May 17, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
        Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
        Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
        Supervisor Janice Hahn
        Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
        Chief Executive Officer

REPORT BACK ON EXPANDING EQUITY AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY SERVICES (ITEM NO. 24, AGENDA OF APRIL 20, 2021)

On April 20, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion directing the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and the Acting Director of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), to report back on recommendations for maximizing equity-based and economic recovery programs, including the possibility of expanding existing programing and projects to: 1) create an equity lens for all disbursement of funding; 2) review best practices and present recommendations to maximize and build-on existing comprehensive equity-based recovery programs; and 3) identify strategies that maximize existing equity-driven programs or expand them to reach more individuals and the creation of new tools for programs.

As directed by the Board, the Chief Executive Office (CEO) convened a working group comprised of the relevant departments to identify best practices and evaluate tools that could be used to support these efforts. The attached report provides: 1) background information on equity tools; 2) equity tools available for use within the County; 3) national best practices; 4) and the use of equity tools during the implementation of programming at DCBA and WDACS with funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

As described in the attached report, there is no one-size-fits-all equity lens that will be appropriate or informative for all programs. In our review of exiting tools, and recent economic development recovery programs, we have distilled the following five best practices to create and correctly apply an equity lens for a particular program:

1) **Define Program Objectives** – Departments must determine what success looks like and intentionally consider equitable outcomes as part of the factors of success.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

2) **Identify Available Data** – Countless federal, state and local data sets exist covering a vast spectrum of focus areas. Departments must identify data sets that will best inform program development and service delivery to achieve the factors of success.

3) **Conduct Appropriate Outreach** – In addition to evaluating data, departments should conduct appropriate outreach as allowed based on program timelines and scope. This outreach is critical to contextualizing available data.

4) **Allow for Calibration During Program Implementation** – Departments should build into their program delivery the ability to scan initial and ongoing outcomes and adjust accordingly, with an aim to meeting the success factors.

5) **Track Outcomes** – Departments must consider how they will track program outcomes to measure success. Tracking must be ongoing through the life of the program and not limited to a post-program evaluation.

NEXT STEPS

The CEO, and its Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion and Women and Girls Initiatives, will work with DCBA, WDACS and other departments to create an equity development and monitoring program to assist departments and ensure that an equity lens framework is utilized in the development and implementation of programs and the related monitoring of outcomes. We will work with departments to employ this program immediately in conjunction with the development of services and investments funded by American Rescue Plan funds.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or Allison E. Clark, Senior Manager, Economic Development and Affordable Housing Division at (213) 974-8355 or allison.clark@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:AEC
JO:AG:yy

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
        County Counsel
        Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative
        Consumer and Business Affairs
        Women and Girls Initiative
        Workforce Development, Aging and
              Community Services

REPORT BACK ON COUNTY INVESTMENTS TO EXPAND EQUITY AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY SERVICES (ITEM NO. 24, AGENDA OF APRIL 20, 2021)

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EQUITY LENS – A DEFINITION

To define what equity "is," it is important to understand what it is not. For the purpose of defining equity within the context of meaningfully impacting the lives of individuals through program and policy, making the distinction between equity and equality is paramount. According to Paula Dressel of the Race Matters Institute, equity is not synonymous with "equality." Achieving equity will not be accomplished though treating everyone equally, rather, "It will be achieved through treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.[1]"

To this end, the Board has sought to incorporate an equity lens into delivering programs impacting individuals in the County of Los Angeles (County) who have been adversely impacted by race, gender, and economic inequality. This continued focus on program delivery using an equity lens is also directly aligned with President Joe Biden's January 2021 Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. Charged with the development and implementation of programs that are based in equity, County departments can use an equity lens during the planning and decision-making process to evaluate the impact of potential outcomes of different policy choices and implementation strategies. While the use of an equity lens can be customized based on specific programs and desired program outcomes, the bottom line is that using an equity lens reflects the ideals of an organization relative to values, assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that prioritizes inclusion and equity in its practices.

