

ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY AT THE SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY: OPPORTUNITIES IN HIRING, PROMOTION, & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 2019

Report prepared by the HSA Racial Equity Work Group
September 2019



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Staff of the Human Services Agency:

In San Francisco and nationally, profound racial inequities are evident in measures of well-being across every dimension of people's lives, ranging from education to health to criminal justice to housing to employment and economic security. Analysis finds that throughout history—and continuing to this day—many public policies have driven racially inequitable outcomes.

As a social services agency whose mission is to promote the well-being and economic security of San Francisco's diverse residents, the Human Services Agency (HSA) is uniquely poised to address issues of racial inequity as a critical component of our charge to create lasting and positive impacts on the individuals and families who call our City home. Our values to address the broader equity issues being faced by the communities we serve extends inward as we work to create a culture of inclusion and belonging for our employees, with attention to key practices.

Recognizing the importance of government in understanding what racial equity is, why it matters, and how to eliminate inequities across multiple systems, we are pleased to present *Advancing Racial Equity at the San Francisco Human Services Agency: Opportunities in Hiring, Promotion, & Organizational Culture*.

Our research process and report follows a framework developed by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of local and regional governments across the country dedicated to uncovering and addressing racial disparities in governmental policies and institutions to advance opportunities for all. Led by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) since 2015, more than 50 City employees representing housing, transit, law enforcement, youth services, health, environment and other service areas have enrolled in curriculum and created a peer-based collaborative to institutionalize racial equity within their departments.

In 2018, HSA was proud to join this effort. We applied to participate in the GARE training, formed a staff-led Racial Equity Work Group to tailor racial equity work to HSA's context, and began a discovery process to uncover and address racial disparities at HSA.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group and HSA's leadership decided to focus its initial discovery on challenges and opportunities internal to the Agency's culture and operations. We chose internal operations first because we believe a diverse staff—supported by a strong culture of racial equity—will result in better client experiences and outcomes in the long-run. As important, our focus on internal operations is to strive for a welcoming workplace where all people can grow professionally and feel valued for their contributions.

Guided by HSA's Racial Equity Work Group, this report culminates the Agency's 18-month strategic planning process that included: focus groups and stakeholder interviews with over 70 staff members at all levels of the Agency and labor representatives; a quantitative case study of hiring trends among applicants for HSA's Senior Eligibility Worker role; and a literature review of scholarly and industry research on best practices for advancing racial equity in the public sector.

This report recommends strategies and actions to advance racial equity in three key areas: (1) recruitment and hiring, (2) leadership development and promotion, and (3) organizational culture.

With the release of this report, we are committing to furthering racial equity at HSA. Over the next year, in partnership with GARE and the Racial Equity Work Group, we will:

1. Create a new Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to operationalize the recommendations in this report and lead opportunities for staff engagement across HSA's programs and organizational positions;
2. Issue resolutions declaring our commitment to racial equity at the Department of Human Services Commission, the Department of Aging and Adult Services Commission and the Office of Early Care and Education Citizen's Advisory Committee;
3. Adopt racial equity as a core HSA value;
4. Conduct a demographic staffing analysis to understand how well program staff reflect their clients' racial/ethnic background;
5. Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color;
6. Develop and advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color;
7. Promote existing opportunities by increasing access to professional development to staff;
8. Begin training on Core Competency Modeling to ensure we are objective and transparent in assessing staff performance and furthering staff's professional development;
9. Begin implementing racial equity training(s) for all staff, including executive leadership, and ensure that all HSA staff involved in the hiring process attend an implicit bias training; and
10. Continue participation in Citywide efforts led by the Department of Human Resources to improve our ability to analyze any disparities.

HSA leadership is committed to advancing racial equity through these initial actions. We begin this journey in earnest but with humility, knowing that organizational culture change in an Agency of 2,200 people will take thoughtful consideration and ongoing effort over time. We look forward to engaging our dedicated employees as champions of change and racial equity across all levels of our organization, from direct service staff to executive management. Guided by staff leads across the Agency, we will continue to revisit the recommendations set forth in this report annually and update all staff on our implementation plan. We look forward to your leadership and partnership as we forge the path ahead.

Finally, we publicly thank and acknowledge the **Racial Equity Work Group Members** listed below whose passion, thoughtfulness and dedication made this plan possible:

- **Vellore Adithi**, Planning Unit
- **Rosa Ortiz**, Human Resources
- **Dan Kelly**, Planning Unit
- **Kelly Bryant**, DAAS Integrated Intake Unit
- **Alexis Cobbins**, Families Rising
- **Laura Dueñas**, Welfare to Work Services
- **Cassandra James**, San Francisco Benefits Net
- **Ronda Johnson**, Family & Children's Services
- **Van Luong**, Family & Children's Services
- **Dr. Roxanne Manning**, County Adult Assistance Programs
- **Brenda McGregor**, In-Home Supportive Services
- **Phyllis Pettus**, Adult Protective Services
- **Priscilla Prado**, San Francisco Benefits Net
- **Paulo Salta**, Office on the Aging
- **Armando Zapote**, Office of Early Care & Education

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Ingrid Mezquita, Executive Director, Office of Early Care and Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Teamwork and collaborative learning are foundational to the success of work to advance racial equity, and the process of developing this report was no exception. *Advancing Racial Equity at the San Francisco Human Services Agency*, and the strategic planning process that informed this report, would not have been completed without the guidance and contributions of a number of our partners and stakeholders in racial equity work:

- **The Government Alliance on Race and Equity, the Center for Social Inclusion, Race Forward, and the HAAS Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society**, who provided HSA staff with foundational trainings on racial equity and provided the guiding framework upon which we built our approach to strategic planning for racial equity;
- **The San Francisco Human Rights Commission and 2018 San Francisco Learning Year Cohort**, who have led the City in advancing racial equity work and whose supportive expertise has helped us to develop creative solutions to problems as they emerged in the research and planning process;
- **The HSA Human Resources Department and HSA Planning Unit**, who have dedicated hundreds of hours of staff time to perform research in support of this report. Special thanks are due in particular to Nora Martín-White and Eric Yee for their contributions to the quantitative case study of HSA Senior Eligibility Worker job seekers, to Carol Peng for her review of the research literature on best practices to advance racial equity in the public sector, and to Rose Johns for her thoughtful feedback and copyediting of this report;
- **Lotus Consulting Group**, who brought their expertise in qualitative research methods and issues of racial justice to bear as the facilitators of the staff focus groups conducted as part of HSA's strategic planning process for racial equity; and, most importantly,
- **HSA Staff Focus Group participants and key informants**, who personified our Agency's core values in conversation, expressing sincere care for their peers, our clients and the success of HSA's mission. They had the courage to engage unflinchingly with questions of race, racism, and racial inequity in the workplace, and shared a desire to be involved in HSA's ongoing work to advance racial equity.

Beyond the collaborations that defined HSA's strategic planning process for racial equity, the authorship of *Advancing Racial Equity* was also an exercise in teamwork. **The HSA Racial Equity Work Group worked for approximately 18 months to conduct research and develop the policy recommendations contained in this report.** Their commitment to advancing racial equity and their dedication to HSA's mission made the planning and writing process not only possible, but a success.

RACIAL EQUITY WORK GROUP MEMBERS

- **Vellore Adithi**, Planning Unit (SF GARE 2018 Cohort member, Racial Equity Work Group Coordinator)
- **Rosa Ortiz**, Human Resources (SF GARE 2018 Cohort member, Racial Equity Work Group Coordinator)
- **Dan Kelly**, Planning Unit (SF-GARE 2018 Cohort alternate member)
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¹ Formerly known as Project 500

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In San Francisco and nationally, profound racial inequities are evident in measures of well-being across every dimension of people’s lives, ranging from education to health to criminal justice to housing to employment and economic security. These racial inequities are complex, pervasive, and deeply entrenched in our community, arising from historical legacies of explicit racial discrimination and sustained by institutions and structures that repeat these patterns of exclusion even today. Notably, government at the local, regional, state, and federal levels has played a central role in shaping these racially inequitable outcomes.

Recognizing the importance of forging a new role for government, **the San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) has partnered with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)**, a national network of local and regional governments working to advance racial equity. This work has begun at a unique and critical time in San Francisco’s history, as the City wrestles with the growth of economic inequity among its residents and its effects, most particularly widespread gentrification and the displacement of African-Americans from the City’s historically Black enclaves.

As a social services agency whose mission is to promote the well-being and economic security of San Francisco’s diverse residents, **HSA is uniquely poised to address issues of racial inequity and make a positive impact on individuals, families, and communities who call the City home.** Comprised of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Aging and Adult Services, and the Office of Early Care and Education, HSA has tremendous reach: the Agency’s 2,200 employees and 170 community partners serve over one in four San Franciscans—most of whom are low-income—across nine major sites throughout the City. Through its partnership with GARE, **HSA seeks to contribute to a collective, long-term effort by this nationwide government network to eliminate race-based outcome gaps so that race does not predict a person’s success, while also improving outcomes for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.**

In 2018, HSA took a major step toward advancing and institutionalizing racial equity: **it began a strategic planning process to examine current conditions at the Agency and identify strategies for advancing racial equity and improve outcomes for all.** Committed to staff representation and engagement in the planning process, **HSA convened a staff Racial Equity Work Group (REWG) to support the development of recommendations for advancing racial equity at the Agency.** The Work Group was made up of employees representing diverse personal identities, a mix of professional roles across HSA programs, and a cross-section of the Agency management hierarchy.

HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY VISION

San Francisco is a diverse community whose children, youth, families, adults, and older adults are safe, economically secure, and thriving.

The planning process led by the Racial Equity Work Group was supported by both quantitative and qualitative research to better inform the recommendations that appear in *Advancing Racial Equity at the SF Human Services Agency*. Major research elements that support the findings in this report include:

- **A literature review** of scholarly and industry research on best practices for advancing racial equity, particularly in the public sector;
- **Staff focus groups and stakeholder interviews** conducted with over 70 members of the HSA staff at all levels of the Agency, including frontline staff, analysts, supervisors, and managers, as well as with HSA’s organized labor partners; and
- **A quantitative case study** of hiring trends among applicants for HSA’s Senior Eligibility Worker role (sometimes referred to by its corresponding job class, 2905), which examined the extent to which racial disparities occur during the Agency hiring process and identified factors that may explain these racial differences in outcomes. *(Summary included in this report).*

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group decided to focus its initial discovery on challenges and opportunities internal to the Agency’s culture and operations, as opposed to focusing on direct client services. The Work Group recommends broad strategies and specific actions to advance racial equity in three key domains: (1) recruitment and hiring, (2) leadership development and promotion, and (3) organizational culture. These strategies and recommendations are summarized in the table below.

Summary of Recommended Racial Equity Strategies and Actions by Domain

Domain 1: Recruitment & Hiring	
Goal	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all Agency departments and programs
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Perform active recruitment in underrepresented communities of color	A. Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color
	B. Advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color
2. Enhance clarity and accessibility in the hiring process	A. Improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of job announcements
	B. Adopt tools for job seekers to track the progress of their application
3. Use data to inform hiring policy and practice	A. Conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process
	B. Perform longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes by race/ethnicity
	C. Continue participation in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group

Summary of Recommended Racial Equity Strategies and Actions by Domain (continued)

Domain 2: Leadership Development & Promotion	
Goal	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all levels of the Agency leadership hierarchy
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Encourage learning at every level of the HSA workforce	A. Promote existing opportunities for skills development
	B. Adopt a Learning Management System to track training and professional education by race/ethnicity
	C. Create a mentoring program
2. Facilitate career development aligned to professional growth	A. Create a career planning guide highlighting advancement opportunities
	B. Use competency models & success roadmaps Agency-wide
	C. Conduct annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner

Domain 3: Organizational Culture	
Goal	Cultivate a workplace environment in which HSA employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel respected, valued, and supported to carry out the Agency’s mission
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Demonstrate leadership commitment to promoting a culture of racial equity	A. Adopt racial equity as a core value of HSA’s mission and vision
	B. Provide HSA leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
	C. Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
	D. Use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies
2. Foster staff capacity to operationalize racial equity in professional practice	A. Provide HSA staff with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
	B. Develop an internal communications strategy to normalize racial equity frameworks
	C. Design a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum
3. Sustain an explicit and ongoing commitment to advancing racial equity	A. Incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes at HSA
	B. Conduct staffing analysis at the division and program level
	C. Convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to facilitate policy development and implementation
	D. Issue a resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency’s department commissions and advisory boards

The development of this report is the first step in a long-term, ongoing, and iterative process for improving Agency conditions and client outcomes with respect to racial equity. This report contains strategies and actionable recommendations for HSA to carry out over the next several years as we seek in this first phase of the work to close race-based outcome gaps in hiring, promotion, and workplace inclusion. Ultimately, HSA’s goal is to be a leader and partner among the City’s many agencies, working together to eliminate racial inequities among low-income San Franciscans by addressing any disparities in the way our policies, practices, and services impact our clients. The recommendations described in this report represent an important starting point for normalizing conversations about race and racial equity at HSA, and for operationalizing racial equity frameworks in our day-to-day professional practice. They provide us with a path forward to act with urgency and intention to eliminate racial inequities in San Francisco, for our clients and our workforce, alike.

Ultimately, in partnership with other City agencies, our community partners, and the clients we serve, **we can begin to transform the conditions in which we live so that San Franciscans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds can achieve well-being and economic security.**

INTRODUCTION

In San Francisco and nationally, profound racial inequities are evident in measures of well-being across every dimension of people’s lives, ranging from education to health to criminal justice to housing to employment and economic security. The current racial inequities that pervade our communities stem from historical legacies of explicit racial discrimination, and are sustained by institutions and structures that repeat these patterns of exclusion even today. In particular, **government at the local, regional, state, and federal levels has played a central role in shaping these outcomes**. Historically, discriminatory laws, policies, and practices “created a racial hierarchy and determined based on race who benefits and who is burdened.”^{2, i} And although this explicit brand of institutional racism was made illegal following the 1960s Civil Rights movement, the colorblind approaches to policymaking that have taken its place leave much to be desired. Due in part to pervasive implicit biases, present day governmental policy and practice often replicate the same racially inequitable outcomes that existed before—albeit in less direct or readily-identifiable ways.³

The San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) entered into a partnership with the **Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)** in 2018, recognizing the importance of forging a new role for government: to proactively advance racial equity in our community. As a social services agency whose mission is to promote the well-being and economic security of San Francisco’s diverse residents, HSA is uniquely poised to address issues of inequity and make a positive impact on individuals, families, and communities who call the City home. Working within GARE’s network of local and regional governments, **HSA seeks to eliminate race-based outcome gaps so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds**.

HSA is one of over 15 City agencies, led by the **Human Rights Commission (HRC)**, who have partnered with GARE to ensure San Francisco is a diverse, equitable, and inclusive city. Developing a network of government agencies focusing on racial equity is critically important to improving outcomes in

² Notable examples of explicitly racially discriminatory policies include historic definitions of citizenship, voting, and property rights that extended only to white Americans; exclusionary policies that barred students of color from attending institutions of higher education; and redlining practices that made it virtually impossible for people of color to become homeowners and accumulate wealth to pass onto future generations.

³ Many policies that are ostensibly race-neutral nevertheless produce racial disparities, often inadvertently or unintentionally. For instance, public school funding formulas tied to local property values systematically disadvantage students of color living in urban areas, where both historical segregationist policies and contemporary *de facto* segregation has concentrated poverty in communities of color. As a result of lower average property values in these neighborhoods, schools serving primarily students of color tend to receive less funding than their whiter, more well-to-do counterparts. The effects of this comparatively lower level of funding are felt deeply by students enrolled in these schools, where they are likelier to have larger class sizes and greater faculty turnover, less access to technological and other resources like school nurses and college counselors, less rigorous and student-centered curricula, etc. These conditions in turn contribute to racially inequitable outcomes with respect to high school graduation rates, enrollment at institutions of higher education, and lifetime earnings. Simply put, while public school funding formulas are not explicitly tied to race, they nevertheless produce racially differential impacts with profound implications for the life outcomes of individuals and communities of color.

communities of color. GARE seeks to work with HSA and other City agencies to establish appropriate benchmarks and implement strategies that lift up all populations, moving beyond just focusing on disparities. **Over time, this partnership will help equip HSA staff with the knowledge and resources we need to apply a racial equity framework to policy, practice, program, and budget decisions, thereby promoting better outcomes for the individuals, families, and communities we serve.**

This report, and the strategic planning process that HSA undertook to develop the recommendations it contains, represent an important step to advancing and institutionalizing racial equity at the Agency. The analysis and recommendations that make up the core of the report focus on internal operations at the Agency, addressing topics such as hiring, professional development and advancement, and organizational culture. As we embark on this systematic and intentional approach to racial equity, it is crucial that we staff HSA to reflect the diversity of our clients and build our capacity to adequately address the racially inequitable outcomes they may experience. A focus on internal operations allows us to do just that: we can ensure that HSA is a workplace characterized by racial equity, and that equity frameworks are woven into the very fabric of our social service practice, thereby enabling us to eliminate racial inequities over time among the low-income San Franciscans we serve. **Ultimately, this planning process provides HSA a meaningful and transparent opportunity to assess our strengths and areas for growth as an agency, to identify our role in advancing racial equity, and to commit to transformative change that will improve outcomes for all.**

UNDERSTANDING RACIAL EQUITY

Issues of race, racial inequity, and racism are complex. For many people, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, these topics can be fraught—complicated by experiences of racial trauma, feelings of guilt or anxiety associated with one’s racial privilege, and the challenges of confronting our culpability for shaping racial outcomes in our communities. Moreover, HSA’s diverse stakeholders bring a wide variety of perspectives, lived experiences, and professional expertise to the Agency’s ongoing conversations about race and racial equity. **This section provides a high-level overview of the racial equity framework, enabling us to operate from a place of shared understanding and thereby facilitate these essential conversations.**

FOUNDATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTSⁱⁱ

Bias and racism are related concepts, and both play a role in producing conditions of racial inequity.

Bias is prejudice toward one group and its members relative to another group. Bias may appear in more than one form: it may operate consciously and be expressed in direct terms (known as **explicit bias**); or it may operate at a subconscious level, often unknown to the people who hold this bias, and emerge in indirect ways (known as **implicit bias**). While expressions of explicit bias have generally declined over the past half-century in formal, institutional settings as well as more informally, reflected in societal attitudes at large, **implicit bias has been shown to be persistent and widespread.**ⁱⁱⁱ Given their subconscious nature, implicit biases can be difficult to pinpoint and connect to our actions, but they can be mitigated through greater personal awareness and intuitional checks their impacts.^{iv} It is important to be aware of our biases because when we act on them, we may engage in discriminatory behaviors and create negative outcomes for particular populations.

Racism arises from people’s racial biases, and takes three interconnected forms: individual, institutional, and structural racism.

