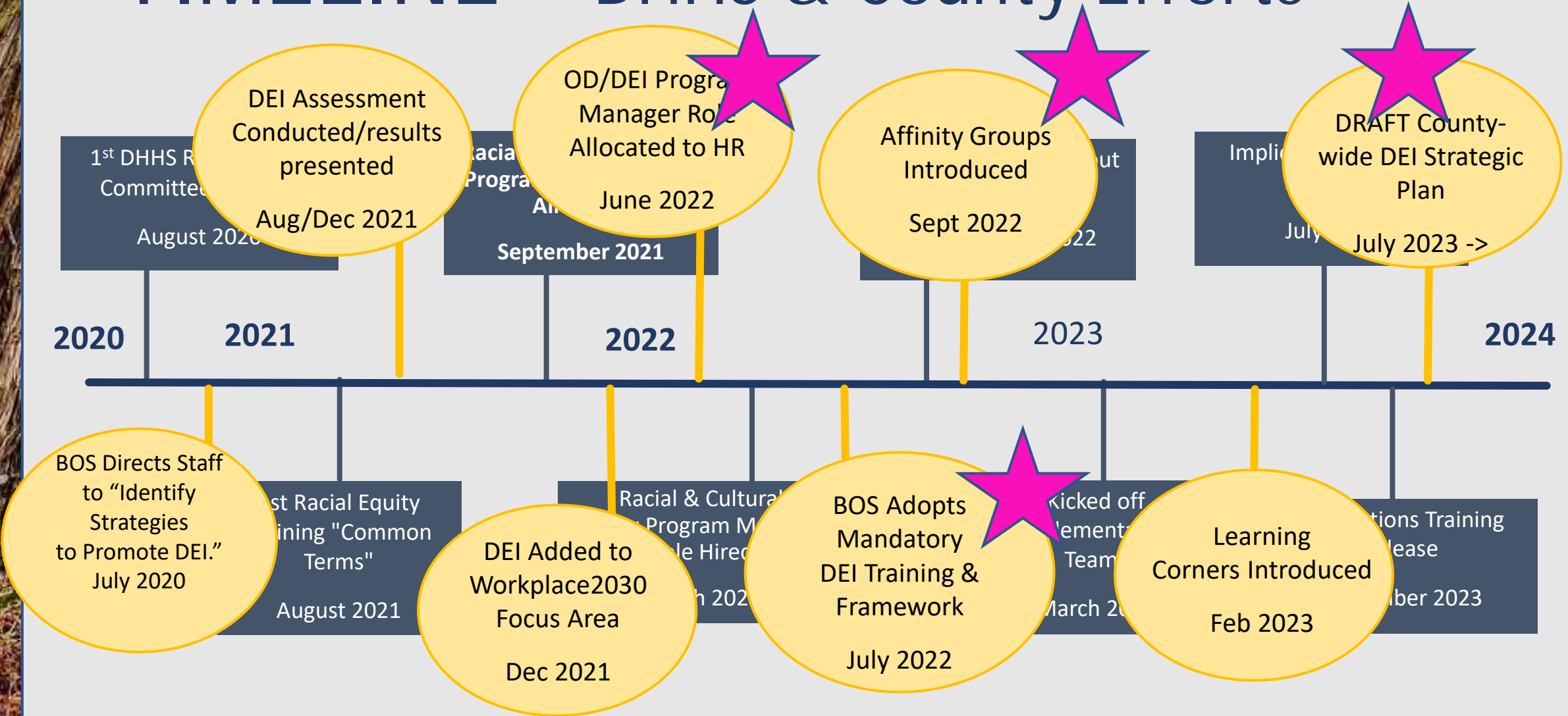
TIMELINE - DHHS





Coalition Building

TIMELINE – DHHS & County Efforts



Data

Trust deficit exists between respondents and senior leadership

Staff trust their immediate supervisor

BIPOC staff and women reported disparate experiences at work

Respondents crave educational opportunities around DEI

Opportunities exist to integrate DEI commitment into all that we do

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AT COUNTY LEVEL

Board of Supervisors

- Formalizing values into policy
- Accountability
- Visibility

Human Resources

- Program Manager, Organizational Development & DEI
- Learning Corners
- Monthly Memos