THE USE OF DATA IN EQUITY DRIVEN PROGRAMMING AND FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

Creation of an equity tool is not, and cannot be, a "one size fits all" endeavor. Rather, it is a thoughtful and deliberative effort that takes into consideration available data and

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[1] From "Racial Equality or Racial Equity? The Difference It Makes" by Paula Dressel, April 2014

specific programmatic goals which guides the creation and implementation of these programs. The ability to map this data on a Countywide level, and in a manner that accurately measures efficacy across programs, largely depends on the types of data that is collected, as well as whether the data being collected is universal to the actual programs being analyzed. As it relates to specific programs, the data being collected may not necessarily be aligned with goals related to equity. For example, federally funded programs often prohibit the allocation of funding based on identifiers such as race.

However, while not perfectly aligned, the mapping of where these funds are being allocated can be achieved using established geographical boundaries such as Supervisorial Districts and Service Planning Areas, where applicable. This would provide a general sense of the populations impacted by funding, and often capture certain targeted groups, but not necessarily those targeted by the funding allocation. In short, to effectively measure the impact to groups targeted using an equity lens, as well as the true efficacy of the funding allocated for these purposes, consistency in the data being collected, as well as the manner in which funding is being allocated, matters.

EXISTING TOOLS – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

The Chief Executive Office (CEO) reviewed examples of established tools that have been used by government agencies in addressing equity issues. A short list of examples includes: a) the County's Delete the Divide mapping tool; b) Department of Regional Planning's (DRP) Equity Indicators Tool; c) Angel City Advisor's Social Equity Index; and e) Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Racial Equity Toolkit. Each of these tools examines factors that affect equity outcomes in the County, yet each has a different approach in identifying a body of stakeholders to examine and analyze equity issues experienced by segments of the population.

The foundation of all the tools involved the convening of stakeholder groups ranging from public health professionals, government agencies, County staff, and the general public to discuss how to build data tools that shape strategies in addressing equity issues. The convening of stakeholders led to the identification of data that can be analyzed and tracked to show where equity issues exist and approaches to trace them over time.

Examples of LA County Equity Tools

"Delete the Divide" Mapping Tool – Internal Services Department (ISD)

https://www.deletethedivide.org/

The County's Delete the Divide effort is a simple mapping tool that displays three sets of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's (Census) American Community Survey (ACS) showing census tract characteristics: percent of households without internet, median

household income, and predominant race. The three data sets are viewable simultaneously showing the viewer how income and race of a census tract correspond with a community's access to the mass communication technology of the internet. This is the most basic example of a tool, reviewed for the purpose of this report, that can be used as a resource to develop strategies in identifying areas experiencing inequities. Although this tool is not configured to trace equity outcomes over time, the standardized data contained in the ACS allows for the County to enhance a tool like this to do so.

Equity Indicators Tool

https://apps.gis.lacounty.gov/drp/m/?viewer=Equity

In December 2015, the Board instructed DRP to collaborate with other departments to develop an Equitable Development Work Program. Specifically, DRP was directed to develop tools including maps to evaluate, monitor, and advance equity objectives in the implementation of the General Plan. To accomplish this directive, staff from DRP and other departments held a series of meetings with a list of major stakeholders to discuss the development of a tool to advance equity objectives and a plan for stakeholder engagement. The meetings resulted in the group defining equity for the purpose of developing the tool and drafting the mission statement of what is now DRP's Equity Indicators Tool. This tool is a web-based mapping tool that displays socioeconomic, demographic and other community characteristics to identify areas that are experiencing equity issues.

