



TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Director Tony Estremera, Chair
D&I Ad Hoc Committee

SUBJECT: October 28, 2021 Diversity & Inclusion
Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

DATE: November 23, 2021

This memorandum summarizes the Diversity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) meeting held October 28, 2021, where the following workplan items were discussed:

1. Receive a Quarterly Update on the Office of Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Program Activities.

The Committee received an update on the Office of Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) activities since July 22, 2021 to address diversity, equity and inclusion. Events held included a cultural speaker series on racism, health voting rights and how to be a good ally to the African American Community, a panel discussion on farmworker equity issues, and a lunch and learn session on environmental justice. A series of professional development trainings will be conducted for supervisors and managers that explains unconscious bias and addresses methods of identification and managing its effects. Staff is working to develop a Strategic Master Plan and briefed the Committee on efforts to advance environmental justice through Board Agenda items.

Director Estremera also expressed his intention to discuss with the Board of Directors possibilities of sharing Valley Water's annual disparate impact report with the public.

Director Hsueh and Chair Estremera will work with staff to prepare a report of the Board's historical key decisions related to equitable allocation of financial resources within the county.

Staff will also prepare reports on ACWA and WELL efforts regarding environmental justice to address equity issues.

2. Receive an update on the Employee Equity Assessment Report from the Office of Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI).

The Committee received an update on the employee equity assessment to assess Valley Water's internal racial and equity climate and inform the development of future program activities to address any gaps. Assessment goals include understanding opportunities to increase racial equity, diversity, and inclusion across business areas, measuring demographics of staff, capturing baseline attitudes around racial equity and work culture dynamics, and assessing staff's understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, within the scope of Valley Water's program mission. The REDI team surveyed staff and conducted interviews, focus groups, and reviewed key organizational documents. The report addresses Valley Water's strengths and challenges in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Office of REDI has initiated some of the report's recommendations. In the coming weeks, the results of the equity assessment will be shared with all Valley Water staff with a focus on addressing the report's recommendations. In collaboration with Human Resources and other Valley Water offices, REDI will work toward increased levels of employee satisfaction in identified areas.

The equity assessment will be used by the recently hired consultant to develop a Master Plan for Valley Water. The assessment will help inform the development of the Master Plan by identifying areas in which the organization needs to create or modify policies and procedures that will create greater fairness and equity in our business operations practices.

3. Receive Update on Human Resources Activities.

The Committee received an update on Human Resources activities regarding the expansion of recruitment, retention, internship and scholarships for disadvantaged college students and partnerships with local community colleges and universities. Staff will work to engage Santa Clara University as a program partner.

The Committee voted unanimously to support and forward staff's proposals to the Board for consideration.

4. Review Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee 2021 Work Plan and 2022 Work Plan and Meeting Schedule.

The Committee requested the following items be included in the 2022 Work Plan and scheduled accordingly:

- Report on historical key decisions related to equitable allocation of financial resources within the county. (Jan)
- Report on ACWA equity efforts
- Report on WELL equity efforts

Please send comments and suggestions to Natalie Dominguez, Assistant Deputy Clerk II, at ndominguez@valleywater.org.