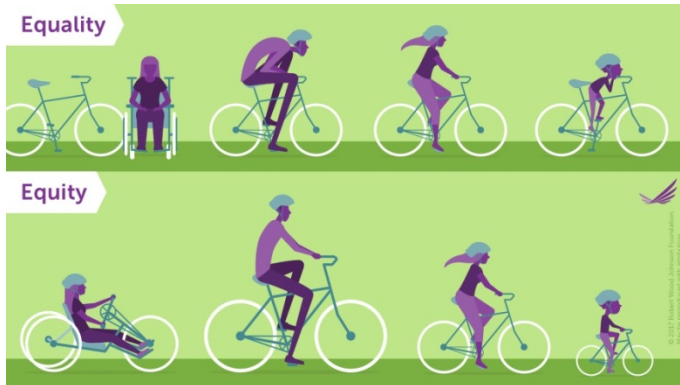
- **Individual racism** refers to bigotry or discrimination by an individual based on race. It may find expression interpersonally, such as when a business owner refuses to serve a person based on their race, or appear in the internalized context of someone’s personally held beliefs.
- **Institutional racism** refers to the policies, practices, and procedures—at an institutional or organizational level—that work better for white people than for people of color and thereby produce racially inequitable outcomes. While explicitly discriminatory laws, policies, and practices were made illegal during and after the Civil Rights Movement, racism continues to manifest in less overt ways throughout institutions such as schools, business, and government agencies, often unintentionally or inadvertently.^v For instance, public school funding formulas tied to local property values systematically disadvantage students of color living in urban areas, where *de facto* segregation has concentrated poverty in communities of color; as a result of lower average property values in these neighborhoods, schools serving primarily students of color tend to receive less funding than their whiter, more well-to-do counterparts.
- **Structural racism** encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts people and communities of color. Racism at the structural level reflects racial bias across interlocking institutions and society at large—including our history, culture, and ideology, as well as policy—and the ways in which these biases produce cumulative, compounding, and systematic inequities that

disadvantage people of color (particularly African American and Indigenous communities) and advantage white people.

Racism at the Individual, Institutional, and Structural Level: An Example in the Housing Context

Individual	An individual property manager doesn't rent to people of a certain race.
Institutional	A property management company uses credit reports and criminal background checks as part of a person's rental application. Due to structural conditions under which people of color experience disproportionately high rates of poverty and contact with the criminal justice system relative to their white peers (see below), this policy has a differential racial impact on otherwise similar applicants. Prospective tenants of color face a systematic disadvantage; the company rents at disproportionately high rates to white tenants.
Structural	Set against a historical backdrop of explicit discrimination in housing, finance, and justice that have shaped their outcomes, communities of color experience higher rates of poverty, displacement, and incarceration than their white peers. Even today, predatory lending practices and high levels of policing are pervasive in marginalized communities, and pose systematic, interlocking, and ongoing barriers to people of color for building good credit and for avoiding criminal justice involvement. These past and present conditions contribute to racial disparities in housing, which in turn feed disparate racial outcomes in education, health, economic stability, and still other dimensions of life.

Equity vs. Equality



The racial equity framework represents a **conceptual shift** away from how most government agencies have treated issues of race since the Civil Rights Era. Historically, the approach has been organized around the principle of *equality*, which is about sameness, and focuses on inputs—in other words, providing the same service to everybody in the same way. The equality framework can be thought of as a “one-size-fits-all” approach that provides the same resources to everyone, and does not account for a person’s current conditions

or whether the outcomes across individuals or groups remain unequal.^{vi}

By contrast, **racial equity is about fairness, and focuses on customizing service levels to meet distinct needs that emerge across racial/ethnic groups.** Racial equity centers on equalizing the outcomes that people of different racial backgrounds experience, understanding that not all groups start at the same place. Under a racial equity lens, government agencies must examine how outcomes may vary by race/ethnicity among the populations they serve. Such analysis helps them to understand if their programs and services are having the desired impact on all of the racial or ethnic groups that make up their communities, and if their services are meeting the varied needs of these populations. **This conceptual shift from equality to equity emphasizes real and measurable results in the lives of people of color, and focuses on achieving transformational change at the level policies, institutions, and structures.**

Understanding Racial Equity

Ultimately, **under racially equitable conditions, race does not predict someone’s socioeconomic outcomes** (such as employment, education, health, wealth, criminal justice involvement, etc.). As organizations work toward racial equity, race-based gaps in these outcomes are eliminated. Moreover, outcomes for all groups are improved because we have successful systems and structures that work for everybody regardless of their racial/ethnic background.

WORKING AT THE INSTITUTIONAL AND IMPLICIT LEVEL TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

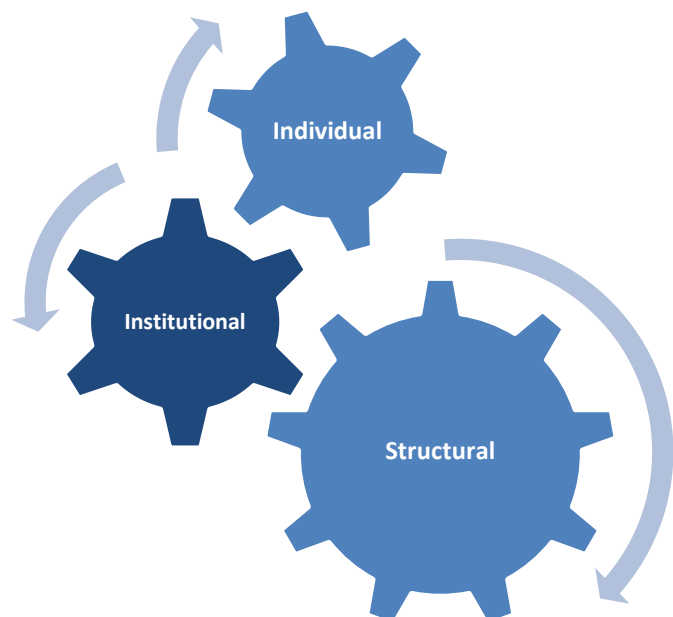
As a social services agency whose mission is to promote the well-being and economic security of San Francisco’s diverse residents, **HSA is uniquely poised to address issues of racial inequity and make a positive impact on individuals, families, and communities who call the City home.** Comprised of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Aging and Adult Services, and the Office of Early Care and Education, HSA has tremendous reach: the Agency’s 2,200 employees and 170 community partners serve over one in four San Franciscans—most of whom are low-income—across nine major sites throughout the City.

American institutions have made important strides to address racial inequity in the half-century since the Civil Rights Movement, primarily by prohibiting explicit racial discrimination in law and policy. However, racial inequities are still pervasive in communities throughout the country, due in large part to the persistence of implicit bias and institutional racism. Cognizant of the racially inequitable outcomes shaping life for San Francisco’s residents of color, HSA has partnered with GARE to ensure our policies and practices actively serve to close race-based gaps in people’s outcomes and improve conditions for all San Franciscans.

By working at the institutional and implicit level, HSA can have a profound impact not only on an individual client basis, but also on the quality of life in the San Francisco community more broadly. With this institutional focus, we have an opportunity to establish a sustainable practice for advancing racial equity that remains relevant over time and across our varied programs (and by extension, across our varied clients, staff, and community partners). Most particularly, it is at this level that HSA has the chance to assess the often invisible ways in which our policies and practices may have different impacts on different racial/ethnic groups, and to offer redress through institutional mechanisms that help to counteract the discriminatory effects of individually-held implicit racial biases.

Simply put, a systematic, institutional approach to advancing racial equity at the level of HSA’s policy and programmatic decision-making is critical for an organization of our size to bring about enduring structural and cultural transformation. By adopting considerations of racial equity as a component of best practice in social services across our diverse programmatic

An Emphasis on Institutional Racism



Understanding Racial Equity

contexts, we ensure that the Agency’s work to advance racial equity will outlast any one advocate for these principles and that the Agency’s many stakeholders share responsibility for shaping equitable outcomes in our community. Working to advance racial equity at the institutional and implicit level promotes the necessary behavioral changes that are essential to produce racially equitable outcomes at HSA. Notably, over time, this approach serves to cultivate the awareness, education, and exposure necessary for more widespread change in attitudes—which tends to follow rather than precede—changes in behavior.^{4, viii} In other words, **to set employee engagement in motion and then maintain the Agency’s momentum to advance racial equity, a focus at the institutional and implicit level is key.**

It is important to understand that, within this framework, the recommendations the HSA Racial Equity Work Group has put forward—solutions that operate at the level of HSA’s policy and practice to close race-based gaps in staff outcomes and improve conditions for all—do not always have an immediately obvious connection to race. However, they function to redress the ways in which superficially race-blind policies at the Agency may produce racially differential outcomes, attentive to the structural barriers that tend to disadvantage people of color and crucially informed by the self-described experiences of people of color (such as those revealed in staff focus groups on racial equity).^{5, 6} **These solutions support HSA to leverage its institutional power strategically and to greatest effect, enabling the Agency not only to achieve more racially equitable outcomes among our clients over time, but also to incorporate an enduring commitment to racial equity in every facet of our operations and culture—benefitting all of our stakeholders.**

Finally, it bears noting that outcomes may also vary systematically along other dimensions of identity, sometimes in connection to race: gender, income, age, ability, sexual orientation, and citizenship status, to name a few. While the racial equity framework provides us with analytical tools that may be applied in other contexts of marginalization, focus and specificity are essential to maximize the impact of our work to advance racial equity. **Acknowledging that strategies to advance racial equity may differ from those necessary to achieve equity in other areas, this report maintains an explicit focus on race and racial equity to best serve the goal of advancing racial equity at HSA.**

⁴ Dr. Andrea Shapiro, a scholar of behavioral decision making, argues that whole-system change requires people who are powerful and vocal advocates for change ideas—in this case, an emphasis on institutionalizing racial equity at HSA—interaction between advocates and others who are apathetic about the change, and an internal work environment that supports the change process and change ideas.

⁵ The HSA Racial Equity Work Group’s process for research and policy development are described in greater detail in the following section on the *Strategic Planning Process*.

⁶ The Racial Equity Work Group found it critically important to identify structural conditions that tend to disproportionately disadvantage people of color to better understand the causes of racial inequities at HSA and provide context for the recommendations contained in this report. The Work Group’s solutions are designed to intervene in these conditions of relative disadvantage. While this analytical approach is based on identifying racial inequities and the reasons why people of color may experience worse outcomes than their white peers, it does *not* treat problems of inequity as endemic to communities of color or rooted in deficits among these populations. Instead, this approach emphasizes institutional responsibility for cultivating racial equity, and encourages us to consider how we might benefit from greater diversity, inclusion, and equity—and therefore, the many assets people of color bring to our organization.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Community representation and engagement is central to success of strategic planning for racial equity, and was an organizing principle for the development of this report. With guidance from GARE and the San Francisco HRC, HSA convened a **Racial Equity Work Group** made up of Agency staff who represent a cross-section of the major divisions at HSA and occupy varied roles and responsibilities, ranging from direct-service staff to management. This 15-member group also reflects the diversity of our staff across various personal identities including race, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation. Nominated by HSA leadership to participate in the work group to meet these representational goals, and based on additional considerations related to staff capacity, experience, and interest, the Work Group members met on a monthly basis over the past 18 months to develop the recommendations presented in this report.

The problems of racial inequity are vast in scale, and work to advance racial equity in San Francisco must necessarily be shared across City agencies and community stakeholders. Moreover, racial inequities are deeply entrenched in our culture and institutions, and will require us to work together with a sustained sense of urgency to eliminate those inequities. Recognizing that **the development of this report is just the first step in an ongoing and iterative process for improving Agency conditions and client outcomes**, the Work Group began its work by identifying a good place for HSA to start addressing issues of racial equity.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

Employing the GARE Agency Self-Assessment tool, a widely used rubric to support assessment of an organization's strengths and areas for growth with respect to racial equity, **the HSA Racial Equity Work Group identified three key domains in which the Agency should take action during this planning and implementation cycle:**

- (1) Recruitment and Hiring,**
- (2) Leadership Development and Promotion, and**
- (3) Organizational Culture.**

It bears noting that **the Work Group's determination of priorities for this strategic planning cycle was not only informed by the assessment tool, but also reflects emerging priorities both Citywide and among HSA's leadership.** The 2018 calendar year was characterized by considerable public scrutiny of the City government's policies and practices with respect to its workforce, particularly in the areas of hiring and disciplinary action. Agency leaders throughout the City testified in multiple public hearings before the San Francisco Board of Supervisors about racial disparities in hiring, as well as in staff retention and separation from the City. The growing momentum of this ongoing public conversation prompted Mayor London Breed's office to release an Executive Directive in September 2018 affirming the City's commitment "to a diverse and inclusive City workplace, where all employees are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect," and identifying actions to be carried out by the City's Department of Human Resources (DHR) to follow through on this commitment.^{viii}

At HSA, our executive leadership has long been conscious of the fact that while the Agency’s staff collectively are diverse and generally reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients, HSA management staff are considerably less so.⁷ In fact, this persistent trend was a key motivator for HSA’s executive leadership to initiate the Agency’s partnership with GARE. It is worth noting that trends in the congruity between client and staff racial/ethnic composition may vary widely by HSA division and program, particularly given the many distinct populations served by different programs at the Agency. While this report touches upon Agency-wide trends as a starting point for HSA’s racial equity work, it is of critical importance to ensure that staffing at the division and program levels also reflects the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients, requiring program-level analysis. See *Recommendation 3B* in the *Organizational Culture* section of the report for more information on this topic. Building on the expertise of our partners in racial equity work, HSA seeks to develop strategies for workforce equity and inclusion at every level of the Agency, including among the ranks of our leadership.

These three domains represent an important starting point for HSA to begin its meaningful and systematic engagement with questions of racial equity. This report’s focus, which prioritizes issues related to staffing and culture, provides the Agency with the opportunity to normalize conversations about race and racial equity in the workplace, where these topics are often regarded as taboo, and to develop inclusive strategies for operationalizing the use of racial equity frameworks in all aspects of our professional practice. Nevertheless, GARE’s framework for assessment and planning to advance racial equity also offers guidance on other major domains including contracting and budgeting, internal and public communications, and community involvement and partnership. HSA dedicates substantial resources to these domains with a number of distinct goals for community impact. As such, the Agency must consider ways to expand its capacity to address issues of racial equity in the long-term, enabling us to both maintain a commitment to advancing equity in the domains highlighted by this report, as well as other domains critical to carrying out the Agency’s mission.

HSA RACIAL EQUITY WORK GROUP: PURPOSE & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As the inaugural cohort of the HSA Racial Equity Work Group, members of the Work Group who helped to prepare this report believed it was important to anchor the Agency’s inclusive strategic planning approach with a clear statement of purpose and guiding principles for orienting its work to advance racial equity. Drawing from the vision, mission, and values of HSA more broadly, the following statement of purpose describes both what the Racial Equity Work Group strives to achieve, and what it does to work toward this goal. The statement of purpose is supported by guiding principles that direct the Work Group’s day-to-day work.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group’s statement of purpose and guiding principles are described below.

Statement of Purpose

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group seeks to support the Agency’s vision, so that our clients of all races achieve well-being by gaining equitable access to safety, financial stability, and economic security, supported by a diverse network of staff and community partners.

In this first phase of the Agency’s systematic effort to advance racial equity, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group will examine internal operations related to recruitment and hiring, leadership development and

⁷ These trends are discussed in further detail in the *Recruitment & Hiring* and *Leadership Development & Promotion* sections of this report.

promotion, and organizational culture, and develop a report with recommendations for improving equity conditions at HSA. This focus on staffing practices and organizational culture is predicated on the belief that, in order to eliminate the racial disparities experienced by HSA’s clients and ensure that San Franciscans of all racial backgrounds achieve well-being and economic security, the Agency must do the critical work of building its capacity to apply a racial equity framework in policymaking and program administration.

Ultimately, this critical work seeks to eliminate race-based outcome gaps so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for people of all races. This approach focuses on those who are disenfranchised and disempowered—marginalized communities of color and ethnic minorities—and moves from a transactional, service-based model toward an emphasis on transforming our policies, institutions, and structures to achieve racial equity.

Guiding Principles

- **Reflection.** We acknowledge that racial inequity is neither natural nor random. It is the result of government policies that have both intentionally and unintentionally created barriers to resources and full participation in American life, prosperity, and civic society among communities of color.
- **Intentionality.** We embrace our ability to intervene in conditions of racial inequity—and take responsibility for dismantling structural racism by ensuring our policies and practices at HSA explicitly advance racial equity.
- **Urgency.** We recognize that structural racism drives outcome gaps between people of color and white people across every measure of well-being and life outcomes. Our racial equity work is critical to improving the quality of marginalized communities’ lives, from birth to end of life. Therefore, we bring a sense of urgency to the work ahead.
- **Collaboration.** We work in partnership with HSA’s clients, staff, community partners, and other stakeholders to ensure shared ownership of our racial equity goals. In particular, we value the experiences of communities of color and create spaces where these voices are well-represented.
- **Transformation.** We carry out racial equity work from a place of learning and continuous improvement. We do our best to advance racial equity and regularly evaluate our outcomes, develop creative solutions to the problems we encounter, repair our relationships with those we’ve harmed when we make mistakes, and always promise to do better.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having identified the policy focus for the current strategic planning process, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group formed small research teams to explore recruitment and hiring, leadership development and promotion, and organizational culture in greater detail. Leveraging their subject matter expertise in both racial equity frameworks and social services, as well as their professional experience at HSA and other organizations, the Work Group evaluated a diverse array of promising practices for advancing racial equity and developed a number of recommended policies and practices for HSA to implement over the next several years.

This planning process was supported by both quantitative and qualitative research to better inform this report’s recommendations. Major research elements that support the findings in this report include: a

Strategic Planning Process

review of scholarly and industry literature on best practices for advancing racial equity; staff focus groups and stakeholder interviews; and a quantitative case study of hiring trends among HSA job seekers. Each of these research activities is described in more detail below.