DRP's Equity Tool displays indicators including educational attainment; income; unemployment; homeless counts; housing cost burden; pollution burden; overcrowding; school quality; high segregation and poverty; and parks need. These indicators are viewable by neighborhood and/or census tract level. DRP's report back to the Board on the tool highlights its overall use by County departments to identify and evaluate the needs and issues of a particular community or segment of the population, and use that evaluation to prioritize locations for projects and investments such as federal, state, and local grant funding. Additionally, the tool provides consistency between departments for determining equity priorities and the implementation of programming to enhance the environments of communities. This effort by DRP and the convening of its series of meetings to accomplish its directive also resulted in development strategies for equity in stakeholder engagement. There are three types of stakeholder engagement: strategies that address specific projects, changes to decision making structures, and innovative pilot programs. Each strategy outlines several engagement processes that require the participation of either general public and/or professional organizations in the planning process. DRP's report to the Board on November 29, 2018, outlines these engagement strategies.

The Social Equity Index (Equity Index)

http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1081218_CreationofaCountywideMicroloanProgram_Ite
mNo.1-D_Agendaof03-19-19_andItemNo.2-D_Agendaof09-10-19__11-10-
2020.pdf#search=%22microloan%22

The Board adopted a motion in September 2019 directing the CEO, in partnership with DCBA and the Center for Strategic Partnerships, to research, design, and present recommendations and an implementation plan for a Countywide microloan program.

Through its Economic Development Master Services Agreement, the CEO engaged Angel City Advisors (ACA) to provide consulting services related to executing the motion's directives. ACA conducted a needs assessment of the micro and small business landscape of the County to identify target geographic areas where a Countywide Microloan Program would be most equitable and containing populations that would benefit most from such a program. ACA developed the Equity Index, an integration of equity metrics that calculate a weighted score based on the categories of structural/immutable disadvantages; current/evolving socio-economic disadvantages; and co-investment opportunities. The weight of each category's score was calculated on data sets that corresponded to the disadvantages.

The Equity Index was designed to assist ACA in developing a program design and implementation plan for a Countywide microloan program. A wide variety of data sources were used for each of the equity categories. Additional information and data sources are included in the Regional Microloan Community Needs Assessment report provided to the Board on June 22, 2020.

Racial Equity Toolkit - Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)

LAHSA created an Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness (Ad Hoc Committee) with the purpose of examining the factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, identifying opportunities to increase racial equity within the homeless service delivery system, and developing recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing homelessness. A strategy for carrying out its objectives involved holding a series of community listening sessions to learn from stakeholders by implementing its Racial Equity Toolkit, adopted from the City of Seattle's Racial Equity Toolkit, and which is a multi-layered process involving community feedback and data analysis. During the listening sessions, the Ad Hoc Committee asked questions to stakeholders and in turn received questions, then research and data analysis pertaining to the discussion was provided by the Race Equity Working Group of the Homelessness

Policy Research Institute (HPRI) to give context and provide insight during this communication process.

The Racial Equity Toolkit process involved six steps: 1) set key community outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis; 2) gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens community in terms of racial equity; 3) analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes; 4) develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences; 5) track impacts on community of color over time by continuing to involve stakeholders and document progress; and 6) share information learned from analysis, strategies developed, and results of implementation over time.

This approach to use a communication process as an equity tool is a unique strategy that involves similar types of data statistics from the other toolkits examined in this report yet integrates the analysis of data by community stakeholders and the Ad Hoc Committee into a communication process. This process allows pertinent data to be displayed to community stakeholders while directly receiving feedback that can later synthesize the research and data analysis of HPRI and other leadership entities of homelessness issues. Similar to other examples shown in this report, this tool can document the progress of equity issues and outcomes over time based on data from widely accepted sources.

EQUITY TOOLS: BEST PRACTICES ACROSS THE NATION

Racial Equity Toolkit – Seattle, Washington

www.seattle.gov/civilrights/programs/race-and-social-justice-initiative/racial-equity-toolkit

The City of Seattle implements racial equity through its Race and Social Justice Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to end structural, individual, and institutional racism by applying a process that guides program and policy and addresses race-based disparities and impacts.

A critical element in implementing the initiative is the development of a strategic plan related to racial equity, as well as the creation of a core team selected from staff across City departments charged with anti-racism analysis building, leadership development training, critical dialogue and strategy sessions, as well as race-based caucusing, with the goal of developing a future model that will include departmental teams, career path incentives, and development of learning goals and activities.