Affinity Groups

- Board Approved
- 2-3 hours monthly, paid time
- Staff designed & staff Led





Linking to Workplace Culture & Buy In

Meeting people where they are

Creating baseline understanding
with a stepped approach

Offer learning spaces tailored to
the audience (affinity
sessions)

Institutionalizing our commitment
to anti-racism in all that we do

Build an inclusive culture that
nurtures belongingness

Build competency and capacity an
organization level

Partnership is Essential

County-wide



Department



Branch/Program



Community



HR
functions



DEI/Racial
Equity

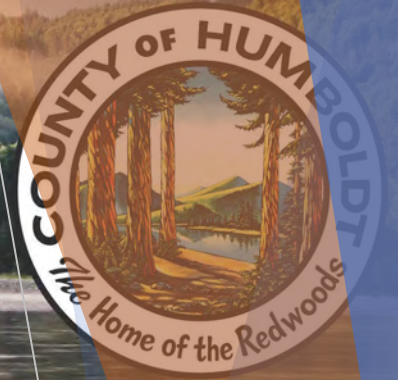


BUILDING STAFF BUY IN

- Start early
- Check in often
- Bring them along

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Staffing & Budget
- ▶ How we show up
- ▶ Momentum



Moving Racial Equity Forward in the Social Services Branch

A Change Management Strategy



THE CHANGE PROCESS



Understanding the Need for Change



Planning and Preparing



Communicating and Engaging




Implementing and Monitoring



Evaluating and Sustaining

OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

▶ *“We are implementing an organizational change, a journey towards equity. These modules are a part of the journey and organizational change ”*



Step 1: Understanding the Need for Change

- ▶ Determine why the change is necessary and the specific goals or outcomes desired

Why do we need to change? What are the Benefits?

- ▶ When equity exists, people have equal access to opportunities
- ▶ Increased engagement and retention
- ▶ Improved employee wellbeing and satisfaction
- ▶ Attracts top talent, creates a bigger talent pool
- ▶ Better serves our community
- ▶ Fosters inclusion, safety, respect, and belonging
- ▶ Broadens perspective and innovation
- ▶ Promotes learning, a team environment, and collaboration
- ▶ Avoid breaking any labor and employment laws
- ▶ Social Responsibility - It's the right thing to do!





Important Topics to Increase Understanding

- ▶ Racism (individual and systemic)
- ▶ Microaggressions
- ▶ Privilege (Based on race, class, etc.)
- ▶ Bias (Implicit and Explicit)
- ▶ Equity (Fair vs. Equal)
- ▶ Inclusion
- ▶ Diversity
- ▶ Fragility
- ▶ Allyship

VIDEOS, BOOKS, AND ARTICLES CAN HELP START THE CONVERSATION

▶ Videos:

- ▶ [If Microaggressions Happened to White People | Decoded | MTV News - YouTube](#)
- ▶ [What kind of Asian are you? - YouTube](#)
- ▶ [Social Inequalities Explained in a \\$100 Race - Please Watch to the End. Thanks. - YouTube](#)
- ▶ [How Power, Privilege and Supremacy Show Up in the Workplace - YouTube](#)
- ▶ [Vernā Myers: How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them | TED Talk](#)
- ▶ [Opinion | A Conversation With White People on Race - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)
- ▶ [Moving The Race Conversation Forward - YouTube](#)
- ▶ [Growing Up Poor In America \(full documentary\) | FRONTLINE - YouTube](#)

▶ Articles:

- ▶ [Systemic racism goes beyond police. Reform human and social services \(usatoday.com\)](#)



Great Discussion Questions:



- ▶ What resonated with you?
- ▶ What did you learn?
- ▶ What did you hear, see, or feel?
- ▶ What surprised you?
- ▶ What questions do you have?
- ▶ How did this video challenge assumptions you had?
- ▶ How does what you saw in the video impact your work?
- ▶ Or any "What" or "How" Questions

What did we learn?