- **Literature Review:** This research gathered existing information about promising approaches to achieving racial equity, particularly in the context of public sector hiring and promotion. While scholarly sources that describe evidence-based best practices in use by government agencies remain limited, many local and regional governments throughout the country have begun to apply a racial equity framework in their policy and practice. **Seattle and Portland in particular provide examples of equitable approaches to human resources (HR) operations**—notably, these cities are among the first members of the GARE network, and have produced extensive publications and resources that showcase promising practices for adaptation and adoption in a San Francisco HSA context. In addition to collecting resources outside the Agency, this research also included a review of relevant HSA policy and research publications, such as the strategic planning documents produced by DAAS, DHS, and OECE, and the 2015 Employee Engagement Survey (sometimes referred to as the “All-Staff Survey”). These internal sources helped to clarify Agency and program goals, outline major policy initiatives, and describe employee perspectives as they pertained to the topics contained in this report.
- **Staff Focus Groups & Stakeholder Interviews:** Information gathered from staff during focus groups and key stakeholder interviews is an essential component of the broader strategic planning process and a major underpinning for the recommendations made by the Racial Equity Work Group in this report. HSA employs approximately 2,200 individuals⁸ with diverse personal backgrounds, professional experiences, and perspectives. In order to capture a cross-section of these voices and ensure that staff experiences and input informed the recommendations for this report, **HSA engaged a consultant to conduct seven 90-minute focus groups attended by over 70 members of the staff.** Focus group participants were diverse and represented all levels of the Agency, including direct service staff, analysts, supervisors, and managers drawn from nearly 40 different job classes. **An eighth focus group was conducted with HSA’s organized labor partners to ensure the viewpoints of these critical stakeholders were also included.** Nearly three-quarters (73%) of focus group participants identified as female, while approximately a quarter (24%) identified as male. The remaining 3% of participants identified as another gender. Staff of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds were represented among the focus group participants: African American employees accounted for over a third (36%) of respondents, Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander staff for approximately a quarter each (25% and 22%, respectively), and white employees for about 16%. Multiracial staff and participants of other or unknown races made up the remaining 1% of participants. On average, focus group participants have served with HSA for 10.5 years.

The findings from the staff focus groups were further supplemented by qualitative data from key informants with unique knowledge or experience relevant to the Racial Equity Work Group’s focus on hiring, promotion, and organizational culture. Key stakeholders who were interviewed

⁸ For the purposes of this report, HSA employee statistics do not include Public Service Trainees (PSTs). While technically employed by HSA, the vast majority of PSTs are placed at host-sites in different departments throughout the City, such as the Recreation and Parks Department or the Department of Public Works.

for this report include HR and Planning Unit staff, in addition to a selection of Agency program managers and executive leaders.

- **Quantitative Case Study:** A case study was developed to provide an innovative, data-informed approach to examining the possible racial impacts of HSA’s policies and practices on hiring outcomes. The analysis, whose findings are summarized in the following section of this report, uses administrative HR data to examine longitudinal trends in hiring outcomes for job seekers, disaggregated by race. **The purpose of this analysis is to determine the extent to which racial disparities emerge at key points during the HSA hiring process** (e.g., application submission and minimum qualifications determination, examination and placement on an Eligible List, in-person interview and selection, etc.), **and to identify the factors that may explain these racial differences.** This analysis also has a secondary purpose: to break new ground in the use of administrative HR data and to produce a template that can be replicated to answer similar research questions about equity outcomes in this or other HR contexts. This quantitative research serves as an important case study, providing HSA with rich information about the strengths and limitations of its existing data infrastructure, and generating questions for further research. Given the large size of HSA’s workforce and the varied roles staff play at the Agency, this analysis was limited to the 2905 job classification, or HSA Senior Eligibility Workers. Staff members in this job class account for approximately 21% of all HSA employees,⁹ and constitute one of the Agency’s most racially and ethnically diverse classes. These characteristics made the 2905 job class an appropriate test case both to attempt a robust longitudinal analysis of hiring outcome trends, and to illustrate the value of a quantitative approach to addressing issues of racial equity. A summary of the case study and its major findings appears in the following section of this report.

The Racial Equity Work Group’s recommendations for advancing racial equity, which appear in the subsequent sections of this report, were guided by the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework for collective impact. RBA is a data-driven decision-making process designed to aid organizations and communities in developing solutions to complex social problems. Under this model for community planning, policy development, and outcomes assessment, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group began with our desired results—the elimination of race-based outcome gaps in areas such as hiring, promotion, and organizational culture—and worked backwards to identify the root causes of racial inequities at HSA and to outline possible means of achieving our desired outcomes.^{ix}

⁹The Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency (ESSS) division is the primary HSA division that uses the 2905 job classification. Collectively, ESSS staff, including supervisors and managers, account for nearly 47% of the HSA workforce, making this population a natural source of interest for workforce analysis.

APPLICATION & HIRING TRENDS CASE STUDY: HSA SENIOR ELIGIBILITY WORKERS (2905)

INTRODUCTION

This case study examined application and hiring trends among job seekers for the HSA Senior Eligibility Worker position, commonly referred to by its associated job classification code, 2905. Staff members in this job class account for approximately 21% of all HSA employees, and constitute one of the Agency's most racially and ethnically diverse classes.

In particular, **this analysis examined how applicant hiring outcomes varied across race and ethnicity, and attempted to identify factors that may have contributed to racial disparities in applicants' outcomes—when they occurred—at key stages throughout the hiring process.**

The first part of this case study provides a demographic profile of job seekers across three distinct recruitments¹⁰ for the HSA Senior Eligibility Worker position between 2015 and 2018. The second part—and the primary focus of this study—presents findings from a cohort analysis from a single recruitment. This approach held constant any factors that could vary between recruitments, enabling us to more reliably compare applicants' hiring outcomes disaggregated by race/ethnicity, and to identify possible racial disparities in their hiring outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Generally and in these recruitments, there is considerable racial/ethnic and linguistic diversity among both applicants and hires for the HSA Senior Eligibility Worker position.** Applicants generally reflect the ESSS client population (the primary Agency division that uses this job classification) with two exceptions: both African American and Filipino applicants far exceed their proportion of clients.
- **Bilingual staffing requirements for many Senior Eligibility Worker positions were a key driver of racial disparities in 2905 hiring outcomes, and tend to impact the race/ethnicity of hires overall.** (Over 60% of the 81 positions hired through these recruitments required fluency in a foreign language). Latinos were hired at a disproportionately high rate (37%) compared to percentage of Latino applicants (20%), predominantly in bilingual roles. By contrast, African Americans were hired at disproportionately low rates (10%) compared to the percentage of African American applicants (21%).
- **White applicants progressed through the final hiring stages at disproportionately higher rates, especially when compared to African American applicants for vacancies without a bilingual staffing requirement.** White applicants were 6% of applicants that were considered "Reachable" (in other words, they could be invited to interview based on the certification rules for the Eligible List), but 11% of those interviewed, while African American applicants were 20% of those Reachable, but only 7% of interviewees. Language requirements do not explain this disparity, but list rank may play a role. In this recruitment cohort, white applicants who appeared on the Eligible List had a median list rank of 7, compared to median list rank of 13 for eligible African American applicants.

¹⁰ A single recruitment includes all steps in the hiring process from public posting of the job announcement through candidate hire.

RECRUITMENTS AND VACANCIES

Across three recruitments that occurred from April 2015 – November 2018, there were **3,705 total applicants** (3,012 unduplicated applicants) seeking one of 81 HSA Senior Eligibility Worker positions, over 60% (49) of which required fluency in a foreign language. Of the 3,705 applicants, 130 individuals applied for a job in response to all three recruitments, and 563 individuals applied to at least two of the three recruitments.

# of Applicants	# of Recruitments	# of Vacant Positions	# of Positions with Language Requirement
3,705	3	81	49

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF JOB SEEKERS (APRIL 2015 – NOVEMBER 2018)

Across the three recruitments analyzed for this case study, the applicant characteristics were relatively consistent. Given this trend, the demographic profile below represents all 3,705 individuals who applied for a 2905 position over the three-year time period of analysis.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- **Gender:** Approximately 70% of applicants (and 68% of hires) were female.
- **Race:** Nearly half of applicants (47%) were Asian/Pacific Islander (API).¹¹ African Americans and Latinos each accounted for about a fifth of the applicant pool (21% and 20%, respectively). White applicants were 7% of the population.
- **Language:** More than half (63%) of applicants reported being bilingual. Other than English, applicants most commonly reported proficiency in Cantonese and/or Mandarin (26% of all applicants). Applicants proficient in Spanish accounted for another 20% of applicants.
- **Place of Residence:** About half (49%) of applicants were from San Francisco. Applicants living outside San Francisco most commonly resided in San Mateo (17%), Alameda (14%), or Contra Costa (11%) Counties.
- **Education:** Over half (53%) of applicants had a 4-year degree and 8% had a Master's or other professional degree; 18% of applicants had a 2-year degree.¹²

2905 Job Applicants by Race/Ethnicity, Apr 2015-Nov 2018

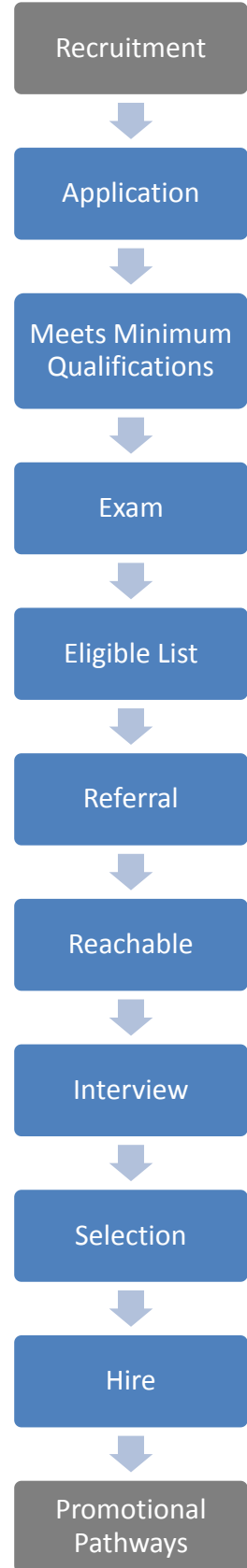
Applicant Race/Ethnicity	#	%
American Indian/Alaska Native	16	0.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander (not including Filipinos)	1,341	36%
Black or African American	786	21%
Filipino	412	11%
Latino or Hispanic	727	20%
White (Non-Hispanic)	256	7%
Unknown	167	5%
Total	3,705	100%

¹¹ While the use of API as a broad racial/ethnic category is common practice, the San Francisco API population is characterized by considerable variation in service needs (including the primary language in which service is delivered) and life outcomes. Data disaggregating API job applicants into national subgroups was not readily available for the purposes of this analysis, with the exception of Filipino job seekers; this analysis uses established City race/ethnicity categories to describe job seekers.

¹² The Minimum Qualifications for job class 2905, HSA Senior Eligibility Worker, include possession of any of the following: Sixty (60) semester units or ninety (90) quarter units from an accredited college/university; or two (2) years of clerical work experience, which includes the use of computer applications to input and retrieve information, regular public contact to provide assistance or acquire detailed personal or confidential information, and interpreting and applying rules, regulations and policies; or one (1) year of experience determining eligibility for health and/or social services programs, loans, financial assistance, unemployment or veterans benefits. The classification description allows for a substitution of thirty (30) semester units or forty-five (45) quarter units from an accredited college/university for one (1) year of the general clerical work experience described.

COHORT ANALYSIS OF JOB SEEKERS (JUNE 2016 – NOVEMBER 2017 RECRUITMENT)

HIRING PROCESS



This case study focuses on the June 2016 – November 2017 recruitment cohort. Applicant profiles were generally similar across all three recruitments, and the findings from this analysis provide insight believed to be generalizable to other recruitment cohorts.

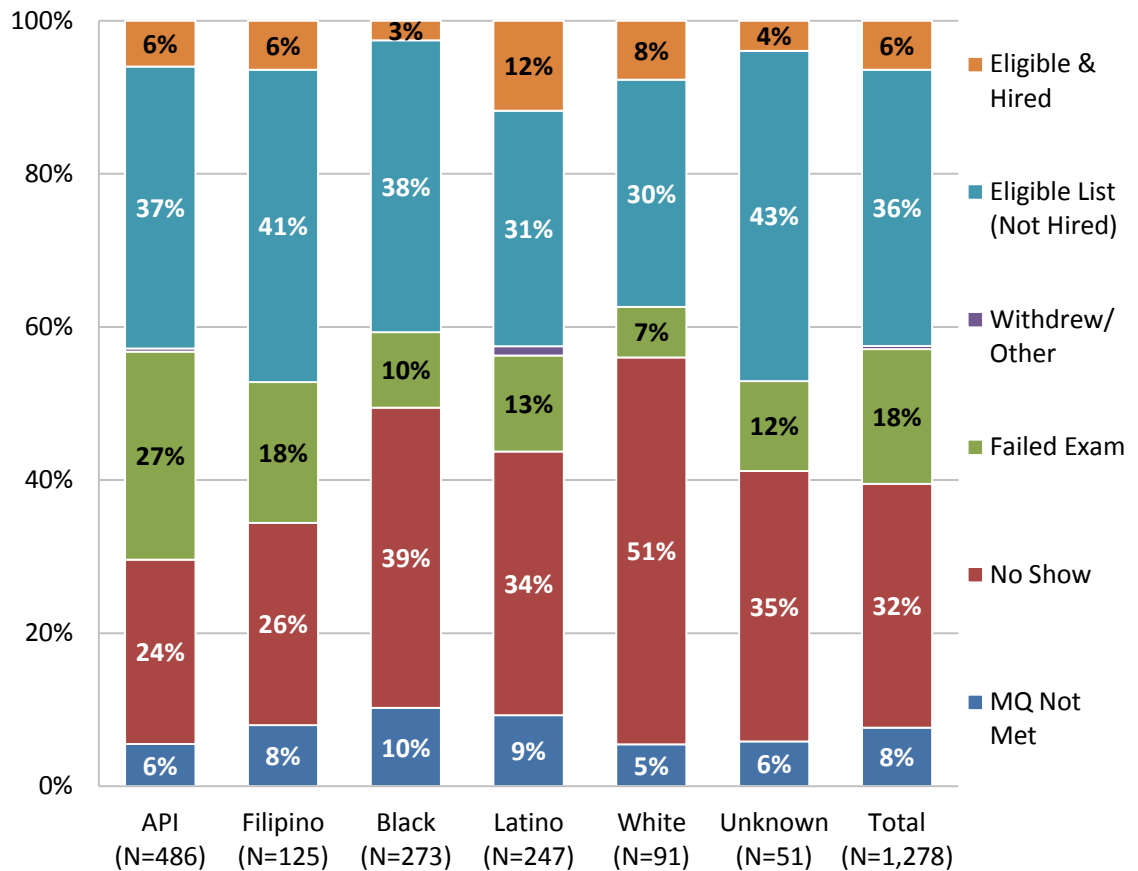
HOW DID THE JOB APPLICANT POOL COMPARE TO THE CLIENT POPULATION?

Demographic trends between applicants and Economic Support and Self-Sufficiency (ESSS) client population (the primary Agency division that uses this job classification) were also somewhat consistent, with two exceptions: both African American and Filipino applicants far exceeded their proportion of clients. They are each represented about 3.5 times more in the applicant population than among ESSS clients.

HOW DID APPLICANTS PROGRESS THROUGH THE OVERALL HIRING PROCESS?

Attrition analysis allows us to identify key points at which applicants “dropped off” in the hiring process and to understand how applicants’ experience of the process may have varied by race/ethnicity. Most obviously, the 2905 exam filtered out the majority of applicants. A **total of 1,278 candidates applied** to this recruitment, and half either did not show for (32%) or failed (18%) the exam. As shown below, only **42% (544 applicants) were placed on the Eligible List** after the exam, and 6% of applicants ended up getting hired.

Exam & Hire Outcomes, by Race/Ethnicity*



*Note: Only 5 American Indian/Alaskan Native individuals applied for this recruitment. Due to small size of this population, it has been excluded from this chart for visual clarity. Two of these individuals were placed on the Eligible List, although neither was ultimately hired.

HOW DID ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS PROGRESS THROUGH THE LIST, INTERVIEW, AND HIRING?

Racial/ethnic disparities were more evident in the final stages of hiring for job seekers who reached the Eligible List, particularly when comparing applicants who were considered “Reachable” (in other words, they could be invited to interview based on the certification rules for the Eligible List) and those selected for interviews.

2905 Job Applicant Hiring Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17 Recruitment

Applicant Race/Ethnicity	Eligible List	Reachable	Interviewed	Selected	Hired
Asian/Pacific Islander (not including Filipinos)	38%	38%	37%	37%	36%
Black or AA	20%	20%	7%	8%	9%
Latino or Hispanic	19%	19%	32%	35%	36%
Filipino	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%
White (non-Hispanic)	6%	6%	11%	9%	9%
Unknown	4%	4%	2%	1%	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	544	544	142	93	81

- African American applicants were 20% of the Reachable stage but only 7% of those interviewed.
- Latino applicants made up a similar 19% of the Reachable stage, but increased to 32% of interviewees and 36% of those hired.
- White interviewees were overrepresented among those interviewed, especially compared to African American applicants. Even though there were many more African American applicants than white applicants in the Reachable cohort (20% compared to 6%, respectively), slightly more white applicants were interviewed and the same number of white and African American applicants were hired.
- API (including Filipino) applicants were the largest group overall. They remained a consistent proportion of job seekers at each hiring stage, from applicants to eligible applicants to hires: about 49% of all applicants.

WHAT IDENTIFIABLE FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THESE RACIALLY DISPARATE HIRING OUTCOMES?

Key factors that contributed to the racial/ethnic disparities in 2905 hiring outcomes are described below:

Bilingual staffing requirements¹³ for many Senior Eligibility Worker positions were a key driver of racial disparities in 2905 hiring outcomes, like those experienced by African American and Latino applicants, and impacted the race/ethnicity of hiring trends overall. African American applicants accounted for 20% of Reachable applicants, but were only 7% of those interviewed. Latino applicants constituted a similar proportion (19%) of Reachable applicants, but accounted for 31% of interviewees. This disparity is likely driven in large part by HSA’s need for bilingual staff. Over 30% of the positions hired through this recruitment required Spanish fluency and 24% required Cantonese fluency.¹⁴ In total, over 60% of the 81 positions hired through this recruitment required fluency in a language other than English.

¹³ Positions that require fluency in a language other than English are determined by programs based on client need. HSA HR reviews the request-to-fill (RTF) form and the justification for the language request submitted by programs with a vacancy to fill. Once HSA HR reviews and approves the request, the SF Department of Human Resources does a second review and either approves the request or solicits additional information regarding the language requirement.

¹⁴ It is worth noting that a similar disparity in hiring outcomes was not evident among API applicants as it was among Latinos, although bilingual staffing was required in both Cantonese and Spanish. This variation in outcomes may be the result of the overrepresentation of API job seekers in overall applicant pool, and underrepresentation of Latino job seekers, relative to the proportion of bilingual vacancies. Given the relatively small number of bilingual Latino candidates considered Reachable and the high level of bilingual Spanish positions that needed to be filled in this recruitment, these individuals had a better chance of being hired than their peers of other races/ethnicities (who tended not to have bilingual Spanish skills).

