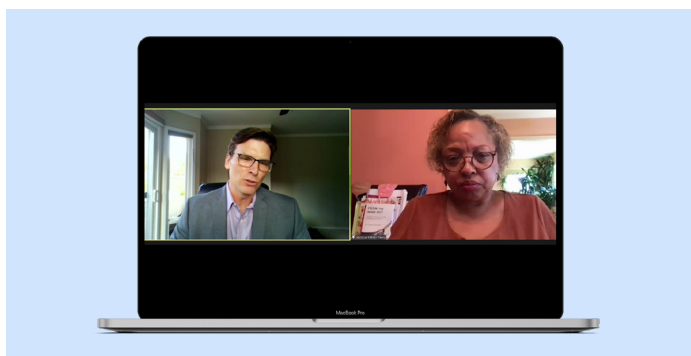


SUMMARY FOR FY 2021-22, SECOND QUARTER Office of Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

On October 19, the Office of REDI hosted an Environmental Justice Lunch and Learn Event with Vernice Miller-Travis, Executive Vice President for Environmental and Social Justice at the Metropolitan Group. Ms. Miller-Travis shared her experience working in the field of environmental and social justice on a federal level and connected that important work to our efforts at the local level here at Valley Water. There were 97 attendees, including Director Nai Hsueh and Director Richard Santos.



Matt Keller (left) and Vernice Miller-Travis (right) during the Lunch and Learn Event.

Third Cultural Speakers Panel: Challenges Faced by Hispanic/Latinx Communities

On October 28, the Office of REDI continued its series of cultural speakers panels to promote understanding and learning of the current experiences of communities. This recent panel was a collaboration with the Organization of Latino Affairs (OLA), an Employee Resource Group (ERG), and focused on community challenges affecting the Hispanic/Latinx community. The event featured four prominent local community leaders: Ester Peralez-Dieckmann, Dr. Carlos Sanchez, Dr. Ann Lopez, and Robin Lopez. The speakers engaged in discussion about essential workers, health equity, and the social justice concerns of the Hispanic/Latinx community. There were 70 attendees for the virtual event, including Director Nai Hsueh, Director John Varela, and Chair Tony Estremera.



Panelists and moderator during the Hispanic/Latinx panel.

BOARD RESOLUTIONS

On November 9, the Board adopted the following resolutions submitted by the Office of REDI.

- Proclamation of November as Native American Heritage Month. Through this resolution Valley Water joined the state and federal governments in honoring the contributions of indigenous, Aboriginal, Native Americans and first American people in the United States.
- Declaration of November 14-20 as United Against Hate Week. With this resolution, Valley Water joins a Bay Area movement that emerged from a United Against Hate poster campaign created in response to white supremacist rallies in Berkeley and San Francisco in 2017.

TRAINING

The Office of REDI continues to collaborate with Human Resources to offer a required training for all staff titled "Diversity Uncovered and Unconscious Bias." This training provides awareness-building to uncover conscious and unconscious biases that can enable discriminatory behaviors. The training also provides tools to address stereotypes, microaggressions, and implicit bias. The training includes discussions of topics related to race, age, and gender. Managers and supervisors were provided an "Inclusive Leadership" component to their training. A total of 95 employees attended the two training sessions held on October 21 and December 8. Additional sessions are planned for 2022.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The Office of REDI has implemented an environmental justice (EJ) impact statement requirement for all Board agenda memos. The new process requires that all actions submitted to Board include an EJ impact statement, prompting staff to consider EJ implications of all Valley Water projects, programs, policies, or services.

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EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

The Office of REDI guides, supports, and collaborates with all of Valley Water’s employee resource groups to help them achieve their respective missions to enhance the experiences of their members.

Ability Awareness

Ability Awareness hosted a “Genetic Testing” event with experts in the field discussing genetic testing and genetic counselors. Attendees learned about the links between the medical community and the disability community, as well as how best to advocate for patients. The virtual event had 22 attendees.

Veterans Awareness Group

The Veterans Awareness Group prepared and posted a video commemorating Veterans Day. They invited a special guest this year, Alexanne Stone, who talked about her personal experience with refugees from Vietnam while serving in the Air Force in Guam in 1975.

For the third consecutive year, the Veterans organized the “Toys for Tots” donation effort from October through November. The Veterans Awareness Group collected toys for underserved children. Donated toys were given to the Toys for Tots program, run by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, which distributes donated toys through nonprofit organizations and social service agencies serving families in Santa Clara County.



Association of Black Employees

The Association of Black Employees (ABE) hosted a Kwanzaa event attended by 18 of their members. Kwanzaa starts the day after Christmas and ends on New Year’s Day. The event shed light on the seven days of Kwanzaa and the weeklong celebration that incorporates African beliefs, values, and traditions.

Organization for Latino Affairs

During Hispanic Heritage Month, the Organization for Latino Affairs (OLA) made an educational presentation commemorating the month during the October 2021 Employee Town Hall meeting. The presentation included a brief history of Hispanic Heritage Month, a discussion of the terminology, and a community poem written by OLA members.

OLA is again taking the lead on the annual “Thank You” to custodial and cafeteria staff campaign. This effort began over 15 years ago with Alicia Jacinto-Canales, a retired employee who worked in Human Resources. Valley Water employees have rallied together every year to express gratitude to these essential members of the Valley Water community.

Green Team

On December 14, the Green Team hosted a documentary showing of “Kiss the Ground,” a full-length documentary on a “new, old approach” to farming called regenerative agriculture. This practice has the extraordinary potential to balance our climate and feed the world.



QUARTER 2: EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG) AND REDI PARTICIPATION NUMBERS		
DATE	EVENT/ACTIVITY	FY 22 TOTAL ATTENDEES
OCT 14	Organization for Latino Affairs - Hispanic Heritage Month Town Hall Presentation	400
OCT 19	Lunch and Learn presentation on Environmental Justice with Vernice Miller-Travis, Executive Vice President for Environmental and Social Justice at the Metropolitan Group	97
OCT 21	Unconscious Bias Training	55
OCT 28	REDI’s 3rd Cultural Speakers Panel – Hispanic/Latinx in the U.S.	70
NOV 18	ERG Leaders Quarterly Meeting	10
DEC 07	REDI’s Information Session - New EJ Impact statements for Board Agenda Memo	77
DEC 08	Unconscious Bias Training	40
DEC 14	Green Team documentary showing of “Kiss the Ground” about regenerative agriculture	35
DEC 15	Association of Black Employees Kwanzaa Event	18
DEC 15	REDI’s Information Session - New EJ Impact statements for Board Agenda Memo	80
DEC 21	REDI’s Employee Equity Assessment Report Presentation	24
Q2 TOTAL		906

LOOKING AHEAD

Educational Events

- REDI’s 4th Cultural Speaker Panel - Spring 2022

Trainings

- Diversity Uncovered/Unconscious Bias Training on January 25, 2022

Resolutions

- February: Black History Month Resolution
- March: Women’s History Month
- March: Cesar E. Chavez Day

ERG Events

- January: Association of Black Employees - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February: Association of Black Employees - Black History Month activities.
- March: Women of Water’s - Women’s History Month activities