- ▶ Everyone has different experiences
- ▶ Not everyone had a shared or common understanding of terms
- ▶ Certain terms are difficult for some people to hear or understand (White Privilege, White Fragility, Racism/Racist, etc.)
- ▶ Allow plenty of time and space for additional conversations
- ▶ Racial Equity work is hard!
 - ▶ Deep-rooted, systemic and societal, inequalities
 - ▶ Historical Context
 - ▶ Resistance to Change
 - ▶ Complex intersections with other forms of oppression
 - ▶ Emotional and Psychological Impact



Step 2: Planning and Preparing for Change

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the objectives, strategies, and resources needed to implement the change successfully. This include identifying potential obstacles and creating a communication strategy.



A black and white photograph of a chess knight and a stack of coins on a chessboard. The knight is on the left, and the stack of coins is on the right. The background is blurred.

What we did to Plan and Prepare

- ▶ Developed a Plan (a list of SMART goals) that Supervisors and Managers in SSB could implement
- ▶ Developed a list of tools, supports, and skills that Supervisors and Managers needed to implement these changes

Resources Provided to Supervisors

- ▶ Monthly meetings -A forum to discuss important topics, have difficult conversations, and share experiences
- ▶ Tools for Accountability
 - ▶ Documentation Training
 - ▶ Evaluation Training
 - ▶ Progressive Discipline Flowchart
- ▶ Goal Development Tools
 - ▶ SMART Goals
 - ▶ Goal 4 It!
- ▶ Time and Project Management Tools
 - ▶ Eisenhower Prioritization Matrix
 - ▶ SWOT
- ▶ A shared resource folder to share tools, trainings, etc.



A photograph of a person wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans riding a white bicycle. A hand from another person is visible on the handlebar, suggesting assistance or support. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

Important Supports from DHHS:

- ▶ Admin Support - Memo from our Director that we are an “Anti-Racist” organization
- ▶ A written Racial Equity Strategic Plan
- ▶ Written supervisor and manager expectations
- ▶ Onboarding Toolkit
- ▶ Supervisor Handbook

Step 3: Communicating and Engaging

► Communicate the need for change to staff and engage them in the process. Address concerns, provide updates, and ensure that everyone understand the reasons behind the change and their roles.





Resources for Engaging and Communicating with Staff

- ▶ Introduction to the Racial Equity Strategic Plan
- ▶ Mandatory Training
 - ▶ Exploring Racial Equity: Common Terms
 - ▶ Implicit Bias: An Introduction
- ▶ Opportunities to seek understanding, ask questions, and express concerns
 - ▶ Staff Debriefs after trainings
 - ▶ unit meetings
 - ▶ one-on-one check-ins
 - ▶ Equity Manager office hours
 - ▶ Learning Corners
- ▶ Surveys
 - ▶ DEI Assessment
 - ▶ Workforce Development Survey

What did we Learn?



- ▶ Communication and nurturing brave spaces is key
- ▶ The majority of staff are bought in and ready to learn and share
- ▶ Staff don't want this work to feel like they are "just checking another box"
- ▶ Ignorance, not resistance is the real problem
- ▶ Staff wanted to know more about their individual role
- ▶ Equity started coming up more (e.g. EEO, Civil Rights, etc.)

Step 4: Implementing and Monitoring

► Execute the change plan, making sure to allocate resources, manage timelines, and address challenges that arise. Monitor progress, gather feedback, ensure accountability, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure the change is on track.



What's the plan?

▶ Begin executing our Plan (SMART Goals)

▶ Examples:

▶ To move towards our organizational commitment of achieving racial equity, we need to understand SSB staffs' knowledge, comfort, willingness to volunteer/participate, ability to create a brave space, and what staff need around having discussions about racial equity. We will learn their understanding of how this relates to our work and the community we serve. We will poll staff using an anonymous/name optional Google poll to do this. The poll will be sent out to staff in the month of December 2023.

▶ Supervisors and managers will schedule a series of 2-4 meetings with the Training Unit by 3/1/2024 to discuss SSB efforts for organizational change toward racial equity. At these meetings participants will discuss how much time can be allocated to the topic of Racial Equity and will identify at least 3 specific ideas, exercises, trainings or concepts of racial equity to be introduced to all new staff during induction training starting in Fall/2024.