White applicants progressed through the final hiring stages at disproportionately higher rates, especially when compared to African American applicants, for vacancies without a bilingual staffing requirement. While language requirements did not explain this disparity, list rank may have contributed to these outcomes. Even though there were many more African American applicants than white applicants in the Reachable population, a slightly higher number of white applicants were interviewed; the same number of white and African American applicants were ultimately hired. Bilingual staffing requirements could not explain these disparities because most applicants from these racial groups were only qualified for “General” eligibility worker positions—those lacking in a language requirement. However, differences in list rank between white and African American applicants could be an important contributor to the disparities that emerge at the interview stage of the hiring process. Under Citywide civil service rules, applicants on the Eligible List are ranked based on their exam score, with top scores ranked first. Consistent with certification rules determining reachability, top ranks are typically used first to fill job vacancies, meaning that candidates ranked toward the top of the Eligible List are more likely to be called to interview for a position. In this recruitment cohort, white applicants who appeared on the Eligible List had a median list rank of 7, compared to a median list rank of 13 for eligible African American applicants.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Findings about the relationship between bilingual staffing requirements and racial disparities in hiring outcomes among applicants for the HSA Senior Eligibility Worker position provide additional context for ongoing discussions about racially equitable hiring practices within City government and at the Agency. Many 2905 Senior Eligibility Worker positions have bilingual staffing requirements, a reflection of HSA’s diverse client population and the demographics of low-income San Franciscans more generally, and the need for staff capacity to serve individuals who may not have English language proficiency. Culturally responsive hiring practices that prioritize bilingual capacity are essential to fulfilling the Agency’s mission. However, we must also consider how to mitigate the disparate racial impacts in hiring that emerge when applicants without bilingual proficiency are unable to compete with their bilingual peers. A demographic staffing analysis by program could also help us identify where to mentor and potentially retrain workers from one part of the Agency to another in order to mirror the client demographics of particular programs. After all, these job seekers may offer HSA other valuable cultural competencies and experience relevant to our local context and critical to the success of our mission.

This case study breaks new ground at HSA, and has served as an important learning experience. It provides us with a valuable analytical template for using administrative HR data to answer complex questions about racial variation in job seekers’ hiring outcomes and the extent to which disparities that emerge may be the result of differential racial impacts of Agency policies and practices. It has also revealed a number of limitations in HSA’s data infrastructure that bear on our ability to adequately answer these questions.

NEXT STEPS:

Findings from this case study suggest several areas for further research and action—both specific to hiring of this job classification and more broadly across the Agency and the domains described in this report. These include the need to:

- **Investigate questions raised by this analysis related to the 2905 job classification:** This case study has found specific components in the hiring process that appear to contribute specifically to racial disparities in the 2905 classification that merit further study:
 - **Audit the process for identifying the number of bilingual positions required.** This case study has highlighted that bilingual qualifications can significantly impact hiring outcomes, particularly for African-American applicants. Communicating with clients in their primary language is critical to providing inclusive and accessible services. Reviewing our process to determine bilingual staffing needs will ensure the bilingual designation is appropriately scaled to serve clients without unnecessarily impacting outcomes for non-bilingual people of color. Related, HSA should conduct a program-by-program client

and staff demographic analysis in order to understand where we may want to encourage staff to explore movement between programs in order to fulfill our racial equity hiring goals.

- **Explore the (racial) impact of list rank.** This analysis suggests that list rank may play a role in disparate outcomes in the hiring process, particularly for African-American applicants. However, it is difficult to verify this with the data currently available. We must improve tracking of reachability by rank on an eligible list—which can vary from referral to referral based on the number of vacancies for which a program is hiring—within a single recruitment, and develop analytical strategies to more fully understand the impact of list rank on interview and hiring decisions.
- **Analyze reasons for disparities in advancement through hiring process.** Throughout the hiring process, candidates advance at different rates by racial/ethnic group. To understand factors driving these differences and develop remedies (as appropriate), we should use a variety of strategies to dig deeper into the different exit points, such as: a review of minimum qualifications to identify common reasons applicants are determined ineligible (and why this more greatly impacts African-American and Latino applicants); exit interviews with applicants who do not finish the hiring process; and a case review of the disparities between all applicants deemed “Reachable” compared to those interviewed.
- **Advocate for better data infrastructure and reporting:** Data available through the existing HR data systems is disjointed and requires significant time, expertise, and resources to analyze, making it difficult to incorporate systematic hiring attrition analyses in HR business processes. Additionally, applicant characteristics that may impact hiring outcomes are unavailable or inconsistently collected (e.g., age, education). The City’s Department of Human Resources is currently in the process of redesigning the City’s hiring database to enable easier analysis and reporting; this is a critical opportunity for HSA HR to advocate for a more usable system, drawing on the findings and data limitations identified through this case study.
- **Replicate this analysis for other major job classifications:** The data-informed findings of this case study provide valuable insight into hiring processes in our Agency. Using the methodology developed for this study as a guide, this analysis should be replicated for other large classifications, such as Protective Services Workers (job classification 2940), or supervisory and management positions to further our Agency’s racial equity goals.

PRIORITY DOMAIN 1: RECRUITMENT & HIRING

One of the most significant priority areas in which HSA should work to advance racial equity is recruitment and hiring. For the purposes of this report, recruitment and hiring refers to the ways in which HSA engages prospective job seekers, and to the hiring process from the point of job application submission through the stages of interview, selection, and hire.

HSA’s workforce is the cornerstone of the Agency; our employees are the reason why HSA is able to effectively carry out its mission to promote our clients’ well-being and economic security. A focus on hiring and recruitment practices at HSA is essential to our efforts to advance racial equity because it is all too easy for the Agency to reproduce racial inequities that appear in the local labor market. Despite being a longtime home to progressive policymaking and diverse racial and ethnic populations, San Francisco and the greater Bay Area region from which we draw our workforce are not unaffected by the pervasive problems of structural racism and racial inequity. We must be thoughtful about the design of our policies and practices for recruiting potential job seekers and hiring the best candidates to carry out HSA’s mission—in other words, **we must ensure that HSA employs diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients, across all programs, positions, and levels of the Agency.**

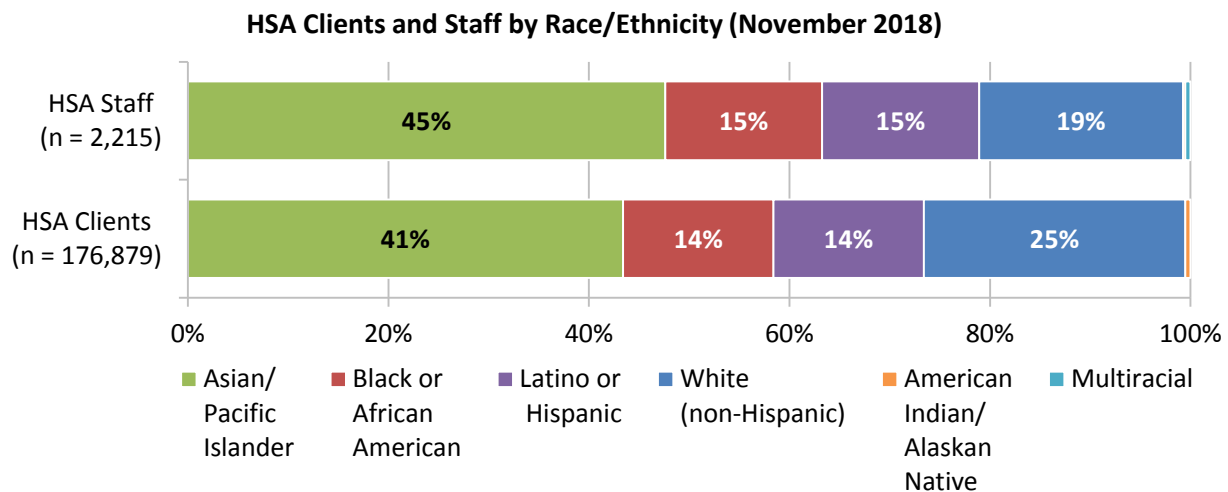
The HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three main strategies to advance this goal. As shown below, each strategy is supported by specific and actionable recommendations.

Domain 1: Recruitment & Hiring	
Goal	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all Agency departments and programs
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Perform active recruitment in underrepresented communities of color	A. Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color
	B. Advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color
2. Enhance clarity and accessibility in the hiring process	A. Improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of job announcements
	B. Adopt tools for job-seekers to track the progress of their application
3. Use data to inform hiring policy and practice	A. Conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process
	B. Perform longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes by race/ethnicity
	C. Continue participation in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group

More information about the need for work in this area, as well as these strategies, is provided on the subsequent pages.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AT HSA

Successful organizations recognize the need to have a workforce that can relate to and represent their clients overall. On its face, HSA does well in this respect: **the Agency's workforce as a whole is characterized by considerable racial and ethnic diversity, and generally reflects the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the clients we serve.** HSA employees are most commonly Asian or Pacific Islander (API): 45%. Latino and white staff are represented in approximately the same portion: 20% and 19%, respectively. African American account for 15% of Agency employees, while American Indian or Alaskan Native (AI/AN) and multiracial employees make up the remaining 1% of staff. These trends in workforce composition are consistent with the racial/ethnic makeup of HSA's clients, as illustrated by the chart below.^x



**Note: HSA serves approximately 225,000 unique clients across three major departments: DHS, DAAS, and OECE. This chart reflects the majority of the Agency's clients, recorded in the centralized CalWIN database.*

It is important to note that trends in the congruency of HSA client and staff racial/ethnic composition may vary considerably by division and program. While the information presented above represents an important starting point for understanding racial equity conditions at the Agency, a more granular level of workforce analysis is an essential next step for identifying and addressing racial inequities in HSA's staffing. HSA serves many distinct client populations with very different demographic breakdowns across divisions and major programs (for example, the Family and Children's Services caseload is disproportionately African-American and Indigenous, while Asians and Pacific Islanders make up the majority of DAAS clients). As such, further analysis at the division and program level is needed to develop a more complete picture of current conditions at the Agency. The need for this analysis is described in greater detail in *Recommendation 3B* in the section on *Organizational Culture*.

More broadly, we must bear in mind that high-level City trends affect our ability to continue recruiting and hiring representative staff. These trends, and their implications for recruitment and hiring practice, are described below.

WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE CONDITIONS?

Current economic trends in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area region are bringing about dramatic changes in the City's demographic makeup, threatening HSA's ongoing ability to retain a diverse

Priority Domain 1: Recruitment & Hiring

Advancing Racial Equity at the San Francisco Human Services Agency

workforce. Over the past several years, the Bay Area has seen sustained growth in the tech industry accompanied by rapid gentrification, further exacerbating the existing housing crisis with severe consequences for native San Franciscans. Facing a lack of affordable housing and an ever-mounting cost of living that far outpaces wage growth, many local families have been forced to leave the City and resettle in other parts of the Bay Area, or to leave the region altogether. Unsurprisingly, the threat of displacement has been most severe among the

“For my [program], the staff do not reflect the population we serve. The resources provided to clients are not catering to their needs. We need a more reflective workforce. For example, we have one African American on [my team], when we serve [majority] African Americans.”

— Focus Group,
HSA line staff member

City’s lower-income residents, who are more likely to be people of color. **The most dramatic impact has occurred within San Francisco’s African American population: the African-American population has dwindled to about 5% of the population today, compared to its post-World War II peak of over 13 percent.**^{xi} This degree of displacement puts increasing pressure on organizations like HSA to build robust job candidate pipelines and attract well-qualified people of color to take up employment opportunities at the Agency, thereby ensuring that our workforce is richly varied and reflective of the diverse communities we serve.

Moreover, the City is a major employer of people of color—and as one of the largest agencies in the City, HSA has a part to play in ensuring that people of color and ethnic minorities are able to continue living and working in San Francisco. The public sector has long served as the cornerstone of upward economic mobility among people of color in the United States, particularly African Americans, who were often locked out of employment opportunities elsewhere due to rampant racial discrimination and structural barriers to access.^{xii} Even today, the public sector remains the single greatest source of employment, and notably, one of the most reliable providers of competitive wages and benefits, for African Americans. In fact, African American workers are approximately 30% more likely than workers of other races to be employed in the public sector.^{xiii} In its capacity as a public employer in San Francisco—and one with a mission of promoting the well-being and economic security of the City’s diverse residents, no less—HSA’s importance as a provider of high quality jobs with competitive salaries, benefits, and labor protections, to people of color cannot be understated. **HSA must do the critical work of ensuring racially equitable access to employment at the Agency, even as changing conditions in the City may make that work more challenging over time.**

WHAT CHALLENGES MUST WE ADDRESS?

While the racial/ethnic composition of HSA’s workforce is undeniably diverse, generally consistent with the demographic makeup of our clients, the Agency nevertheless faces challenges in recruitment and hiring that must be addressed if we are to advance racial equity in this domain. In particular, staff focus groups conducted to inform this report revealed that **employees throughout the Agency find the bureaucratic processes governing City hiring to be cumbersome and lacking in transparency, making it difficult for outside applicants to persist through the process. Many noted how these burdens are borne disproportionately by people of color, and lead HSA to overlook qualified candidates belonging to these populations.**¹⁵ More specific challenges are outlined below.

¹⁵ Focus group findings that appear in this report reflect common, recurring themes that emerged across demographic, hierarchical, and programmatic characteristics that shape participants’ varied experiences and

Lack of a Recruitment Pipeline for Job Seekers of Color

During the focus groups, staff expressed frustration with the underrepresentation of employees of color in some programs, particularly when people of color make up the majority of that program’s clients. They noted that **while strategic recruitment of racial and ethnic minorities could help to remedy these incongruities, such recruitment rarely—if ever—occurs**. Without a robust pipeline for job seekers of color to identify job opportunities and secure employment with the Agency, candidacy for jobs can simply boil down to a matter of who you know to help you navigate the bureaucratic hiring process; as one frontline worker pointed out: “Recruitment is a big issue. I got a job at the City because of who I knew. I did an internship. If you don’t know anyone, it can be a turn off.”^{16, xiv}

Lack of Clarity and Accessibility in the Hiring Process

Related, another major theme that emerged from the staff focus groups was the lack of clarity and accessibility in the hiring process. In particular, **employees described how challenging it can be to apply to HSA as an outsider, noting that job seekers with connections to existing employees have a distinct edge over other candidates because their access to insider knowledge can help them** to prepare a more competitive application and to remain persistent through the often lengthy civil service hiring process. “The language [in job announcements] is really generic,” a frontline worker stated, going on to note that “the announcement may be completely different than what the job actually is,” making it difficult for an applicant to tailor their resume and application to the particular position for which they would like to be considered.

Moreover, vague cultural and linguistic norms in the government hiring process may disadvantage outside applicants, especially job seekers of color. As pointed out by an Agency analyst in a focus group: “You have to word things [on your application] in a specific way. If people aren’t coached or don’t know how to word things, they miss out on opportunities... [Hiring criteria] are very rigid, and if you don’t structure the application and test accordingly, you’re out of luck.” **Job seekers of color, who may lack the social or professional connections at the City to fill in the gaps left by obscure elements of the hiring process, are likely to be especially affected by these challenges.**¹⁷

perspectives. Where possible, these findings are buttressed by relevant research literature that describes systemic barriers experienced by people of color with respect to employment, professional advancement, and issues of inclusion and belonging.

¹⁶ One of the common barriers to workforce equity includes in-group favoritism, which is a psychological phenomenon whereby people tend to automatically favor others like them—“to trust them, prefer them, give them the benefit of the doubt., etc.” When the composition of a workforce or hiring network is disproportionately white, these patterns of behavior tend to inadvertently disadvantage people of color, because information about jobs and job references are typically more available to people in someone’s own social or professional network, reinforcing existing demographic patterns of the predominant in-group(s) at the organization.

¹⁷ While people of color are reasonably well-represented at HSA in entry level and non-managerial positions (see the section on *Leadership Development & Promotion* for more detailed analysis), they tend to be underrepresented, relative to their white peers, in supervisory and management roles. As such, their social networks are unlikely to confer the same degree of advantage as do those of white job seekers, whose in-group networks are represented at disproportionately high rates among positions of power at the Agency, including in roles related to hiring and candidate selection.

Lack of Transparency and Fairness in the Hiring Process

Throughout the focus groups, across perspectives representing all levels of the Agency hierarchy, **staff indicated dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic nature of the hiring process, characterizing it as cumbersome, opaque, and unfair to candidates in part because its rigid structures can serve to obscure favoritism and implicit bias in hiring.**^{18, xv} Staff members offered a number of examples to illustrate their thinking regarding this lack of transparency, such as:

- **Minimum qualification standards:** Some staff expressed concerns that minimum qualification standards may not be applied fairly, describing experiences in which the expertise of staff of color is not recognized and rewarded to the same degree as that of their white counterparts. For instance, one staff member noted that, in their experience, “African American staff are told (or themselves believe) they don’t qualify. My supervisor said her degree didn’t qualify [for a position], and then another white lady was interviewed with the same degree without any drama.” While HSA HR works to ensure that the review of minimum qualifications is applied fairly and consistently, implicit biases held by individuals involved in the hiring process may still contribute to systematically different outcomes for people of color and their white peers.^{19, xvi} Notably, HR sends notification letters to candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications explaining why they have not been invited to continue in the hiring process; this documentation may be a rich source of data to help HSA assess the extent to which minimum qualification determinations are racially disparate, and if so, why.
- **Civil service exams:** Staff also noted that testing may exacerbate implicit and structural biases. “Culture plays into tests. Some cultures are positioned to do better on tests,” one member of the line staff remarked. These sentiments were echoed by a manager who noted that these exams are unlikely to be culturally relevant for some minority job seekers when “the people who put together the tests do not represent the diversity of HSA.”²⁰

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that, in focus group sessions, staff across the leadership hierarchy often described nepotism and favoritism together, sometimes even interchangeably. Nepotism, defined by the San Francisco Civil Service Commission as a practice by which family members favor other family members in employment decisions, is strictly prohibited: the City’s policy on Family and Romantic Relationships at work does not permit “employees to make, participate in making, or influence any employment decision involving a family member or romantic partner.” In other words, nepotism requires a direct familial or romantic link between a job seeker and persons responsible making employment decisions that may favor that job seeker. Acts of favoritism in hiring—while similarly prohibited as a violation of the merit-based principles governing hiring in the civil service context—are more broadly defined, and as a result, more difficult to identify, prove, and eliminate.

¹⁹ Numerous studies of job seeking and employment in the US have demonstrated that African American and Latino job candidates are significantly less likely than their white peers to receive interviews or callbacks for jobs to which they have applied and for which they are equally qualified.