Budget Equity Tool – San Antonio, Texas

https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/Equity/BudgetEquityTool.pdf?ver=2020-04-13-182339-083

The City of San Antonio's Budget Equity Tool is designed to integrate the consideration of racial and economic equity into the budget development process. The Budget Equity Tool provides questions that guide City departments in assessing how their budgets benefit and/or burden communities, specifically communities of color and low-income communities, and guides the development of strategies aimed at reducing racial and economic inequities.

This effort is staffed by a Budget Equity Officer and staff assigned to assist and guide City departments through the budgeting process.

Equity and Inclusion Toolkit- International City Managers' Association (ICMA)

https://icma.org/documents/icma-equity-inclusion-toolkit

The ICMA Equity and Inclusion Toolkit was designed to equip local governments with equity and inclusion strategies and leading practices that are used in communities across the United States and abroad, along with corresponding resources that can be replicated in other communities. The toolkit includes a list of organizations actively involved in promoting equity and inclusion in government, additional resources, and a glossary of terms useful for individuals and communities when working on these issues.

RECENT COUNTY EFFORTS UTILIZING AN EQUITY LENS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA)

Eviction Defense Program

Due to COVID-19, DCBA's Eviction Defense Program (EDP) pivoted its original implementation plan to meet the needs of the County's hardest hit communities. Although the initial plan proposed to focus limited resources by targeting residents in predetermined high-need zip codes, the widespread economic hardship and housing uncertainty stoked by COVID-19 forced the department to reconsider the service delivery model. DCBA worked with program partners to develop a new strategy and methodology that would allow the EDP to target high-needs communities Countywide. The pivot included leveraging an existing Tenant Vulnerability Index (Index) developed by the City of Los Angeles (City). Due to the fast-evolving public health emergency, the Index provided a ready tool for implementing a new approach.

Understanding characteristics associated with socioeconomic risk was critically important because they are often compounded and result in neighborhood-level displacement pressures, particularly as tenants living in gentrifying areas are more likely to face eviction threats. The Index, which included renter households below the federal poverty line; severely rent burdened households; Black renter households; Latino renter households;

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elderly renter households; renter households that have lived in the same unit for over 20 years; households receiving social security income; single-mother households; adults' with less than a high school degree; residents that immigrated after 2010; and linguistically isolated households, allowed DCBA and CEO to conduct a deeper analysis and develop a more equitable application based on specific characteristics of target clients. Although data-driven tools, such as vulnerability indices, provide clear scales for application, they are not without limitations. Variables such as timeliness of the data, types of housing, and weighted scoring can have impacts on the tool's prediction of relative risk or absolute need. In order to prevent absolute reliance on data and to validate final recommendations, DCBA obtained nuanced feedback from Board Offices and members of tenant protections groups that helped ensure outreach and marketing efforts targeted the most vulnerable communities.

LA Regional COVID-19 Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund)

In response to the negative impacts and disruption the pandemic created for businesses, the Board directed DCBA and the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) to work together with private sector partners to establish and launch the public-private Recovery Fund to support small businesses and nonprofits in the County. In order to implement a model that would have greater impact on historically disadvantaged communities, DCBA partnered with the City and together worked with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to develop program requirements that would ensure equitable distribution of $100 million in grants.

To do this, DCBA incorporated unique elements into the Recovery Fund Program. First, it created multiple rounds to avoid the first come, first served model that leaves many disadvantaged applicants out. This allowed the fund to continue promoting the program to reach those hardest to reach and allowed flexibility to adapt program elements during rounds. Second, it applied an equity lens to ensure that dollars reached communities most impacted and less likely to access government programs.

Finally, technical assistance was made available at least one week prior to grant opening to support businesses through the application process in order to minimize factors related to the digital divide.