Survey Details

▶ The intent of this survey is to:

- ▶ Develop a baseline on staff knowledge and perception of how SSB is doing with Racial Equity
- ▶ Gauge staff buy in and commitment
- ▶ Identify areas of concern and success
- ▶ Determine our priorities
- ▶ Develop additional SMART goals based on results

▶ Sample survey questions:

- ▶ Are you given the same career opportunities as your peers in SSB? Career opportunities include promotion, external trainings, cross training, mentorship, etc.
- ▶ Are you willing to participate in the development and/or presentation of a training that teaches others about diversity, equity, and inclusion?



Step 5: Evaluating and Sustaining

► Assess the effectiveness of the change and its impact on the organization. Identify lessons learned, celebrate success, and address remaining issues. Develop strategies to sustain the change long term.





What's the plan?

- ▶ Develop Key Performance Indicators for each goal
- ▶ Provide regular surveys to gauge progress
- ▶ Report out on steps taken to improve racial equity
 - ▶ Example: In an effort to provide equitable career opportunities SSB has made all external trainings a competitive process.

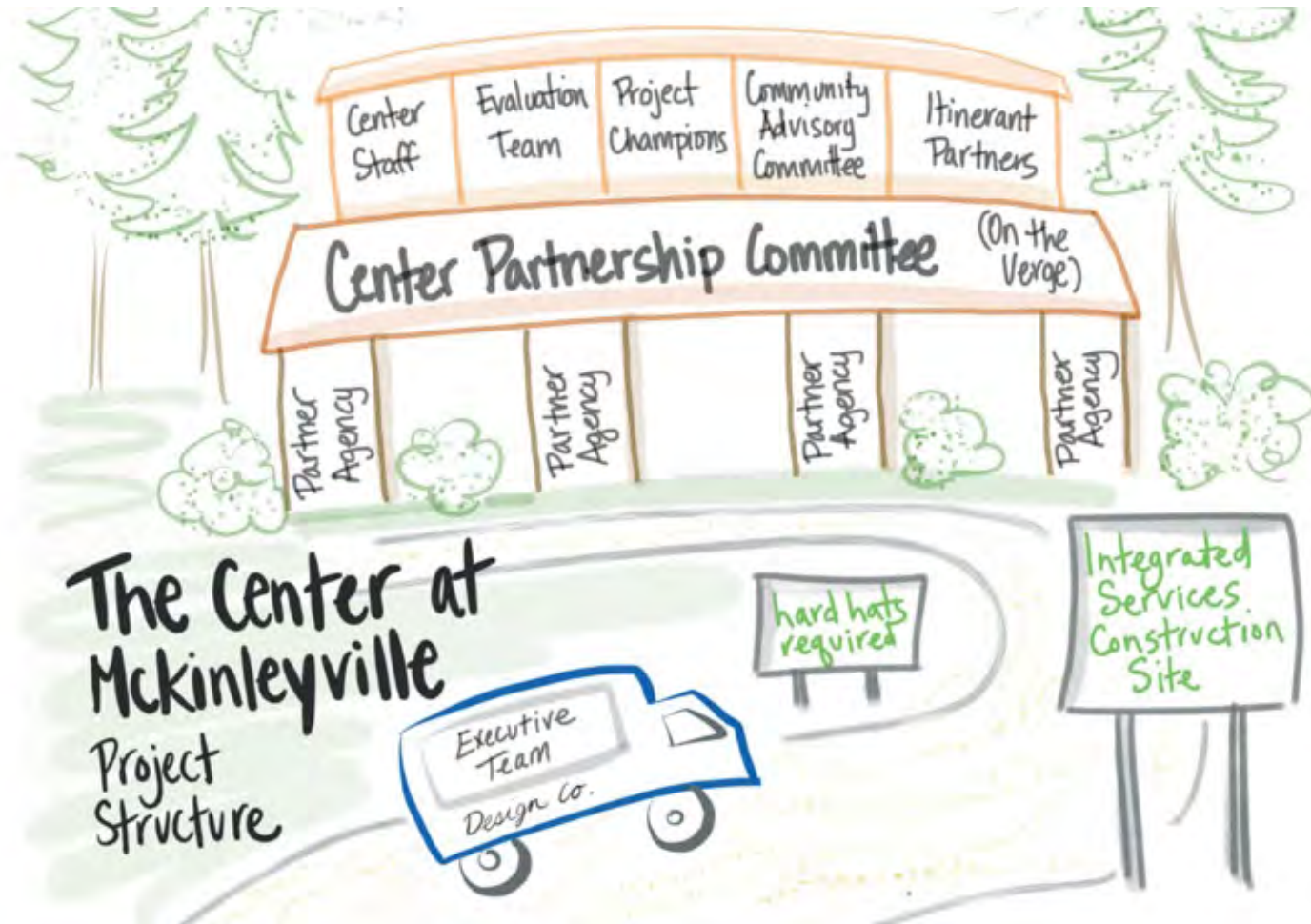


A Hyperlocal Approach to Onboarding

McKinleyville

A dream envisioned in 2012 to bring services closer to residents in the northern and eastern parts of the county





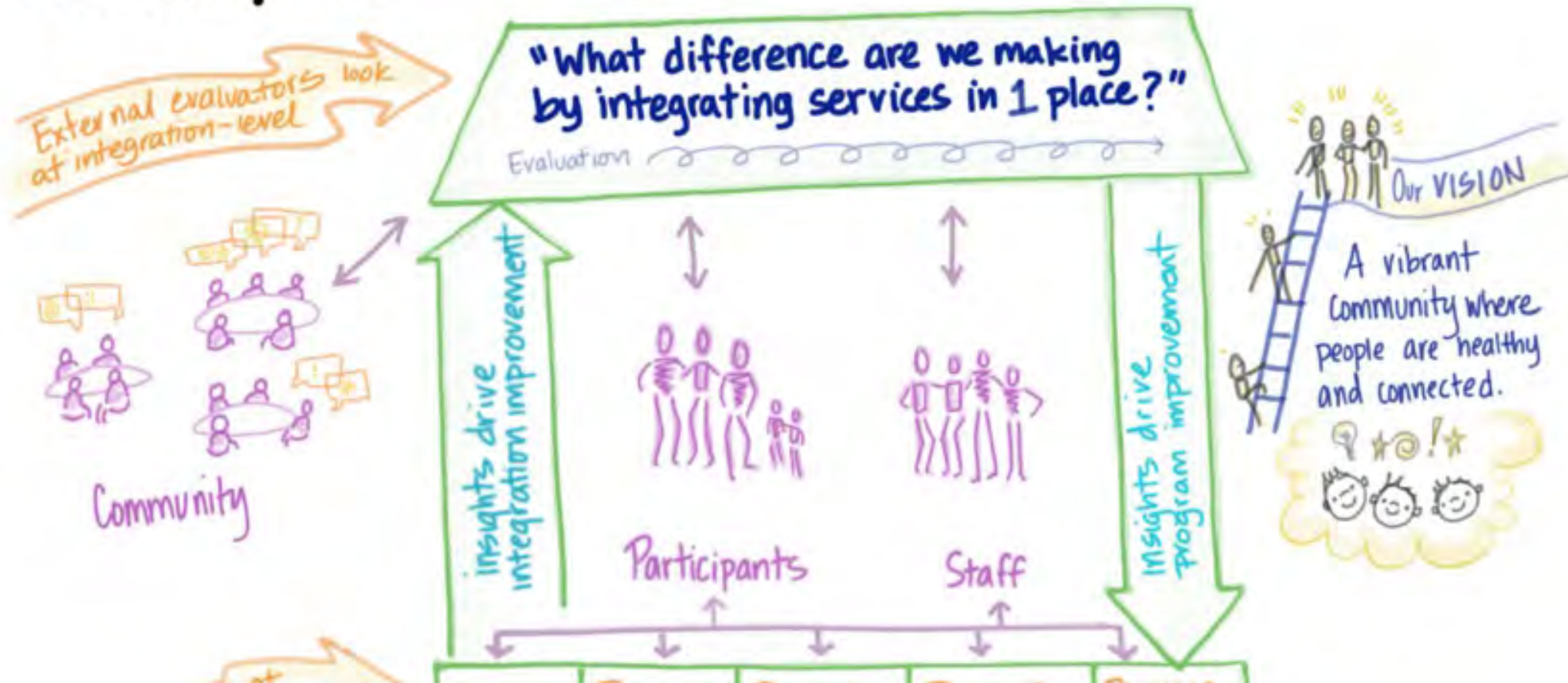
Center Partner Agencies

- McKinleyville Family Resource Center
- Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services
 - CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal Eligibility Programs
 - Child Welfare Services
 - Adult Protective Services
 - In-Home Supportive Services
 - Behavioral Health
 - Women Infants and Children (WIC)
- North Coast Child Support Services
- Open Door Community Health Centers
- Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Social Services
- Cal Poly (HSU) Social Work Department



The Center at McKinleyville

Evaluation Plan to measure...
"How well are we working together?"