²⁰ Examination for permanent civil service positions in San Francisco is a complex topic involving many stakeholders at HSA and beyond: for instance, while exams for job classifications specific to HSA are often developed by HSA HR, Citywide classifications are typically developed by the City DHR analysts. Moreover, there are extensive rules governing the design and administration of civil service exams that have been developed with input from several entities outside HSA—the Civil Service Commission, DHR, organized labor, etc. Given the scale and complexity of this component of the hiring process, this report does not feature more detailed commentary or recommendations for improving civil service exams. Instead, the recommendations contained in this report focus on elements of the hiring process that fall more directly

- **Eligible List de-identification:** A number of staff members expressed concern that new City policies intended to combat implicit bias may in fact make it easier for hiring managers to engage in favoritism with impunity, now that candidate names on eligible lists remain confidential. In the hiring process, job applicants who meet minimum qualifications and achieve a passing score during the exam process are placed on a ranked applicant list. Hiring managers then work with HR to establish job-related, merit-based, and non-discriminatory selection criteria, which will determine how many candidates in reachable ranks are able to proceed to the interview stage. For example, for a position with multiple vacancies in one referral, a hiring manager may be able to interview candidates in all ranks on a list. If there are not enough resources available to interview all interested candidates, hiring managers and HR must arrive at selection criteria to narrow down the candidate pool to a feasible quantity.

Previously, the full eligible list containing applicant name and list rank was made publicly available. In 2018, the San Francisco Civil Service Commission implemented a de-identification policy that restricts hiring managers from seeing the name and rank of candidates on eligible lists when determining which applicants to invite for an interview. As a tradeoff, under the new policy, the name and list rank of those newly hired to a permanent civil service position is posted on DHR's website for public view.

While de-identification has been newly implemented to promote racial equity, this study's focus groups, as well as public pushback from labor union partners, reflect a deep mistrust of this policy. Staff perception, widespread across all eight focus group sessions, is that hiring managers may still have access to applicant names and ranks while the rest of the public do not. One staff member stated their worry plainly: "Forget Rank 1's, because [hiring managers] keep going down the list until they get to the person they want. People are hiring their friends and family. We just can't see, and now it's hidden even more." While this is not how the de-identification policy should work if implemented with fidelity, this sentiment was consistently expressed across focus groups, suggesting the need to communicate better with staff and clarify the purpose and mechanics of this new policy.

These examples serve to underscore how deeply staff at all levels mistrust the hiring process, even in the context of policies or practices that are specifically intended to support equity and fairness in the process. They also raise important questions about the extent to which HSA is prepared to respond to these widespread perceptions of fairness in hiring, and how it intends to address racial disparities where they may emerge in the process.

HOW IS THE AGENCY WORKING TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

HSA HR is responsible for providing vital services to Agency staff including recruitment and hiring, payroll processing, investigation of staff complaints, employee advisement, and collaboration with City labor union partners. Over the past five years, HSA HR, in partnership with the City's Department of Human Resources, has undertaken numerous initiatives designed to streamline HR business processes, improve the hiring experience for job seekers, and support current HSA employees in their daily jobs.

within HSA's locus of control, such as the process for recruiting a diverse pool of qualified candidates or interviewing and selecting a candidate for hire following the posting of an eligible list.

These initiatives include strategies to make outcomes among job seekers and current staff more equitable along a number of dimensions, including race.

- **Specialized HR team to support the hiring process:** In 2018, HSA HR created the Post-Referral Selection Process (PRSP) Team within the HR Operations Unit to provide enhanced support to hiring managers, streamline the hiring process, and ensure selection processes are performed in accordance with best practices and civil service guidelines. This team was developed as the result of a Cross-Training Pilot in 2017 that identified strategies to reduce delays and redundancy in the hiring process. The team serves as consultants to hiring managers, liaises with candidates, and acts as an additional safeguard against implicit bias in the selection process. For example, their work includes supporting hiring managers to develop job-related, merit-based, and non-discriminatory selection criteria, vetting interview question content, and ensuring diverse interview panels. The team reviews selection processes individually to ensure fairness and consistency in the Agency's efforts to hire a qualified workforce in compliance with merit-based selection principles.
- **De-Identification presentations (Q&A):** as described previously, in October 2018, the SF Civil Service Commission implemented a new De-Identification (De-ID) policy to combat implicit bias in hiring. Previously, lists of eligible applicants that contained applicant name and list rank were made available publicly available and to the hiring managers. Under the new policy, to eliminate opportunities for preferential selection, these lists are no longer made available the public. Moreover, program staff involved in the hiring process are unable to see the names and ranks of candidates on these eligible lists. HR analysts remain able to see these names for operational purposes (such as to contact candidates, extend an offer of employment, or complete hiring paperwork). When a permanent civil service appointment has been made at the end of the hiring process, the name and rank of the newly-hired individual is posted on DHR's webpage for public view. To support the implementation of this new policy, HSA HR has provided presentations during New Supervisor Orientations to support best practices in hiring among staff who may now participate in the hiring process from the employer's perspective. The Agency should also extend these presentations to current supervisors and managers so a wider range of staff who are likely to play a role in the hiring process understand the purpose and mechanics of the new policy. In addition, HR should consider including de-identification presentation materials and resources on the Agency's intranet and other employee touch points so more staff understand how this policy is being implemented and why.

WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS SHOULD HSA TAKE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY?

In light of the challenges described in this section, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three main strategies to advance racial equity in the area of recruitment and hiring. These strategies, and the recommendations that support them, are described below.

STRATEGY 1: PERFORM ACTIVE RECRUITMENT IN UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

In order to racially diversify the pool of job seekers and, by extension, HSA's workforce, **the Agency must build specific strategies for employment outreach to the City's communities of color**, making use of connections with community-based organizations, educational institutions, faith organizations, and

other neighborhood groups, to develop and sustain pathways to employment among communities of color. HSA cannot continue its current, passive approach to recruitment, in which job announcements are not regularly circulated widely outside the Agency beyond the minimum requirement of public posting. Instead, the Agency needs to take a proactive role in communicating employment opportunities to community partners, and leverage opportunities such as internships, mentoring, and job shadowing to engage prospective employees from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups in the City. This approach is consistent both with best practices in public sector workforce diversity management and a Citywide diversity recruitment initiative prompted by Mayor Breed’s Executive Directive 18-02 to the Department of Human Resources.^{xvii}

In order to ensure that current and future staff composition reflects the racial/ethnic backgrounds of our clients at all levels of HSA, **the Agency must perform active recruitment for employment opportunities in underrepresented communities of color.** The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends two actions to support this strategy:

- A. Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color
- B. Advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color

RECOMMENDATION A: CULTIVATE RECRUITING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS PRIMARILY SERVING PEOPLE OF COLOR

San Francisco is home to a large community college, two universities, and numerous professional associations—organizations that offer a concentrated pool of talent that can be leveraged to support focused employment outreach and recruitment of specific candidate populations. Cultivating relationships with educational institutions and professional groups as a meaningful source of well-qualified job candidates requires a focused effort to partner with relevant academic departments, faculty members, student organizations and clubs, and so on.^{xviii} Some government agencies have the misconception that recruiting at specific universities may conflict with the merit principles that govern hiring practices in the public sector. However, research about best practices for hiring and recruitment to increase diversity in government specifically highlights building recruitment pipelines through partnerships with historically Black and Latino schools or other institutions in which minority job seekers are well-represented.^{xix}

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency increase its recruitment efforts by cultivating recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving job seekers of color. Conducting active recruitment at career fairs and schools where minority job seekers are well-represented will ensure that candidates hear about the Agency as an employer of choice first. Examples of promising local educational institutions where HSA might conduct this outreach include San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco. The success of this recommendation hinges on effective collaborations between HSA programs and the Agency’s HR Department. To the extent possible, both program and HR staff should be in attendance at these events—the former, to provide prospective job candidates with firsthand knowledge of the roles available at the Agency and information about day-to-day work; the latter, to answer technical questions about City hiring processes and provide advice for preparing a successful application. If

program staff are unable to regularly attend these events, they should minimally prepare written or video testimonials about their work that can be shared with job seekers hoping to learn in greater detail about the demands of specific roles at the Agency.

Notably, this active approach to recruitment gives HSA the opportunity to bring its mission and vision to life for job seekers in a way that online job postings alone cannot do, boosting our chances of piquing the interest of enthusiastic candidates who share our values and wish to serve our client population. In-person recruitment also opens an important channel of communication between job candidates and HSA staff that can enhance their persistence through the often lengthy and byzantine hiring process. This humanizing connection may have especially important impacts on the persistence of job seekers of color, who may otherwise lack extensive connections to City employees in hiring and management roles, and the related advantages of preparing an application with insider knowledge about what makes an application successful.^{xx} Providing candidates with clear and succinct information about what to expect from the hiring process is likely to improve their persistence through the process.

In order to begin cultivating these pipelines in earnest, HSA should leverage our existing relationships with the City’s institutions of higher education and our partnerships with community-based service providers that work primarily with ethnic minority communities or communities of color. Building and maintaining these relationships should be a shared responsibility between program and HR staff. Program managers and other staff involved in maintaining HSA’s relationships with community providers should help HR to identify promising partners and connect the HR Examination & Classification Unit with leaders at these organizations. HR staff, meanwhile, should establish a centralized resource such as a SharePoint database, to document and support ongoing recruitment activities.

Recommendation	Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Program Managers and other program staff involved in the hiring process • HSA HR Examination & Classification Unit (Exams)

RECOMMENDATION B: ADVERTISE JOB OPPORTUNITIES ON SELECT COMMUNITY JOB BOARDS, WITH COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNER AGENCIES, AND IN NEWSLETTERS PRIMARILY SERVING JOB SEEKERS OF COLOR

Currently, the Agency uses a passive recruitment strategy for most open positions. External advertisement and focused outreach is typically conducted only for positions that have historically been difficult to fill or when there are insufficient respondents to a particular job recruitment. As a result, those who apply for open positions tend to be people who are already familiar with City hiring or have a connection to an existing employee. This approach to recruitment may not always draw a diverse and qualified candidate pool, and has troubling implications for racial equity now and in the future. If current economic conditions and demographic trends in the Bay Area persist, the displacement of City residents of color to other parts of the Bay will make it increasingly challenging to access diverse job candidates. HSA’s HR Department has observed a reduction in the size of applicant pools over the past several years, and has responded to this trend by taking a more proactive approach to recruitment, reaching out to third parties (such as community partners or professional networking sites) to post job opportunities

more frequently. By investing in more proactive recruitment strategies, such as localized advertising of all job opportunities on community job boards and newsletters accessed primarily by job seekers of color, HSA can continue to employ a diverse workforce that reflects the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color. The Agency should connect with City and regional institutions of higher education, such as community colleges and universities serving diverse student populations and advertise employment opportunities in relevant departments more frequently—for all job openings, not just those that are historically difficult to fill or when there are insufficient candidates. For instance, job announcements for social work roles at HSA should be shared with Title IV-E programs or student groups at San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco that focus on subjects like social welfare, sociology, psychology, and other related fields.

To begin, HSA may wish to pilot this new approach to recruitment with a few Agency programs or classifications of interest. HSA should especially consider employing a focused outreach strategy to fill supervisory and managerial roles. In the majority of organizations, management positions are harder to obtain in part, because there are fewer of them available in comparison to frontline staff positions. Diversifying the leadership team at the Agency begins by expanding the candidate pool at the onset of a recruitment process when those coveted positions become available. Ultimately, these efforts should be evaluated for their success in boosting the rate at which quality candidates of color apply and are hired for these roles.

Recommendation	Advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Program Managers and other program staff involved in the hiring process • HSA HR Examination & Classification Unit (Exams)

STRATEGY 2: ENHANCE CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE HIRING PROCESS

Clarity and transparency in the application and hiring process are critical to encourage people to apply for open positions and sustain their interest throughout the hiring process. As described earlier in this report, prior staff surveys and focus groups conducted for this project have found that some employees felt low-levels of trust in management. In particular, staff have expressed concerns that there are insufficient checks on implicit bias, and even more explicit favoritism, in hiring and promotion at the Agency. This perception among job candidates may be exacerbated by confusion about the hiring process and a lack of clear and accessible tools for navigating it. Even for existing HSA staff who have made it through the hiring process once before, the process of successfully applying for promotions or permanent civil service positions remains unclear. Many job seekers report being confused and dissatisfied with the hiring process.

In an effort to ensure that our current hiring process is clear and inclusive to job seekers of all races/ethnicities, the Agency must enhance clarity of the hiring process and associated materials and

Priority Domain 1: Recruitment & Hiring

improve accessibility to important information (e.g. application progress, hiring steps and tentative timelines, analyst contact information, FAQs, etc.). HSA must invest in a user-friendly hiring and selection process to support the success of qualified job seekers from all backgrounds.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends two actions to support this strategy:

- A. Improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of job announcements; and
- B. Adopt tools for job seekers to track the progress of their application.

RECOMMENDATION A: IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND USER-FRIENDLINESS OF JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

A common criticism from job seekers about the City’s hiring process is regarding the language found in job announcements. Successful applicants and other job seekers describe the language and length of job announcements as confusing. Ultimately, complex job announcements may result in a potential deterrent when considering applying for employment with the City. Citywide job announcements are often broad because they reflect a job classification that may be employed to serve various functions. They are also considerably lengthier than private sector job postings—in part, because they include extensive language about the hiring process and civil service rules. As an unintended consequence, this often results in prospective applicants feeling overloaded with information to the point where it is difficult to discern what is important and necessary.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency improve accessibility by creating job announcements that meet user-friendly criteria. The goal of a job announcement is to describe the position in a way that is clear, concise, and attractive to top talent. To ensure that job announcements are more user-friendly, the Agency may consider piloting select job announcements using clear and straightforward terminology, minimizing bureaucratic jargon, displaying a simple and aesthetically pleasing format, including visual aids such as videos or recorded webinars, and ensuring that postings are easy to navigate.

The City’s Department of Human Resources (DHR) has revised collective recruitment notices sent to candidates Citywide (e.g., application received, scoring on exams, referral notifications, notices of interest, etc.). The new notices reflect essential information communicated in simple language, a methodology that HSA can potentially replicate in Agency-specific job postings, with DHR’s input.

Recommendation	Improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of job announcements
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Examination & Classification Unit (Exams) • SF Department of Human Resources (DHR)

RECOMMENDATION B: ADOPT TOOLS FOR JOB SEEKERS TO TRACK THE PROGRESS OF THEIR APPLICATION

Clarity of process and timeliness in hiring proceedings are critical to retain the interest and participation of candidates. However, given the bureaucratic requirements under which the Agency must operate, our hiring process often takes several months. Candidates may disengage or take another less-desired

opportunity because they are unsure of the status of their application or the timeline of the hiring process. While these problems affect all job seekers, it is particularly critical for us to address these issues in order to attract and engage candidates from communities of color to work at the Agency.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency adopt tools for job seekers to track the progress of their application. This action will both facilitate and improve communication between HR analysts and job seekers. As the City’s contract with our current Applicant Tracking System (ATS), JobAps, nears expiration, DHR is leading the work to identify applicant tracking software that will better meet our needs Citywide. Selection of a new ATS vendor is pending. Ideally, the new Citywide ATS will allow job-seekers to track the progress of their job applications; HSA should advocate for this function as DHR finalizes its contract with a new ATS vendor and ensure that the needs of our applicants are met.

In the event that the Citywide ATS does not satisfy our needs, HSA should create a workflow database where applicants can track the general progress of their application for a given job recruitment. This database could be accessed by applicants through a private portal of the public HSA webpage. As HSA carries out this recommendation, the Agency may learn from the experience of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s (SFPUC), which developed an internal application tracker for HR analyst use to easily access recruitment information by position number and determine its stage in the hiring process (e.g. request-to-fill submitted, in exams, in selection, etc.). Ideally at HSA, this function would be available to applicants and not just for HR operations purposes, so job candidates may log into their personal job account and review the progress of their application for any job they applied to at HSA. Another desired feature would be to allow candidates to send an email, chat, or voice message directly to the HR analyst working on a specific recruitment, facilitating communication between the two parties.

Recommendation	Adopt tools for job seekers to track the progress of their application
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Leadership • SF Department of Human Resources (DHR)

STRATEGY 3: USE DATA TO INFORM HIRING POLICY AND PRACTICE

While HSA has developed robust analytical capacity, this work has largely been focused on client populations, program performance measurement for continuous quality improvement and state reporting requirements, service provider contract monitoring, and other functions directly related to client services. More recently, HSA has been working to develop a more data- and evidence-driven culture in HR to examine issues in hiring, promotion, discipline, and separation. However, the Agency has faced challenges institutionalizing a culture of robust data collection, analysis, and reporting practices in HR, driven in part by our use of outdated software for human resources management that does not support complex analytical projects and by limited staff capacity to perform desired analyses.

In order to ensure that HSA’s hiring practices, processes, and policies are racially equitable, the Agency must use data to inform these policies and practices. More specifically, HSA must collect data throughout the hiring process and analyze trends in attrition and recruitment-end hire outcomes to better recognize and respond to potential racial inequities. The Agency must also consider qualitative methods to answer questions that quantitative data cannot, especially to support our understanding of

why certain patterns of racial disparity may emerge and to help develop creative solutions to close race-based outcome gaps. Ultimately, HSA must be clear and transparent with stakeholders and partners in our the hiring process, regularly communicating findings about hiring and other HR trends, and developing productive collaborations to solve problems as they emerge.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends three actions to support this strategy:

- A. Conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process;
- B. Perform longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes by race/ethnicity; and
- C. Continue participation in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group.

RECOMMENDATION A: CONDUCT A GAP ANALYSIS OF THE HIRING PROCESS

While specific aspects of recruitment and hiring at HSA have already been clearly identified as areas for improvement with respect to racial equity, it would behoove the Agency to conduct a more detailed gap analysis of the hiring process to further refine our understanding of other points in the process that present barriers we must address. Gap analysis is a strategic planning tool to help organizations determine current conditions, identify desired outcomes, and develop strategies to meet those objectives.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process, paying particular attention to the ways in which job applicants of different racial/ethnic backgrounds may encounter barriers of different types and scale as they navigate the process. It is essential that HSA capture the point of view of all stakeholders in this process, including hiring managers, job candidates, HR personnel, and organized labor partners to identify areas where differential racial impacts may occur and must be addressed.

Fortunately, some of this work has already been done or is currently underway at HSA and throughout the City. The Department of Human Resources Hiring Modernization Project, for instance, is an ongoing collaborative effort to improve the hiring process, intended to ensure that changes to the way the City hires result in fair, effective, and modern processes for applicants, hiring managers, human resources professionals, and other stakeholders. Led by the HSA Innovation Office, the Agency undertook a similar initiative in 2016 known as the HR Improvement Movement, during which Innovation Office and HR staff worked together to map the hiring process workflow from beginning to end, identify and discuss pain-points, and create and implement solutions to address emergent challenges.