The Recovery Fund's equity lens was weighted based on a list of collective factors. Priority was given to veteran-owned entities, and to entities located in census tracts with lower median household income, higher levels of pollution, higher unemployment, lower education rate, and lower jobs-to-population rate. Approximately 80 percent of funds were distributed to minority-owned or led entities, and over $75,000,000 of the total grants went to low- and moderate-income census tracts, where at least 51 percent of households are at or below 80 percent of the area median income. A total of $2,735,0000 was awarded to 203 veteran-owned entities.

As a result of the iterative nature of the rounds, DCBA was able to adjust Recovery Fund strategies and supporting activities, including data analysis and outreach, to continue to meet the needs of the various industry sectors and diverse regional communities. These supportive activities were as essential as an equity lens framework. As each round was implemented, DCBA and LISC performed data analysis on each round, adjusting education and outreach strategies to reach disadvantaged groups that were initially not scoring well, in later rounds. However, it was only through robust outreach and technical assistance efforts that DCBA was able to increase the pool of eligible and diverse applicants for award consideration.

The success of the Recovery Fund provides a foundation for future grant-based program designs. The lessons learned and the applied equity lens can serve as program development tools that can be combined with other tools and data models to help design future targeted programming.

Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS)

Employer Assistance Grant Fund

Through the Employer Assistance Grant Fund (EAGF) program, WDACS was intentional in using the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 resource. CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool that helps identify communities that are most adversely impacted by environmental, health and socioeconomic stress. The goal of the EAGF was to help businesses, social enterprises, and community business enterprises to offset costs related to compliance with local health orders. Businesses and Social Enterprises impacted by COVID-19 were prioritized by using the CalEnviroScreen tool, targeting those in the most vulnerable communities, to help them keep their workers employed. Without a clear and comprehensive data set that showed where the majority of low-income workers were traveling to for their jobs, WDACS used the comprehensive equity tool, CalEnviroScreen, to disburse resources equitably. Using this mapping resource, WDACS was able to focus not just on communities in high need areas, but also ensure that over one-third of the available funding went to businesses led by people of color. By securing the data available through the tool, it was important to outreach to trusted community partners to help not just with the messaging, but the engagement that is needed beyond the data.

ANALYSIS/CONCLUSION:

The County may opt to further develop an equity toolkit that implements best practices and strategies from the examples of equity toolkits discussed in this report as well as examples from other jurisdictions. A County toolkit can provide a sharp lens to examine strategies to maximize equity-based economic recovery and other programs. For example, DRP's equity tool can be used as a framework that can be expanded to cover

more specific equity issues related to segments of the population most affected by the pandemic, such as women, especially women of color, who have statistically been shown to experience disproportionate impacts due to COVID-19, including loss of jobs as well as the burden of child and adult care.

As stated above, the application of an equity tool is not a "one size fits all" endeavor and, therefore, departments must be allowed the flexibility to apply equity tools that are appropriate to the programs being administered. A toolkit would provide options based on specific programmatic needs and desired outcomes.

All the examples of equity tools herein were created using a stakeholder engagement process implemented by government agencies to gather information on relevant equity issues for strategy development aligned with their missions and which enabled outcomes to be tracked. Equity priorities were established by these groups and data was selected to track measurable equity outcomes identified by their stakeholders. There are several widely accepted resources of equity-related data and tools that were used in these examples; however, the County can go further and enhance its program data collection methods so that goals, objectives and measurable outcomes can be geographically represented by census tract resulting in more geospatially informed program metrics.

It must be recognized that the utilization of a tool is a fluid process that involves engaging and re-engaging stakeholders as well as analyzing, synthesizing, and then re-analyzing data to continue to improve upon equity issues.

NEXT STEPS

The CEO will continue to explore the appropriate use of equity tools, including looking at successfully implemented models nationwide and their applicability to the County. We will continue to leverage the expertise of our Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion team and WDACS' Human Relations Commission to ensure our efforts under this motion align with the County's overall strategy to address equity holistically. In addition, the CEO will explore the ability to further develop existing equity tools in partnership with departments implementing American Recovery Plan-funded programs and report back to the Board on the outcomes achieved and further explore the use of equity tools to maximize existing equity-driven programs or expand them to reach more individuals in need.