

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

June 3, 2025

Transforming the County's Complaint and Dispute Resolution Processes to Foster a Culture of Belonging, Transparency, and Accountability

The County of Los Angeles (County) is uniquely positioned to lead by example in creating a workplace that addresses employee complaints, resolves disputes efficiently and fairly, and promotes a culture of belonging and inclusion. In furtherance of this goal, on December 7, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion titled, "Enhancing the County's Commitment to Promoting a Diverse and Inclusive Work Environment,"¹ to advance equity and fairness in the workplace by exploring updates to the County Policy of Equity (CPOE) and making recommendations for enhanced complaint and alternative dispute resolution processes to strengthen our commitment to a safe, inclusive, and respectful work environment for all employees. At that time, the Board recognized that continuing to ensure a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is foundational to building an equitable County workforce, one that reflects the values we seek to promote across the communities we serve. Additionally, as the largest employer in the County with over 110,000 employees, it is imperative that each County department timely responds to workplace disputes, including those relating to interpersonal conflicts that do not rise to the level of a CPOE violation,

¹ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/164239.pdf>

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in order to facilitate resolution and foster a safe, productive, and inclusive work environment.²

Over the past two years, the Chief Executive Officer's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI), the Department of Human Resources, the County Equity Oversight Panel (CEOP) in the Executive Office of the Board, and the Office of the County Counsel (the "CPOE Program Partners") have worked collectively to achieve the Board's directives relating to recommendations for enhanced workplace complaint and dispute resolution processes that advance equity, fairness, and inclusion for all.

In May 2025, ARDI submitted a report to the Board titled, "Findings and Recommendations for Transforming the County's Complaint and Dispute Resolution Processes to Foster a Culture of Belonging, Transparency, and Accountability." The report contained the CPOE Program Partners' findings and recommendations, following their two-year review and analysis of the County's CPOE and dispute resolution processes, summarized as follows:

- a) Only approximately 25% of all complaints filed with the CEOP receive an 'A' designation, meaning that the complaint could be a potential CPOE violation and warrants additional investigation by the County Equity Investigations Unit.
- b) The remaining approximately 75% of complaints are determined to not be jurisdictional to the CPOE and are sent back to the involved departments for administrative handling. However, there is currently no standardized tracking system to monitor the resolution of non-jurisdictional CPOE complaints across departments.
- c) The County's existing technological infrastructure for supporting the CEOP process should be upgraded to enhance data management and tracking.

² <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Flow-Chart-CPOE.pdf>. This depicts the current County Policy of Equity (CPOE) complaint process.

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- d) For workplace dispute resolution processes, although significant progress has been made, reforms are needed to address gaps in the current process that could perpetuate delays, frustration, inconsistent handling, and a lack of transparency.
- e) Although mediation is effective when used during the CEOP process, the availability of mediation and dispute resolution options should be expanded, including investing in early conflict resolution and leadership training.
- f) For the CEOP process in particular, CPOE complaint designations should be simplified, and it is recommended that the membership of the CEOP panel should include non-attorney members in order to bring in different perspectives and experience into the process.
- g) County complaint and dispute resolution processes and functions are currently dispersed across multiple departments or entities. The County should explore consolidating CPOE and dispute resolution processes into one consolidated entity. This entity would serve as a Shared Services Center for complaint and dispute resolution processes to increase efficiencies, expeditiously resolve complaints and disputes, provide training and resources, and publish regular reports on the complaint process to foster accountability.

Now is the time for the County to take bold action. Implementing the recommended reforms is essential to achieving the Board's broader goals of advancing equity and non-discrimination in the workplace, modernizing County operations, and building a workplace culture where employees feel heard, respected, and empowered. The County's complaint and dispute resolution processes must be more standardized, streamlined, and efficient to best serve our employees and foster trust and inclusion in the workplace.

Building on the findings of an extensive, multi-year process, the County must adopt a strategic action framework to make enhancements to CPOE processes, ensure all departments are working together to resolve employee disputes, and initiate critical

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stakeholder engagement to ensure that any reforms are shaped transparently, collaboratively, and with the voices of our workforce at the center.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), through the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative, in collaboration with the Executive Officer of the Board (EO), the Director of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), County Counsel, and other relevant departments to return to the Board in 180 days with a written detailed implementation framework, including an estimate of resources needed for implementation, developed from the recommendations in ARDI's May 2025 Report titled, "Findings and Recommendations for Transforming the County's Complaint and Dispute Resolution Processes to Foster a Culture of Belonging, Transparency, and Accountability," including key process reforms such as:
 - a. Recommendations for developing a centralized, single-entity Shared Services Center within a County department to manage a dual-track process for (i) reporting and investigating County Policy of Equity (CPOE) complaints and (ii) supporting the proactive resolution of workplace disputes;
 - b. Establishing department-level pre-complaint resources, including a culture holders program, to assist in the facilitation of dispute resolution services;
 - c. Developing uniform procedures for handling complaints throughout the County, regardless of complaint designation, to the extent feasible;
 - d. Establishing a simplified complaint designation system to improve clarity;
 - e. Modernizing the County's Integrated Complaint Management System;
 - f. Adding non-attorney members to the County Equity Oversight Panel in order to bring different and valuable perspectives and experience into

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- the process;
 - g. Enhancing employee resources through expansion of the Elevate platform or similar platform;
 - h. Strengthening communication standards and mediation practices;
 - i. Modernizing a training program to improve staff and management's conflict resolution and communication capabilities;
 - j. Publishing regular reports on trends and outcomes to foster accountability with regard to the County employee complaint process; and
 - k. Updating the CPOE policy to reflect changes as referenced above, in a clear and simplified manner, as appropriate.
 - l. This implementation framework should include: a proposed timeline for action steps; any required budget adjustments or requests for additional resources; and recommendations for necessary next steps, including ordinance changes, policy or procedural updates, and potential labor engagement.
2. Direct the Director of DHR, in collaboration with the CEO, EO and County Counsel, to immediately begin stakeholder engagement with County departments, labor partners, employee associations, and other relevant stakeholders to:
- a. Transparently present the proposed reforms and their timeline for implementation;
 - b. Solicit feedback and address concerns including ways to improve the overall workplace dispute resolution process for both proposed tracks; and
 - c. Ensure the implementation process reflects the lived experiences and priorities of the County workforce.

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