Current practice in HSA's HR Department includes conducting exit interviews, and more recently, "stay" interviews. Similar to exit interviews, which are used to gather information about the experiences of employees separating from the Agency, stay interviews will be used to understand how and why HSA staff have remained at the Agency. Of particular relevance, they will solicit information about staff experiences navigating the hiring process. HSA should build on these projects to perform its gap analysis, conducting stakeholder surveys to understand why and how applicant attrition in the hiring process occurs, and why it may vary by race/ethnicity. **Gap analysis should be further supported by use of the GARE Racial Equity Tool**,^{xxi} which is a resource designed to help local government decision-makers systematically incorporate considerations about racial equity in the development of programs, policies, practices, and budgets. Crucially, the Racial Equity Tool can also be used retrospectively to examine the impacts of existing policies on racial equity, and adjust policies to better promote equitable

outcomes. Using both quantitative and qualitative data to reveal gaps and inform the development of solutions, HSA should share its findings and any recommendations that emerge from the analysis with key stakeholders, and eventually pilot recommended strategies, using ongoing data collection and analysis to measure success in achieving their intended impact on racial equity.

Recommendation	Conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Exams and Operations Units • SF DHR: Hiring Modernization Project consultants • HSA Innovation Office or SF Office of the Controller (CON), City Performance Unit

RECOMMENDATION B: PERFORM LONGITUDINAL ANALYSES OF HIRING OUTCOMES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

As part of this strategic planning process, the HSA Planning Unit performed the Agency’s first-ever longitudinal analysis of application and hiring trends, disaggregated by applicant race/ethnicity—a case study of a major client-facing role at the Agency, the Senior Eligibility Worker position (also referred to by its job classification number, 2905).²¹ This case study had a two-fold purpose:

- It provided valuable information about the ways in which job applicants of different racial/ethnic backgrounds experience the specific 2905 hiring process; and
- It broke new analytical ground at the Agency, highlighting the utility of longitudinal analysis of hiring data to answer questions about the potential differential impact of Agency hiring practices on job candidates of different races and ethnicities.

The Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA perform further longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes in other job classes to assess whether and to what extent racial disparities emerge in our hiring process. During the past five years, HSA HR has been moving toward a more data-informed approach to policymaking. It is essential that we continue to use analytical techniques like the longitudinal analysis performed in this case study to understand how our hiring practices may affect job candidates of different races/ethnicities, and to develop solutions to counteract racial inequities wherever they may occur. This case study provides a methodological guide for future research as HSA turns its attention to potential race-based outcome gaps in other large classifications at the Agency, such as Protective Services Workers (job classification 2940), or supervisory and management positions.

Recommendation	Perform longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes by race/ethnicity
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Exams & Operations Units • HSA Planning Unit • SF Department of Human Resources (DHR) • SF Office of the Controller (CON), City Performance Unit

²¹ In consultation with HSA executive leadership and the HR and Planning Directors, the 2905 job class was determined a priority class of interest. Staff members in the 2905 class account for about 21% of all HSA employees and constitute one of the Agency’s most racially/ethnically diverse classes.

RECOMMENDATION C: CONTINUE PARTICIPATION IN THE CITYWIDE HR DATA QUALITY WORK GROUP

In support of HSA’s efforts to shift to a more data-informed culture of decision-making and policy development in HR, the Agency is participating in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group (DQG), first convened in December 2018. The goal of the DQG is to examine Citywide and departmental issues related to HR data quality and governance, and to provide recommendations for improving the quality and usefulness of HR-related data in human resources management. Ultimately, the DQG will identify recommendations to improve access, create understanding, and promote learning.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency continue to participate in the DQG, and use this forum to advocate for emergent needs related to HR data collection and analysis at HSA. In particular, HSA should advocate for more robust resources to support longitudinal tracking and reporting of data on job applicants and hiring outcomes, including promotion of existing City workers. HSA should also consider sharing its case study of application and hiring trends among 2905 job seekers as an exemplar of promising analytical projects related to racial equity that should be undertaken by other City partners in the DQG. Moreover, HSA could and should use this case study to illustrate to policy bodies like the Citywide HR Analytics Council how improved HR data infrastructure may lend us the capacity to perform even more sophisticated analysis.

Participating in the DQG requires only a small investment of HSA staff time, but has the potential to generate much larger returns as we capitalize on the data expertise of our peer City agencies and use our own work to drive the conversation about data needs and desired outcomes.

Recommendation	Continue participation in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSA HR Operations Unit• HSA Planning Unit

PRIORITY DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & PROMOTION

Leadership development and promotion is another priority domain in which HSA can and should take strategic action to advance racial equity. As described in the previous section of this report, it is essential that HSA employs diverse staff who reflect the racial/ethnic backgrounds of our clients in order to best fulfill the Agency’s mission to promote their well-being and economic security. However, it is not enough to consider the racial composition of the workforce as a whole. Given the large size and scope of our organization, and the ways in which structural racism may impose barriers to professional advancement for people of color even once they have been hired at HSA, **we must also take steps to ensure that staff reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of clients at every level of the Agency’s management hierarchy.**

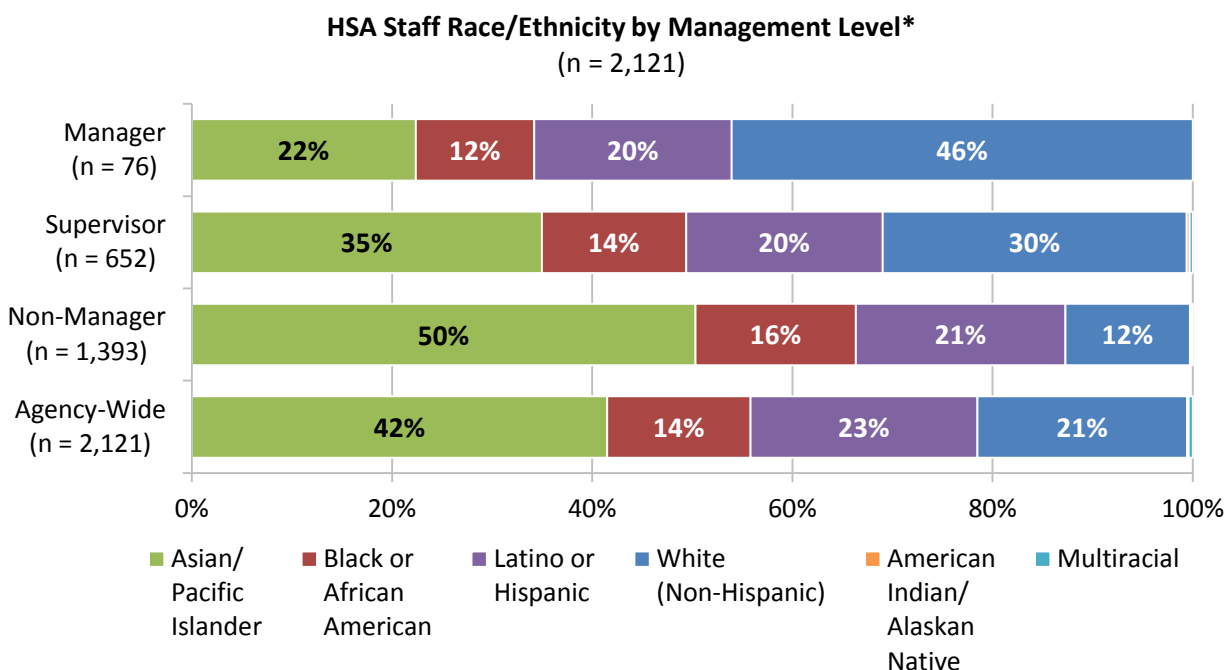
The HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified two main strategies to advance this goal. As shown below, each strategy is supported by specific and actionable recommendations.

Domain 2: Leadership Development & Promotion	
Goal	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all levels of the Agency leadership hierarchy
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Encourage learning at every level of the HSA workforce	A. Promote existing opportunities for skills development
	B. Adopt a Learning Management System to track training and professional education by race/ethnicity
	C. Create a mentoring program
2. Facilitate career development aligned to professional growth	A. Create a career planning guide highlighting advancement opportunities
	B. Use competency models & success roadmaps Agency-wide
	C. Conduct annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner

More information about research findings and the need for work in this area, as well as these recommended strategies, is provided on the subsequent pages.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AT HSA

While the HSA workforce as a whole is characterized by considerable racial and ethnic diversity, and generally reflects the racial/ethnic backgrounds of the clients we serve, the same cannot be said for the Agency’s leadership. An analysis of the racial composition of HSA’s staff (described in part in the previous section on *Recruitment & Hiring*) showed that, **when disaggregated by management level,²² white employees are overrepresented among the leadership ranks at HSA, with the most pronounced disparities at the highest levels of management:** they are 1.5 times more likely to serve in a supervisory role and over twice as likely to serve in a management role when compared to Agency-wide demographic trends. Conversely, API workers are nearly 2 times less likely to serve as a manager. Latino employees consistently make up about 20% and African American staff about 15% of the employee population, regardless of management level.



**Note: Supervisor category includes all positions authorized to provide supervision but that may not currently require supervision duties as part of the role (e.g., mid-level analyst positions). This analysis excludes PST positions.*

WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE CONDITIONS?

The relative lack of racial diversity among management at HSA has implications for policy development, service delivery, and the culture of work at the Agency. Even as research has shown that minority racial/ethnic representation in the public sector workforce improves the ability of public agencies to address minority client needs—especially by hiring and retaining diverse frontline staff—it has also illustrated the value, both to clients and frontline employees, of minority representation among supervisory and management ranks. In particular, **supervisors of color are more likely to share common**

²² Staff with management responsibilities include HSA Directors, Senior Managers, Mid-Level Managers, and Supervisors. In this chart, the supervisor category includes all positions authorized to provide supervision, but that may not currently require supervisory duties as part of the role (e.g., analyst positions).

values and attitudes with line staff of color, and by extension, are more likely to advocate for, encourage, recognize, and mentor these workers. They are also more likely to implement personnel policies that benefit them and create a positive work environment that promotes both autonomy and collaboration to keep them engaged and satisfied at work.^{xxii}

“I was the only African American supervisor for a long time. I have to fight hard to have representation of African American workers... There aren’t that many African Americans in San Francisco, but they comprise our system.”

— Focus group,
HSA Supervisor

These findings in the research literature are paralleled by the results of **the 2015 HSA All-Staff Survey, which revealed racial disparities in staff feelings of inclusion and respect.** Survey respondents of color—especially African American and API respondents (who tend to be most underrepresented in managerial roles relative to Agency-wide workforce demographic trends)—expressed the lowest level of agreement with the statement, “At work my opinion seems to count”: 47% and 50% respectively, compared to Latino respondents (56%) and white respondents (62%). Similarly, API respondents were less likely to agree with the statement that “In my program the clients are treated fairly and with respect.” Only 68% of API respondents answered the statement favorably, compared to 80% of white respondents and 81% of Latino respondents.

Notably, **HSA staff expressed a general distrust of the Agency’s management, particularly senior management:** while 68% of staff agreed that they had a “high level of trust and confidence” in their supervisor, only 56% said they trusted their program manager, and less than half (43%) of staff indicated trust in executive management (Executive and Deputy Directors). These trends may be unsurprising for an agency of HSA’s size and hierarchical structure, where line staff typically have greater opportunities to develop trusting relationships with their direct supervisors than with program and executive managers who are far removed from them in the management hierarchy. Given the racial disparities in the composition of the Agency’s line staff and management, it is worth considering the ways in which race may play a role in shaping employees’ experiences of communication, decision-making, inclusion, and trust across hierarchical boundaries.

WHAT CHALLENGES MUST WE ADDRESS?

The underrepresentation of people of color in management roles at HSA, and its effects, emerged as a major theme in the staff focus groups conducted to inform this report. **Across the levels of the management hierarchy, staff expressed a common desire for greater inclusion of people of color among Agency leadership, as well as frustration with conditions that keep people of color out of leadership roles.** Focus group discussions revealed a number of prominent challenges that contribute to the current conditions at HSA and may be addressed through thoughtful and strategic actions to advance racial equity in the area of leadership development and promotion.

Lack of a Supportive Culture & Infrastructure for Employees of Color to Advance Professionally

During the focus groups, one supervisor expressed how demoralizing it can be to see so few people of color occupy executive leadership roles at HSA, even as new vacancies open and are filled: “Look at the 8th floor [of 170 Otis St., which houses] all the higher positions—most staff are white. That’s what we expect. For a new position, I thought it would be someone white because that’s what we have come to expect, it’s almost natural now.” In a similar vein, a manager described her experience as the only manager of color at one time in the Agency’s history. She noted how she was glad to be a resource for workers who “came to me and told me they were grateful” there was a manager who shared their

racial/ethnic background, but also how sad and isolating it was to be the only manager of color at the time. These comments **raise important questions about the extent to which HSA staff of color—especially frontline workers—see themselves, their values, their interests, and their opportunities for upward mobility reflected among the Agency’s management.**

Lack of Resources to Guide Long-Term Career Planning, Professional Growth, and Promotion

At HSA, the most common formal opportunities for learning while on the job tend to occur once, in the early days of an employee’s hire or promotion into a new role at the Agency. These opportunities typically include official onboarding activities, informal peer mentoring, and/or mandatory City trainings. **Anecdotal evidence suggests that opportunities for ongoing education, professional development, and long-term career planning—when they are available—are not offered in a racially equitable fashion.** While more robust data is necessary to confidently characterize this challenge and identify its root causes, this anecdotal evidence nevertheless appears consistent with structural conditions at the Agency, which require direct service staff to be available to serve our clients. Under these conditions, it may be easier for HSA staff in analyst and management roles (who are more likely to be white) to access professional and leadership development than for staff members serving on the front line and often in client-facing positions (who are more likely to be people of color). Many focus group participants noted that line staff encounter a number of barriers to accessing professional development opportunities and resources for setting career advancement goals. These barriers range from a lack of accessible and up-to-date information about existing learning opportunities and enrollment procedures to more rigidly hierarchical management and work structures that exacerbate feelings of disempowerment among line staff who struggle to advocate for their development, particularly in the absence of a supportive supervisor.

“Supervisors and managers, as part of the [HSA] culture, they get to go for trainings and classes...There should be more trainings on how to deal with clients, for example, for eligibility workers and social workers. They would have more time to understand [how] to better reach out, or to minimize frustration... The Agency should do more. Managers travel to far places for workshops and the Agency covers that.... But it should trickle down to regular employees.”

– Focus group,
HSA line staff member

HOW IS THE AGENCY WORKING TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

Within HSA HR, the Learning and Organizational Development (L&OD) team is responsible for providing quality learning and professional development opportunities for staff while utilizing data to inform HR policymaking to improve staff productivity, personal success, and growth throughout the employment life cycle. Current initiatives include strategies to make outcomes among new and existing staff more equitable along various dimensions through the following efforts:

- **Workforce Analytics Team to support data-informed decisions and process improvements:** Over the last few years, HSA HR has been working to develop a Workforce Analytics Team within L&OD to support data-informed decisions and policies. This team is responsible for partnering with all areas of HR to develop competency-based processes and systems for hiring, training, performance management, and succession planning. As the team is further established and fully staffed, its analytical capacity will be expanded to enhance the data and information shared with Agency decision makers regarding hiring, recruitment, forecasting, training utilization, and other key HR functions. Key efforts currently led by this team include:

- **Competency Modeling:** In 2014, HSA HR began a competency modeling initiative to identify, develop, and evaluate the core knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed for job classifications. Identifying competencies for success enables the HR team to identify and prioritize the development of tools, trainings, and other resources to support professional growth and elevate performance—ultimately resulting in consistent and high quality service to clients. Additionally, competency modeling provides standardized metrics to assess performance, supporting consistency and decreasing bias in evaluation of staff performance. This effort has focused on classifications with the highest number of incumbents. To date, 36 out of a total of 111 job classifications (32%) in the Agency have been completed; these 36 classifications make up about 75% of our 2,200-person workforce. By the end of 2019, the team aims to complete this work for another 51 job classes that cover nearly 300 employees.^{xxiii}
- **Workforce Interviews:** To support a satisfied and productive workforce, the Workforce Analytics Team is leading HR’s effort to conduct staff interviews to understand the rewarding and challenging aspects of our Agency. This began in 2016 with the collection of *exit interview* data for HSA staff leaving their positions to understand reasons for departure and gather ideas for improvement in their position and program. This year, HSA HR will begin to conduct *stay interviews* with current employees to understand their reasons for staying with the organization and gather insight into what is working well, while also sharing thoughts on areas needing improvement. Through the information collected, organizational challenges can be moved to the forefront and guide strategic planning. This initiative also allows HR to check in with staff to ensure the Agency does not engage in practices that exacerbate racial and other inequities.
- **Training Course Curriculum:** The L&OD team provides many trainings for the workforce to support the competency and inclusivity of the HSA workforce. For staff at all levels, L&OD offers courses on emotional intelligence and a series on cultural competency (with sessions on racial/ethnic diversity, the multi-generational workplace, and LGBTQ inclusivity) on a monthly basis. By promoting this knowledge and awareness, L&OD aims to help support an inclusive workforce in which all staff feel comfortable and diverse skillsets are recognized. Additionally, L&OD provides trainings for supervisors and managers. In addition to New Supervisor Orientation, the team offers specialized courses to help supervisors and managers to develop their skills with coaching staff and conducting challenging conversations. These courses support both the new supervisors in their own career path and also the line staff who benefit from standardized supervision practices across the Agency. L&OD also offers courses and leader forums for managers and directors. The lens provided in all training courses is one of equity as L&OD seeks to eliminate subjective practices and processes that adversely impact staff.

WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS SHOULD HSA TAKE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY?

In light of the challenges described in this section, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified two main strategies to advance racial equity in the area of leadership development and promotion. These strategies, and the recommendations that support them, are described on the following pages.

STRATEGY 1: ENCOURAGE LEARNING AT EVERY LEVEL OF THE HSA WORKFORCE

A thoughtful, robust investment in professional and leadership development is critical to ensure that staff at HSA not only build skills that are important to their continued success in their current roles, but also cultivate the necessary abilities to promote into new roles at the Agency over the course of their careers. If we are to diversify the leadership at HSA, we must cultivate a culture at the Agency in which learning is regarded as a lifelong process and central to the success of our mission. Specifically, **the Agency must make racially equitable investments in the ongoing improvement of staff's professional practice by providing readily accessible opportunities for continuing education, skills training, and leadership development to every level of the Agency's workforce—especially and including to entry-level and client-facing staff.**

In order to racially diversify HSA's management and ensure that staff composition reflects the racial/ethnic backgrounds of our clients at all levels of the Agency leadership hierarchy, **we must encourage learning at every level of the HSA workforce.** The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends three actions to support this strategy:

- A. Promote existing opportunities for skills development;
- B. Adopt a Learning Management System to track training and professional education by race/ethnicity; and
- C. Create a mentoring program.