WIYOT LAND

We are located along the Baduwat, or Mad River.

There were many small village sites in and around what is now known as McKinleyville. Using available information, there is no singular Wiyot village that we can point to for McKinleyville.

Likely some overlap with the Yurok and other tribes in the region.



Source: honortax.org

Welcome to Rraninou'Waduk

Pronunciation: "dah-nee-noot-wah-duck"

The Center at McKinleyville sits on the unceded land of the Wiyot Tribe.

The Center sits near the mouth of Baduwa't (the Mad River), the ancestral, unceded home of the Wiyot Tribe. Humboldt County is home to many Indigenous peoples, including the Wiyot, the Yurok, Karuk, Hupa, Tolowa, and Wailaki tribes.

The Center at McKinleyville strives to live up to its name, Rraninou'Waduk.

Wiyot Tribal members named the Center Rraninou'Waduk, which means "we help each other." While this is our goal, we also commit to:

- **Be in partnership** with and follow the lead of Indigenous peoples.
- **Not forget** that social services, such as those offered at the Center, have a history linked to genocide and other harms.
- **Approach our work with humility**, as learners, and aware of our power to harm.

The Center at McKinleyville is dedicated to action.

We believe the best way to acknowledge and honor this land is to give it back to the Wiyot Tribe. We encourage you to join us in continuously finding ways to support Indigenous sovereignty. |

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To Learn More and Get Involved:

