



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council Charter Revision

Background:

[According to the US Census QuickFacts](#), Ventura County is home to a diverse population. Diversity is essential for the County of Ventura as an organization to recognize the significant contribution of its diverse workforce to maximize outcomes for the population it serves.

The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was launched in 2017 under the direction of the CEO and with the support of the Board of Supervisors. In 2020, the DEI Task Force supported County efforts to declare racism a public health crisis and in 2021 became a permanent Council and was renamed the "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council" [the Council]. The Council is comprised of a diverse and representative group of leaders across all county agencies.

In 2022, the Council developed the following Commitment Statement that was adopted by the County for the Strategic Plan:

We, the County of Ventura, are committed to developing, nurturing, and sustaining an equitable community and workforce where all individuals can thrive. We pledge to amplify the voices of under-represented communities or those who were historically excluded, by removing barriers that result from racial and social injustice and inequities. We strive to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion practices are embedded at all levels of Ventura County programs and departments by acknowledging, analyzing, and addressing the root causes of inequities. We advance equitable policies, practices, and procedures, including, but not limited to County services, recruitment and retention, policies and practices, budgeting, and procurement. We commit to being transparent and will continually evaluate and update our strategies when identified goals and objectives are not being achieved or sustained. We, the County of Ventura, strive to create an inclusive environment where every community member feels like he/she/they belong.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted a resolution on November 10, 2020, declaring racism a public health crisis. The resolution and its implementation reinforce the diversity, equity, and inclusive work initiated by the County in 2017 and are integral to fostering and promoting racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to our community. The County chooses to lead with race but is not exclusively focused on race. This framework extends to additional equity issues including sexual orientation, gender, and ability.

DEI Council Vision:

The vision for the DEI Council is to develop and nurture an equitable community where everyone is able to reach their full potential.



DEI Council Mission:

The mission of the DEI Council is to develop, sustain, recommend and model equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices in collaboration with the various County agencies we represent, as well as to embrace the valued perspectives and experiences that arise from diversity within our community. Through the work of the DEI Council, we will empower and share decision-making and accountability with all members of our community and County workforce in order to remove barriers that may exist throughout our county agencies that are as a result of social injustice, inequality, and racial trauma. We are committed to engaging the voices of our community to promote equitable outcomes for all.

We commit to ensuring that the county provides resources that promote equal access and opportunity for all people in order to achieve a prosperous society, and we advocate for policies that secure diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racist practices within the County of Ventura workforce.

It is through the lens of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (DEI-AR) that we pledge to build the following capacities:

- **Diversity:** Recruit, support, promote, and retain more underrepresented individuals into leadership positions.
- **Equity:** Ensure the adequate and necessary resources and dedicated positions to DEI-AR efforts are available for Ventura County to uphold, develop and sustain equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices when serving the community and its employees.
- **Inclusion:** Ensure through action and empowerment that individuals from underrepresented groups are represented throughout the county departments and agencies at all levels of decision-making and leadership to address and find solutions that are inclusive of those impacted by inequities.
- **Belonging:** Listen to those affected by inequity to foster unity as we strive to create an inclusive environment where all community members feel they belong with the knowledge that they are recognized and valued for their contributions. Inclusion is an action; belonging is a feeling.

DEI Council Goals:

- Build internal capacity within the County of Ventura to ensure we have the systems and practices to work effectively and leverage differences with all team members, customers, and the community
- Improve outcomes for community members, deliver culturally responsive services, and maintain successful partnerships with community organizations. This Council will ensure that cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are not only in line with each other but are consistent with our organizational objectives and accountability goals
- Provide recommendations to leadership on policies, programs, training, best practices, initiatives and serve as a communication link between all County of Ventura agencies
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses, barriers and opportunities related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the county workforce and policies
- Research and identify DEI-AR best practices to improve the quality of life for all individuals within Ventura County



- Create a Countywide Racial Equity Action Plan and agency-specific Racial Equity Action Plans
- Review, create and recommend policy, programs, training, and communication strategies to improve and promote DEI-AR
- Measure impacts of the DEI accountability action plans
- Collaborate internally and externally with key stakeholders in order to ensure all voices are heard

Membership:

The Council shall be composed of key multidisciplinary staff appointed from the various agencies across the County of Ventura and led by a chair selected by the members. The Council members will bring varied expertise, including knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion, organizational development, change management, community partnerships, and County policies and procedures. The members will be in leadership roles in their agencies and will help to shape policy, programs, and culture in the County as well as advocate for financial and human resources to meet DEI goals.

All members will commit to the Council's most current Operating Agreement. Members are expected to participate in DEI Council meetings and any activities related to DEI Council efforts.

The term of membership for individuals on the Council shall be four years. After a four-year term, a Council member may be reappointed for additional terms by consensus of the Council.

Council members who have either been absent from three consecutive council meetings, or absent for more than 50 percent of meetings within the past 12 months, may be subject to removal from the Council. Council members shall apprise staff assigned to the Council of anticipated absences.

Meetings:

Meetings of the Council shall be monthly, or more or less frequently, as deemed necessary by the Chair of the Council. The meetings shall be run in a semi-structured format informed by operating agreements formed by the members. Members are expected to review meeting materials before each meeting and be prepared to contribute to the meeting. Members are also expected to remain up to date on DEI Meeting activities and DEI-related materials.

Meetings may be held virtually, hybrid, or in person.

Decision Making:

Decision-making by the DEI Council is by consensus. In an instance where consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a majority vote as long as more than half the members are present (51% or greater). Therefore, members must make every reasonable effort to attend meetings in which decisions are made.

Officers:

The Council shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among the Council members every two years. The Vice Chair should succeed the Chair whenever possible. Officers are limited to 2 consecutive terms with a mandatory one-term waiting period before being eligible for that role again. It is recommended that



the role rotate among the group's members to provide additional experience and distribute the workload associated with the role.

The primary role of the Chair and Vice-Chair is to determine the meeting agenda in collaboration with the Office of DEI and to run the meetings of the DEI Council.

Sub-Committees and Working Groups:

From time to time, the DEI Council may form working groups and/or sub-committees to fulfill the Council's goals.

Staff Support

The Office of DEI will support developing and distributing meeting agendas, summaries, and meeting logistics. As requested by the Chair, the DEI Council may also be supported by various County staff such as County Counsel, the CEO PIO, et.al.

Charter Amendments:

Any proposed amendment to the Council Charter must be adopted at a regular Council meeting. Once adopted, the revised charter is sent to the County Executive Officer.

Charter Revisions:

Adopted by DEI Council April 21, 2022