RECOMMENDATION A: PROMOTE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There are already a number of existing opportunities for continuing education and professional skills development at HSA and throughout the City. These include trainings developed by HSA and/or the City specifically for City employees, such as HSA HR's Learning & Organizational Development course offerings, trainings by DHR and its affiliates, and courses put on by DataSF; City partnerships with local institutions of higher education to provide low-cost or subsidized courses to staff, such as the City University program; and a broader constellation of professional associations, conferences, and educational resources related to work in social services. As focus group research revealed, however, these opportunities are not always accessible to staff, particularly entry-level and frontline staff.

The Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA promote opportunities for continuing education and skills development tailored to our staff, particularly those employees working on the front line with clients. This could include actions such as creating a centralized resource on the HSA Intranet to provide: an up-to-date calendar of available Agency trainings; links for staff to easily enroll in courses or sign up for course waitlists; and information about other City professional development programming. HSA should consider existing models such as the "Classes and Training" page on the City DHR website, which helps City employees identify coursework relevant to their career development goals and access other City programs related to leadership and professional advancement. Promotion of existing professional development opportunities should not be limited to hard skills development alone, but also include encouraging staff attendance at speaker events or presentations by industry or subject matter experts that take place at the Agency, as well as brown bag lunch events, such as those described in *Recommendation 2C* in the section on *Organizational Culture*.

In addition, HSA should explore other methods for effectively communicating with staff at all levels of the Agency about available learning opportunities, ways to empower client-facing staff to advocate for their learning on the job, and strategies for expanding the supply of professional development activities that may be oversubscribed and inaccessible to line workers.

Recommendation	Promote existing opportunities for skills development
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD) • HSA Program Managers (for program-specific resources)

RECOMMENDATION B: ADOPT A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO TRACK TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

In order to ensure that leadership and professional development opportunities at HSA are racially equitable and accessible to staff at all levels of the Agency, we must know who is participating in learning activities. Moreover, in order to support employees’ career advancement, we must recognize staff for their participation in learning activities and related professional growth. Simply put, HSA needs an easy way to collect and analyze data on staff professional development, and to use that information to inform decision-making about staff learning needs and how best to meet those needs. At present, the HSA’s Learning & Organizational Development team conducts the majority of its trainings in-person. Data collection on training activities and analysis of staff development outcomes is limited; when it takes place, it tends to be manually-recorded and highly resource-intensive.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency adopt a Learning Management System (LMS) to track training and professional education by employee race/ethnicity. An LMS is a centralized digital platform for creating and distributing professional training content, which can be customized to suit the diverse learning needs of the workforce. Many of the City’s agencies already employ an LMS system to support the learning and professional development of their employees.

The advantages of adopting an LMS are many: it provides employees with flexibility to access a selection of trainings remotely and at a time that is convenient to them; it empowers staff to explore available learning opportunities and design a curriculum that suits their particular interests; it encourages interactive learning and the application of new skills; and it expands HR staff capacity to offer a broader range of trainings and multi-modal options for training delivery to reach a wider audience of employees. Another notable benefit of an LMS is its ability to easily track data on staff engagement in professional development activities, and in some cases, on learning outcomes. This function of Learning Management Systems is valuable to HR staff, who may use the data to ensure staff completion of mandated trainings and perform aggregate analysis of staff learning trends. It is also useful to individual employees, who could use documentation of completed trainings and learning outcomes to help track their learning and advance their career goals.

Recommendation	Adopt a Learning Management System to track training and professional education by race/ethnicity
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD) • SF Department of Human Resources (DHR)

RECOMMENDATION C: CREATE A MENTORING PROGRAM

While technical skill building may readily occur in a formal classroom or workshop setting, many aspects of leadership and professional development tend to take place in more informal ways, often as an extension of the personal relationships staff build with their peers and supervisors. **These informal professional networks are essential to our success at work**—they equip us with knowledge, expertise, and perspectives beyond our own; they amplify our ability to solve problems we struggle to address alone; they allow us to vent our frustrations and develop solutions to challenging issues; and they can act as a source of encouragement and recognition. For workers of color especially, they can also serve as an important resource for addressing the ways in which they navigate unspoken cultural norms, identify supportive allies, and achieve upward career mobility in the workplace.

However, minorities and people of color often face structural barriers to accessing these networks and the social capital they represent, including siloed work environments, limited access to mentors in leadership or management roles, lack of role models that share relevant demographic characteristics (such as race), etc. Research has demonstrated that **when professional mentorship is formalized and made available to all staff, including employees of color, it has demonstrated value** in improving job performance and satisfaction among participants generally—and particular benefits for staff of color, including gains to career advancement.^{xxiv}

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA create a professional mentoring program available to all staff, and perform focused recruitment of frontline employees, workers of color, and Career Pathways participants to participate. Formalizing mentorship at the Agency will not be without its challenges, and HSA will need to consider how to recruit and manage participants, facilitate mentor-mentee pairings, develop basic resources or curricular materials for participants, etc., to support successful implementation of a mentorship program. Fortunately, extensive examples of mentorship programming exist in both the private and public sectors, particularly within diversity management contexts. In order to carry out this recommendation, HSA must identify promising mentorship models and best practices, adapt these strategies to our organizational context, and conduct a pilot professional mentorship program. HSA HR Leadership and the Learning & Organizational Development team has recently drafted such a program; it is currently under review.

Recommendation	Create a mentoring program
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD) • HSA Directors, Managers, & Supervisors • HSA Planning Unit • HSA Racial Equity Work Group

STRATEGY 2: FACILITATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT ALIGNED TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

While the previous strategy aims to expand equitable access to a culture of learning and professional development at every level of the Agency, this strategy seeks to equip staff with resources for setting goals for career advancement at HSA and taking tangible steps toward achieving those goals. If we are to diversify the leadership at HSA, **we must support staff to plan for their careers at the Agency by identifying pathways for their advancement and providing them with tools to guide their professional growth along these upward trajectories.**

In order to racially diversify HSA’s management and ensure that staff composition reflects the racial/ethnic backgrounds of our clients at all levels of the Agency leadership hierarchy, **we must facilitate staff career development in alignment with expectations and opportunities for professional growth**. The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends three actions to support this strategy:

- A. Create a career planning guide highlighting advancement opportunities;
- B. Use competency models and success roadmaps Agency-wide; and
- C. Conduct annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION A: CREATE A CAREER PLANNING GUIDE HIGHLIGHTING ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In an organization of HSA’s vast size and varied service scope, it can be challenging for staff to orient themselves to the Agency hierarchy outside of the immediate supervisory structures that govern their day-to-day work. Under these conditions, staff may have difficulty identifying, preparing for, and pursuing promotional opportunities of interest.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA create a career planning guide or tool that highlights common pathways for career advancement at the Agency. The guide should provide an overview of HSA’s organizational structure both at a high level and program-by-program so that staff see how they fit into the hierarchy and may identify pathways for long-term career advancement at the Agency. The guide should also highlight common promotional pathways, such as job classification sequences, that staff members may pursue during their tenure at HSA. In order to be most effective, these promotional maps should include information on the roles and responsibilities that define each job class, and describe the skills and experience staff must develop at their current level to satisfy the minimum qualifications for the next promotional position in the sequence. In addition, the guide should make clear links between required competencies for promotion and available Agency or City resources for professional and leadership development in these areas. Especially to the extent that promotion within HSA and the City require collegiate or graduate level coursework, career planning resources should include information for staff about how to access financial support for continuing education, which may pose a particular barrier to lower-income, entry-level staff of color seeking education to enhance their promotional potential.

While a static career planning document may be useful as an important first step in carrying out this recommendation, the Work Group believes that an interactive, web-based career planning tool may be the most effective resource to support staff, enabling them to easily explore multiple relevant career trajectories and design a professional development curriculum that is appropriate to their promotional goals at the Agency.

Recommendation	Create a career planning guide highlighting advancement opportunities
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA HR Examination & Classification Unit (Exams) • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD)

RECOMMENDATION B: USE COMPETENCY MODELS & SUCCESS ROADMAPS AGENCY-WIDE

Staff roles at HSA are varied and require workers to leverage a diverse array of knowledge, skills, and abilities to contribute to the success of the Agency’s mission. While hard skills, such as proficiency in the use of a computer software like a word processor or spreadsheet tool, are relatively easy to identify and develop through training courses, soft skills, like the ability to run an effective meeting or deescalate conflict, are less so. The latter are especially essential to the positive and productive function of any workplace—particularly so at an agency like HSA, which provides direct services to diverse, and often marginalized or vulnerable individuals. Notably, cultural competencies tend to fall into the soft category of knowledge, skills, and abilities: highly valuable and highly valued in social services work, but difficult to quantify. Fortunately, competency models and success roadmaps offer us a means of enumerating key competencies across a range of both hard and soft skills, and of tracking professional growth in these areas.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA adopt competency models and success roadmaps Agency-wide to guide staff development of critical technical and interpersonal skills in support of their career advancement. Competency models provide clear benchmarks for the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and possible measurement criteria for assessing the attainment of new competencies over time. Success roadmaps build on competency models, providing a flexible, but structured system for setting and tracking goals related to skill development, both individually and in collaboration with one’s direct supervisor. In this way, they allow staff and their supervisors to align their expectations for current work, professional growth and the mastery of new skills, and career advancement. HSA has developed and piloted detailed competency models and success roadmaps aligned to each job class, with input from staff in those roles to ensure a fair and accurate representation of the necessary skills for success over a worker’s tenure in that position. However, these tools are currently not in widespread use at the Agency, despite their proven value in guiding performance management and career development.

The HSA HR Learning and Organizational Development team anticipates completing competency models for 96% of the Agency by the end of the 2019 calendar year. During this time, this team is also proposing an implementation and communication strategy to roll out new performance management tools, including competency models and success roadmaps, to the entire Agency. This recommendation supports current and upcoming efforts regarding this much-needed resource.

Recommendation	Use competency models and success roadmaps Agency-wide
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSA Directors, Managers, & Supervisors• HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD)

RECOMMENDATION C: CONDUCT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS IN A CONSISTENT AND TIMELY MANNER

Timely, regular, and thoughtful feedback is an important component of professional development. Though required across the Agency, anecdotal evidence suggests that performance reviews are performed in an inconsistent manner from program to program, and even from supervisor to supervisor. For instance, some supervisors issue performance reviews on a fiscal year calendar, while others conduct them in accordance with the calendar year; still others may issue their reviews in

accordance with employee milestones or anniversaries. In addition to being conducted at unpredictable times across programs and supervisors, annual performance reviews may also cover different content, and vary considerably in terms of completeness and quality of documentation.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA complete annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner. HSA should adopt—and enforce—clear and consistent standards for the timely completion of annual performance reviews. HSA HR should track submissions of performance reviews and send reminder alerts for supervisors to complete annual reviews for their staff. At minimum, the reviews offer staff an opportunity to receive feedback from their supervisors about their professional strengths and areas for growth. In their most effective form, they enable staff to respond to the feedback they receive, to clarify and realign expectations for work in partnership with their supervisors, to identify professional goals for the upcoming year and discuss how to achieve them with support from their supervisors, and to reflect on their success in achieving goals set during the prior year’s performance review. Used in concert with tools such as competency models and success roadmaps, annual performance reviews are a key instrument for long-term performance management, skills development, and career advancement. HSA must optimize the use of annual performance reviews and ensure that all employees have the opportunity to have high-quality, productive conversations about their current contributions to and future success at the Agency. The HSA HR Learning and Organizational Development team is working on a new performance appraisal form and anticipates an Agency-wide roll out in early 2020 along with competency models and success roadmaps.

Recommendation	Conduct annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Directors, Managers, & Supervisors • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD)

PRIORITY DOMAIN 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is the third major domain in which HSA should take action to advance racial equity following this strategic planning process. **The concept of organizational culture is broad: it encompasses not only why we do our work, but also how we do our work and how we feel doing it.** The culture of an organization is shaped by the formal and informal norms that govern our behavior as we strive to achieve the organization’s goals, particularly the ways in which we interact with one another. Organizations with a healthy and strong culture integrate their principles and priorities into every aspect of the workplace, creating an environment characterized by consistency and fairness, cohesion and a shared sense of identity, and purposeful decision-making.^{xxv, xxvi}

Since 2018, at the initiative of HSA’s executive leadership, HSA has partnered with GARE; convened a diverse staff Racial Equity Work Group; undertaken a robust, staff-driven strategic planning process; and produced this report—the culmination of more than a year’s dedicated research, policy development, and writing. **Collectively, these activities represent a major step toward institutionalizing and advancing racial equity at the Agency.** We are taking action to make racial equity an explicit priority at HSA at a time when City leadership and the broader San Francisco public is highly focused on issues of structural racism, implicit bias, and the ways in which local government may work to eliminate racial inequities in our community.

To build on this work, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three key strategies to advance racial equity in the context of organizational culture. As shown below, each strategy is supported by specific and actionable recommendations.

Domain 3: Organizational Culture	
Goal	Cultivate a workplace environment in which HSA employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel respected, valued, and supported to carry out the Agency’s mission
Strategy	Recommended Action
1. Demonstrate leadership commitment to promoting a culture of racial equity	A. Adopt racial equity as a core value of HSA’s mission and vision
	B. Provide HSA leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
	C. Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
	D. Use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies
2. Foster staff capacity to operationalize racial equity in professional practice	A. Provide HSA staff with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
	B. Develop an internal communications strategy to normalize racial equity frameworks
	C. Design a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum

Domain 3: Organizational Culture	
Goal	Cultivate a workplace environment in which HSA employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel respected, valued, and supported to carry out the Agency's mission
Strategy	Recommended Action
3. Sustain an explicit and ongoing commitment to advancing racial equity	A. Incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes at HSA
	B. Conduct staffing analysis at the division and program level
	C. Convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to facilitate policy development and implementation
	D. Issue a resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency's department commissions and advisory boards

More information about the need for work in this area, as well as these strategies, is provided below.

HOW IS THE AGENCY WORKING TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE?

For the past few years, HSA HR has been focusing efforts on making internal processes more efficient and taking a more robust data centric approach to guide employment decisions. HSA HR is focused on being an influencer across the City, building the workforce, and providing the most effective customer service to our employees and clients. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** To lead the HSA's efforts to develop a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for our staff and clients, the Agency submitted a proposal to fund the creation of a 3-person Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at the Agency. HSA wishes to formalize the shared commitment with Mayor Breed and the City to address issues of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion by building adequate organizational capacity at the Agency. The DEI Office would provide the Agency resources to ensure that the recommendations within this report are executed with fidelity. Further, the DEI Office would be responsible for developing DEI curricula, providing safe spaces to facilitate conversation and discussion around equity issues, align efforts with stakeholders to identify core priorities for advancing equity, ensuring accountability for progress, and building a sustainable infrastructure to carry out this essential work.
- Data Quality Work Group:** In 2018, the HR Analytics Council,²³ of which HSA HR is a key member, set out to increase its capacity and operationalize ideas for improvement by creating the Data Quality Work Group (DQG). The group is composed of analytics and data governance subject matter experts, People and Pay software subject matter experts, and departmental staff. The purpose of the DQG is to examine Citywide and departmental issues related to HR

²³ Approximately 5 years ago, HSA partnered with DHR, the SF Office of the Controller, and other HR professionals across the City to form the HR Analytics Council. The Analytics Council engages in high-level conversations HR data collection, reporting, and use to inform policy and practice.

data quality and governance, and provide recommendations for improving the quality and operational usefulness of HR data. Staff from the HSA HR Operations team currently serve as co-chairs for this work group.

- **HR/IT Engagement Data Project:** Beginning in the summer of 2018, HSA engaged outside consultants to review HR department-level processes that could benefit from using a more data-centered approach. The consultants began by analyzing two HR processes where they uncovered fundamental gaps in data collection and management. In the fall of 2018, they piloted solutions and made recommendations to help HSA HR better structure data. Well-structured data is necessary in order to be able to run sophisticated analyses on hiring trends, job candidate and hire demographics, program-specific outcomes, etc. The goal of this data project is to support HR and program stakeholders across the Agency to use the same data sets to conduct customized reporting. Part of HR's functions are to be able to provide better reporting to help decision-makers take appropriate actions. This initiative seeks to advance racial equity at the Agency by ensuring that we have an infrastructure in place to both gather and understand accurate data regarding personnel management trends and the driving forces of these patterns, while simultaneously providing a mechanism to accurately measure the impact of interventions to change job applicant and/or HSA employee outcomes. In preparation for the implementation of this report, the consultants are working congruently on a satellite project to aid the HSA HR team in identifying and aligning key objectives and goals, applying a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS SHOULD HSA TAKE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY?

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three main strategies to advance racial equity in the area of organizational culture. These strategies, and the recommendations that support them, are described below.

STRATEGY 1: DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING A CULTURE OF RACIAL EQUITY

The success of HSA's nascent racial equity efforts rests in large part on the organizational investment and professional engagement of the Agency's leadership. HSA's directors, managers, and supervisors help shape policy, make budgetary and staffing decisions, and direct staff practices through supervision. As such, **they will play an essential role in guiding the culture shift represented by HSA's explicit engagement in racial equity work.**

In order to cultivate a strong organizational culture founded upon a common commitment to advancing racial equity, HSA leadership must be proactive in reflecting on their professional practice as it relates to racial equity and seeking out opportunities to improve their understanding and application of racial equity frameworks. Moreover, they must create and promote opportunities for their staff to do the same. Simply put, **HSA's directors, managers, and supervisors must explicitly make racial equity work a priority and allocate resources to accomplish this critical work, demonstrating a clear and unequivocal commitment to advancing racial equity at the Agency.** The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends four actions to support this strategy:

- A. Adopt racial equity as a core value of HSA's mission;
- B. Provide HSA leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training;
- C. Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and
- D. Use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies.

Priority Domain 3: Organizational Culture

Advancing Racial Equity at the San Francisco Human Services Agency

RECOMMENDATION A: ADOPT RACIAL EQUITY AS A CORE VALUE OF HSA'S MISSION

In order to establish the Agency's commitment to racial equity and inclusion as an integral component of the organization's identity, HSA's must actively and explicitly articulate the shared principles that bring the Agency to this work. To this end, **the HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency executive management adopt racial equity as a core value of the Agency's mission.**

The development and adoption of racial equity as a value central to the mission of the Agency will act as a shared statement of purpose for HSA's engagement in racial equity work, succinctly orienting staff to the importance of racial equity as a key component of the Agency's broader goals for the well-being and economic security of San Francisco's diverse residents. Given that HSA's vision, mission, and values are currently being redesigned as part of the Agency's rebranding effort by the HSA Communications team, this is an ideal time to publicly reaffirm the inextricability of racial equity goals and the Agency's mandate to support the well-being and economic security of San Francisco's diverse individuals, families, and communities.