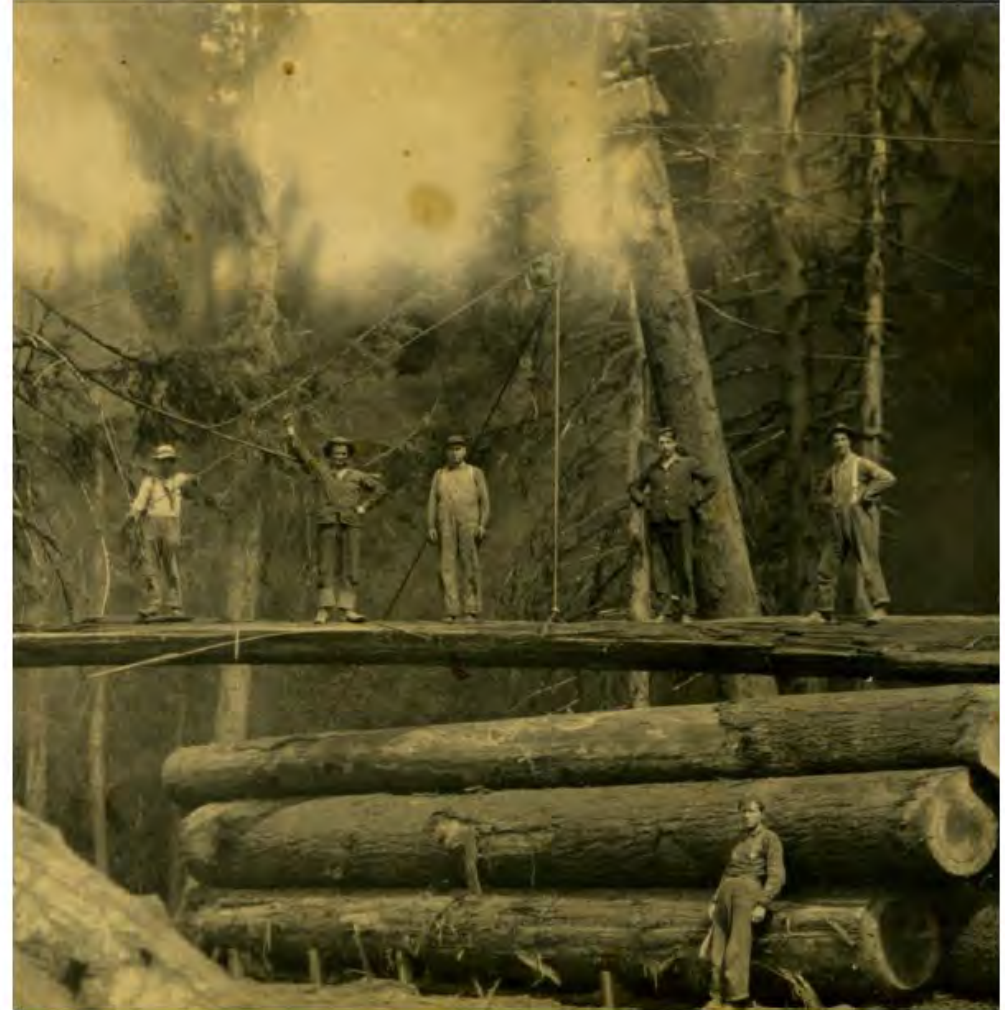


COLONIZATION

Started roughly 1850 (relatively late)

European and American immigrants relied upon natural resources, building industries around mining, fishing, and lumber.

The Wiyot and other Tribal people tried to continue their lives. Many were violently removed from their lands.



Understanding Context

- How does the past & present connect to your work?
- How do the natural and human geography shape a place and experiences?
- What are our own implicit biases and "isms," and how do they impact our impressions and interactions with others?





Some Concerns

**Humboldt County Sheriff William Honsal
has stated there is no evidence of
organized hate groups in McKinleyville.
But the rumors persist.**

**"I've heard McKinleyville
is by far the more racist
part of the Humboldt
Bay Area."**

**"Mckinleyville is one of
the only locations in
California with official
KKK meetings."**

Comments from online message boards

Locals have reported the following symbols often associated with racism in and around McKinleyville in 2020-21*:

- Don't Tread On Me Flags
- Confederate Flags
- Punisher Bumper Stickers

Racist incidents have also occurred within the town in this same time period:

- Vandalized Black Lives Matter Signs
- Vandalized Black Lives Matter Mural
- Incidents of racial slurs yelled out of car windows at LatinX youth
- Threats of violence against a Native youth on the Hammond Trail

*The Anti-Defamation League holds an extensive library of images associated, implicitly or explicitly, with white supremacy, violence, and racism. Use the ADL website to learn more about the imagery listed here and to look into other questionable images.

We do need allies to have a safe conversation, so we can all make improvement together.

We have learned how to coexist. Especially native people and non-native people...doesn't mean that it's been a good existence, but we found a way to deal with the historical trauma, with the history of this region, with the people who came, those who massacred and those who were massacred, to all find a way to coexist in this community.

This is real and if you don't want to be McKlanlyville, then let's be proactive, start shaping what we want to be.



Onboarding Training Topic:	Number of Attendees:	Percentage Attendance:
Full Day Onboarding (May 3)	42	84%
Full Day Onboarding (May 4)	43	86%
Racial Equity	32	64%
Safety Policy	34	68%
Mental Health First Aid	33	66%
Onsite Program Collaboration 1	31	62%
Five Goal Areas	32	64%
Center Evaluation	22	44%
Onsite Program Collaboration 2	25	50%
Centering Justice 1	33	66%
Centering Justice 2	33	66%

Onboarding Data

Two Full Days of Onboarding



▶ Topics that were covered on the first day of training (May 3):

- ▶ Background and history of The Center
- ▶ Services that will be provided at The Center
- ▶ Goals, mission, vision, and values of The Center as a whole
- ▶ Shared values
- ▶ History of the McKinleyville community
- ▶ Physical space of The Center building

▶ Topics covered on the second day of training (May 4):

- ▶ Importance and general critique of land acknowledgement
- ▶ Introduction to California Indian History
- ▶ Parts of land acknowledgement
- ▶ Connection between historical land loss and moments of resistance and land loss

Weekly Half-day Trainings

The following topics were covered throughout the two-month period:

- ▶ Ladders of awareness and empowerment
- ▶ Microaggressions
- ▶ Comfort with giving and receiving feedback
- ▶ Background and history of The Center
- ▶ Creating a workplace that is culturally safe
- ▶ Community care
- ▶ Signs and symptoms of depression and panic attacks
- ▶ Goals, programs, and services of The Center
- ▶ Importance of storytelling and evaluation
- ▶ Language justice
- ▶ White supremacy culture





Strategies

Listening

When a person who identifies as BIPOC shares a story about race and racism with you--even if it makes you uncomfortable or defensive--it is a gift. When someone tells you how you or your community hurt them, it is often because they want to build a relationship with you. Thus, when BIPOC share about McKinleyville, it is a tool we can use to make our relationships and community stronger.

TIP: Don't just listen for trauma, but also listen for needs, hopes, and joy. BIPOC are more than the discrimination they face.

Education

The body of amazing books, videos, and other resources about race grows every day. Many local organizations are also hosting free or low-cost workshops on race and racism. Take advantage of these resources.

TIP: When in doubt, Google it.

Interruption

As you learn more about race and how it functions in the spaces you are in, practice interrupting when you see something happen. It might be a microaggression or an outdated policy, or it might be intentional and explicit racism. Remember to focus your energy into the person harmed by what happened, including giving them space or acting for accountability.

TIP: It will always be uncomfortable to interrupt racism, but it is more uncomfortable to experience it.

Assessment

Sometimes it is hard to see how race functions in spaces you have been in for a long time. It helps to focus on the data. If you don't have existing data, you can use a free self-assessment tool from well-respected racial equity organizations, and/or contract with an expert to evaluate your organization.

TIP: You can utilize listening sessions of BIPOC who interact with your organization, but we recommend only doing so if requested by the community. You must be prepared to act on what you hear in order to maintain trust with those who shared.

Give Updates

If you are an organization that has made commitments to racial equity, give regular updates to the community. Share when you attend a training, change a policy, or build a new program that works towards equity. This will help the community members see your continued commitment. It will also serve as an example for your peers to continue their own commitments.

TIP: Ask if you can give credit wherever possible. If people feel uncomfortable getting credit in a small community, find other ways to express your appreciation, such as offering compensation.

Focus on Inclusion AND Belonging

It is not enough to invite marginalized community members to events and hire them in your organizations. If we want to build deeper ties as a community, we must acknowledge what has made spaces uncomfortable for BIPOC, Queer, disabled, and other communities in the past and take steps to change these things. If you are not familiar with this topic, this might be a good place to start your education.

Get Vulnerable and Take Risks

If there is anything you learn from racial equity work, it is how much you do not know. To do this work well, you will face situations where you don't understand another person's perspective or experience. You might also face really big emotions in other people, as well as within yourself. The more you take risks and open yourself up, the better you can connect with those around you.

TIP: This does not mean that everyone will be happy with racial equity work. You may need to prepare to change or even lose some relationships. Focus on those who want a fairer community to lift you up.

The Center Safety Policy

In order to create an intentionally connected and collaborative community for those who work at The Center, we rely on these 5 components of the Center Safety Policy:

Cultural Safety

- No one should have to hide, protect or deny their identity to feel safe at The Center.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

- It is vital that we can give each other feedback, so we can grow and learn

Learning Community

- Innovation requires an active learning environment, where mistakes are allowed and power is shared.

Health and Wellbeing

- When we take care of each other, we are healthier and more connected.

Code of Conduct

- Everyone who walks into the Center in any capacity agrees to basic guidelines of how we treat each other.



Don't Wait to
do Your Part!

Lessons Learned

- Start small, start big
 - Know better do better
- Power in partnership
 - Every level has influence
- Bring staff along

Start today



Thank you!

Neftali Miller-Rubio

Program Manager, Racial & Cultural Equity
nmiller-rubio2@co.Humboldt.ca.us

Ryan Bishop

Deputy Director, Social Services
rbishop@co.Humboldt.ca.us

Monique Upshaw-Smith

Program Manager II, Health & Nutrition Svcs
mupshaw-smith@co.Humboldt.ca.us

Eric Kanaga

Program Manager II, Regionalization
ekanaga@co.Humboldt.ca.us