The statement of purpose and guiding principles drafted by the Racial Equity Work Group, modeled loosely after HSA's mission statement to provide a shared foundation and forward thrust for its work over the past 18 months, may serve as a helpful starting point for carrying out this recommendation. This document can support further conversation at HSA about the short- and long-term goals of our racial equity efforts, and help ensure alignment of a racial equity core value with the broader mission and vision of the Agency.

Recommendation	Adopt racial equity as a core value of HSA's mission
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSA Executive Management

RECOMMENDATION B: PROVIDE HSA LEADERSHIP WITH INTRODUCTORY AND ONGOING RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING

An important first step of public sector racial equity work is to normalize conversations about race and racial equity in the workplace. In other words, we need to develop a shared understanding of what racial equity is, how racial inequities were created and are still maintained today, and the steps we can take to advance racially equitable outcomes through our professional practice. Normalizing racial equity requires developing an understanding of the racial equity framework, tools to communicate effectively about equity topics, and strategies to act with urgency to advance racial equity.

To best ensure the success of racial equity initiatives at HSA, **the Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency provide its leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training.** Attendance at introductory racial equity training should be a requirement for all HSA directors, managers, and supervisors; participation in ongoing training opportunities should be strongly encouraged to maintain and further develop HSA leadership's competencies in this area.

As stakeholders who set the culture at HSA by modeling professional behaviors, and who will be called upon to encourage their supervisees to participate in Agency activities as the recommendations in this report are implemented over the coming months and years, it is essential that the Agency's leadership has a foundational understanding of the racial equity framework. HSA should set clear expectations for

Priority Domain 3: Organizational Culture

Agency leadership to be in attendance at events like the San Francisco Human Rights Commission’s quarterly “Racial Equity Foundations” training, and to bring their new knowledge and skills to bear at HSA. At this or similar introductory racial equity trainings, attendees will learn about topics such as the history of government and race; implicit and explicit bias; and individual, institutional, and structural racism, and develop basic tools to engage in workplace conversations about race and racial equity. Ideally, HSA’s leadership would continue to build their skills to advance racial equity by participating in ongoing trainings and other racial equity activities at HSA.

Recommendation	Provide HSA leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Directors, Managers, & Supervisors • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD)

RECOMMENDATION C: ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The strategic planning process that informed the recommendations contained in this report was seriously constrained by the limited capacity of the Racial Equity Work Group members, most of whom had volunteered to participate in the Work Group in addition to their existing work requirements. Understandably, their extensive responsibilities in their full-time work at HSA often took precedence over the research, policy development, and writing activities that contributed to this report. Only the two co-facilitators of the Work Group had formally designated time to dedicate to the work, and even then, the Work Group required the liberal infusion of additional staff resources from HSA’s HR Department and Planning Unit to complete the strategic planning process and prepare this report.

Based on lessons learned from the challenges of executing a staff-driven strategic planning process and regularly convening a large staff work group, **the HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**—hereafter referred to as the DEI Office. It is clear that the ongoing demands of policy implementation, and the expansion of activities to normalize the racial equity framework at the Agency, will require the dedication of multiple full-time staff with expertise in issues of structural discrimination, equity, and justice, and the ability to oversee and administer HSA’s racial equity activities at a high level. The establishment of a DEI Office will help to formalize the Agency’s commitment to advancing equity by dedicating the staff resources we need to plan and coordinate effective action for racial equity. **It bears noting that the success of HSA’s racial equity efforts will depend on a sense of shared responsibility for advancing equity both within the DEI Office and across Agency programs and staff more broadly.** While the DEI Office would hold primary responsibility for developing and administering stand-alone racial equity initiatives, racially equitable policy and practice must be incorporated into the day-to-day operations of the Agency’s varied programs, supported by technical assistance, planning, and coordination provided by the subject matter experts in the DEI Office.

HSA’s executive management, in partnership with the HSA HR Department and the Racial Equity Work Group, developed a budget proposal to the Mayor’s Budget Office to permanently staff a DEI Office in the upcoming budget cycle (FY 2019-20). Unfortunately, the Mayor’s budget, released in June 2019, does not include funds for HSA to staff a DEI Office, consistent with the Citywide freeze on creating new positions. In light of this new hurdle, **the Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA adapt at least one existing position vacancy at the Agency for the purposes of launching a DEI Office within the**

scope of HSA’s standing budget. The Office should be led by a managerial level position and governed in partnership with the Racial Equity Work Group.

Recommendation	Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Executive Management • HSA Director of Human Resources
Notable External Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Mayor • Office of Public Policy & Finance Review

RECOMMENDATION D: USE THE GARE RACIAL EQUITY TOOL TO SUPPORT REVIEW OF HSA POLICIES

As we strive to orient the culture of HSA to better incorporate racial equity as a key priority of our work, we must make the application of the racial equity framework in our policy and practice second nature, woven into the very fabric of our everyday thought process. Initially, we may need support to adjust to systematically incorporating racial equity considerations in our decision-making. Fortunately, the GARE Racial Equity Tool is designed to help us do just that, a process and end product that we can use to conduct both forward-looking review of new policies in development and retrospective assessment and revision of existing policies.^{xxvii} The Racial Equity Tool uses a questionnaire framework to guide decision-makers, asking them detailed questions regarding the potential racial equity impacts of the policy, process, budget, etc., under review.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies in a pilot that spans divisions and programs. Based on the lessons learned from the pilot implementation of the Racial Equity Tool, HSA may wish to develop an adapted version of the Tool to better suit our unique San Francisco social services context or otherwise support Agency programs in their use of the Tool. While the Racial Equity Tool may be used as is, other municipalities, such as Seattle and Portland, have lightly tailored it to the local context and/or agency needs—an option the Work Group suggests HSA consider in future years. In particular, it may be helpful to develop both abbreviated and full-length versions of the Tool for use in different decision-making contexts, should our experience reflect this need during the pilot implementation of the Tool. This flexibility is likely to minimize the burdens associated with the completion of the Tool and support more widespread use of the Tool throughout the Agency while still retaining its effectiveness as a formal guide for making considerations about racial equity in decision-making. Ultimately, HSA should test the use of the adapted Tool across the major divisions of the Agency and make adjustments as needed before setting Agency-wide standards for its use.

Recommendation	Use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion • HSA Directors and Senior Managers • HSA Program Managers and Analysts • HSA Planning Unit

STRATEGY 2: FOSTER STAFF CAPACITY TO OPERATIONALIZE RACIAL EQUITY IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

HSA's frontline staff are vital stakeholders in the Agency's efforts to advance racial equity. Hand in hand with the Agency's leadership, **their understanding of the racial equity framework and their ability to put them into practice at HSA will be critical factors in creating sustainable, transformational culture change at the Agency.**

Developing a strong organizational culture oriented to achieving racially equitable outcomes for our clients and workforce will require HSA to set clear organizational expectations for our employees' best practice and support their success in carrying out these practices. Workplace policies and practices must reinforce this messaging so that staff across all HSA programs and at every level of the Agency feel supported to learn about racial equity and apply this framework in their day-to-day work. In other words, **HSA must foster staff capacity to operationalize racial equity in their professional practice.**

In order to be effective, this capacity-building effort cannot be felt by staff as a top-down decision in which they have no opportunity for input or understanding. Learning about racial equity and bringing new competencies to bear in their daily work must not appear to be a burden imposed by the leadership, but rather as a process of mutual learning and support, where best practices are modeled, first and foremost by our Agency's directors, managers, and supervisors.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends three actions to support this strategy:

- A. Provide HSA staff with introductory and ongoing racial equity training;
- B. Develop an internal communications strategy to normalize racial equity frameworks; and
- C. Design a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION A: PROVIDE HSA STAFF WITH INTRODUCTORY AND ONGOING RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING

As with HSA's leadership, it is important for the Agency's line staff to develop a shared understanding of what racial equity is, how racial inequities were created and are still maintained today, and the steps we can take to advance racially equitable outcomes through our professional practice. In order to equip all HSA staff with the tools they need to engage critically with issues of race and racial equity in their professional practice, **the Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA provide Agency staff at every level with introductory and ongoing racial equity training.** Attendance at introductory racial equity training should be a requirement for all HSA staff; participation in ongoing training opportunities should be strongly encouraged to maintain and further develop staff competencies in this area.

Given the large size of HSA's workforce, it is unlikely to be an efficient or cost-effective strategy to outsource the training of our staff to other organizations like the Human Rights Commission or a private firm. **Implementing this recommendation will likely require the Agency to develop an in-house racial equity training series.** To support this important preliminary step, the Racial Equity Work Group recommends a collaboration with HSA HR's Learning & Organizational Development team to explore a peer training approach to racial equity training at HSA, patterned on GARE's "Train the Trainer" model. This model attempts to expand organizations' training capacity and to capitalize on the improved

learning outcomes that may result when trainings are administered by trusted colleagues rather than an unknown individual.

To best ensure that a culture of racial equity takes root and flourishes at HSA, it will be important to encourage participation of staff in ongoing trainings and other racial equity activities beyond foundational training requirements.

Recommendation	Provide HSA staff with introductory and ongoing racial equity training
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion • HSA HR Learning & Organizational Development Unit (L&OD) • HSA Racial Equity Work Group • All HSA staff

RECOMMENDATION B: DEVELOP AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY TO NORMALIZE RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORKS

Onboarding and orienting the approximately 2,200 employees at HSA to the Agency’s work to advance racial equity will require a multimodal approach. While in-person training is a centerpiece of this approach to normalizing conversation about race and racial equity at HSA, we must consider other methods that are less resource-intensive and that can occur simultaneous to training, but along a faster more flexible timeline.

To that end, the **HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency develop an internal communications strategy** to disseminate information about our goals for advancing racial equity, engage interested staff in equity activities, and maintain open channels of communication between frontline staff and the key policy implementation stakeholders who will be carrying out the recommendations in this report. In particular, the Work Group suggests that the Agency launch a short-term informational campaign to raise awareness about the new racial equity work at the Agency. This campaign should be supported by a longer-term communications infrastructure—such as a page on the HSA Intranet or similar resources—where staff may keep informed of ongoing developments in the work, learn where and how to participate in racial equity programming, and provide feedback to the Racial Equity Work Group and other key policy implementation stakeholders. GARE has published a communications guide^{xxviii} with extensive resources that may aid in the design of communications materials for HSA’s racial equity work.

Recommendation	Develop an internal communications strategy to normalize racial equity frameworks
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion • HSA Communications • HSA Innovation Office

RECOMMENDATION C: DESIGN A RACIAL EQUITY BROWN BAG SERIES & CURRICULUM

One of the organizing principles of this strategic planning process and HSA’s broader effort to advance racial equity is a shared ownership and responsibility for advancing racial equity—across personal identity, programmatic affiliation, and role in the Agency hierarchy. As we shift from planning and policy development toward the implementation of the recommendations in this report, it is critically important that HSA sustain a culture of racial equity rooted in collective action and the engagement of the community. It is in this spirit that the **Racial Equity Work Group recommends the design of a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum.**

Brown bag discussions provide employees with a less formal opportunity to learn about topics of interest among their peers and colleagues. In the context of racial equity, they offer staff the chance to discuss issues of race, racism, and inequity that have long been considered taboo in the workplace, and to make connections between these topics and their personal and professional experiences. The informal quality of brown bags may be attractive to staff members who would prefer to engage with these topics in a low-stakes environment with friends and trusted colleagues rather than the more structured setting of a formal racial equity workshop or training. Guided by the DEI Office, the Racial Equity Work Group should take responsibility for carrying out this recommendation, and develop a monthly brown bag series to discuss racial equity topics as they relate to our work in social services, drawing from established best practices in other jurisdictions.

In addition, recognizing the importance of empowering staff to explore their own interests at the intersection of racial equity and professional practice, the Work Group should design a racial equity brown bag curriculum or toolkit, modeled on existing tools that have proven effective in other public sector contexts. By providing staff with adaptable tools for identifying promising discussion topics, facilitating a brown bag session, and having productive conversations about race in the workplace, employees may engage directly in the work of advancing racial equity, a crucial step forward in the effort of staff capacity building. Moreover, pairing a centrally-administered racial equity brown bag series with a more diffuse approach will make participation more accessible across the many buildings and programs that make up HSA; individual programs or units could easily host a brown bag lunch at a site most convenient to their employees.

Recommendation	Design a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion• HSA Racial Equity Work Group

STRATEGY 3: SUSTAIN AN EXPLICIT AND ONGOING COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

Racial inequity in San Francisco is complex, pervasive, and deeply entrenched in our community. It is maintained by structural racism that has taken shape over centuries of state-sanctioned violence, discrimination, and neglect. And despite the strides that indigenous peoples, people of color, and ethnic minorities have made to close race-based gaps in life outcomes following the Civil Rights era, significant inequities still persist. Simply put, **racial inequity is a vast problem that will not be eliminated quickly, easily, or in isolation.**

In the face of these realities, **it is essential that HSA sustain an explicit and ongoing commitment to advancing racial equity**. HSA must identify racial equity as central to its mission to promote the well-being and economic security of all San Franciscans, and invest adequate staff and financial resources to support these priorities. Crucially, Agency leadership must collaborate with HSA staff, clients, community partners, and other stakeholders to set clear short- and long-term racial equity goals, and act with intentionality and urgency to bring about the transformational change we seek to achieve.

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends four actions to support this strategy:

- A. Incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes at HSA;
- B. Conduct staffing analysis at the division and program level;
- C. Convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to facilitate policy development and implementation; and
- D. Issue a resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency's department commissions and advisory boards.

RECOMMENDATION A: INCORPORATE RACIAL EQUITY INTO EXISTING HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESSES AT HSA

With sustained and strategic effort to advance racially equitable policies and practices, HSA can begin to redress the seemingly intractable problems of racial inequity and close race-based gaps in the outcomes of the low-income and other vulnerable San Franciscans we serve. Iterative strategic planning can help HSA to work with a sustained sense of urgency to eliminate racial inequities in the short- and long-term. Moreover, a robust strategic planning cycle supports transparency, accountability, and public engagement regarding questions of racial equity; provides time and essential opportunities for community participation in the planning process; and promotes the stability of multi-year racial equity programs and initiatives.

Fortunately, HSA already engages in systematic and strategic planning processes, typically at the departmental or divisional level, on a regular basis. As such, **the HSA Racial Equity Work Group recommends that the Agency incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes**. Strategic planning for racial equity must articulate key policy and funding priorities for the current cycle and describe the specific actions the Agency intends to take to advance these priorities in service of improved Agency conditions and client outcomes. Considerations of racial equity must be taken into account both in the broader policy and programmatic priorities outlined by HSA's strategic planning documents, but also raised up as a distinct set of goals that align with the Agency's mission to promote well-being, self-sufficiency, and economic security among San Francisco individuals, families, and communities.

Racial equity should be featured as an important component of HSA's major departmental strategic plans, which are typically produced approximately every five years: the DHS, DAAS, and OECE strategic plans. In addition, racial equity considerations should also be incorporated in other ongoing needs assessment, program evaluation, and planning processes, such as those conducted in the last year for the Dignity Fund or currently ongoing within the ESSS division.

Integrated racial equity planning activities should include: performing needs assessment to identify race-based gaps in Agency processes and outcomes of interest, including consideration of unmet needs among staff, community partners, and/or clients as appropriate to the scope of the plan; developing strategies for Agency action to address racially inequitable outcomes and community needs; and implementation, supported by rigorous performance measurement to ensure that HSA’s work to advance racial equity is achieving its intended impact and making the best of use of available resources.

It is worth noting that HSA already collects demographic data on client participation in its various programs; however, program leadership and analytical staff should intentionally analyze both process data points (e.g. client participation in employment programs) and outcomes data points (e.g. wage levels) by race and ethnicity in order to uncover any differences in clients’ outcomes by race and ethnicity.

Recommendation	Incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes at HSA
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Executive Management • HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion • HSA Planning Unit

RECOMMENDATION B: CONDUCT STAFFING ANALYSIS AT THE DIVISION AND PROGRAM LEVEL

Data on the racial/ethnic composition of HSA’s clients and the Agency’s workforce serve as critical indicators that help us to understand the extent to which our staff reflects the diversity of the San Franciscans we serve. The staffing analysis for this report remained at a high, Agency-wide level for the sake of simplicity, however it is important to note that trends in the congruency of HSA client and staff racial/ethnic composition may vary considerably by division and program.

While the information presented in this report represents an important starting point for understanding racial equity conditions at the Agency, a more granular level of workforce analysis is an essential next step for identifying and addressing racial inequities in HSA’s staffing. HSA serves many distinct client populations with very different demographic breakdowns across divisions and major programs (for example, the Family and Children’s Services caseload is disproportionately African-American and Indigenous, while Asians and Pacific Islanders make up the majority of DAAS clients). As such, **the Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA conduct follow-up staffing analysis at the division and program level to develop a more complete and nuanced picture of current conditions at the Agency.**

Recommendation	Conduct staffing analysis at the division and program level
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Planning Unit • HSA Program Analysts • SF Office of the Controller (CON), City Performance Unit

RECOMMENDATION C: CONVENE A STANDING RACIAL EQUITY WORK GROUP TO FACILITATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Ongoing public engagement and shared community investment in HSA’s work to advance racial equity is essential to its long-term success. In order to ensure that the Agency’s process for developing and implementing strategies to eliminate race-based outcome gaps is itself a racially equitable one, we must instrumentally involve the communities we seek to service in that process.

Therefore, **the Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to participate in policy development and implementation, and otherwise support the strategic planning process for racial equity.** In this cycle, given HSA’s narrow focus on priorities related to internal functions of the Agency’s administration and its culture, membership in the Work Group may include only HSA staff. In future strategic planning cycles, as we expand our efforts to address racial equity bearing more directly on our community partnerships and clients, membership should include constituents from these populations as well.

To support implementation activities in FY 2019-20, HSA should circulate an open application for the Racial Equity Work Group to all staff, so that any interested employees may indicate their desire to participate. The FY 2019-20 Work Group members will be selected by a steering committee comprised of current Work Group members who are serving as HSA’s representatives to the City GARE cohort, in consultation with the Agency’s DEI Office and executive management. In coordination with the DEI Office, this steering committee will also facilitate meetings of the Work Group and direct its implementation activities.

Recommendation	Convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to facilitate policy development and implementation
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion • HSA Racial Equity Work Group, Steering Committee

RECOMMENDATION D: ISSUE A RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY BEFORE THE AGENCY’S DEPARTMENT COMMISSIONS AND ADVISORY BOARDS

In publishing and circulating this report to all staff at the Agency, HSA is taking an important step to ensure that our work to advance racial equity remains transparent and inclusive as we shift from needs assessment and policy development activities to the task of implementation. This report represents an explicit commitment to the HSA workforce that the Agency regards issues of racial equity as central to HSA’s mission, and that we intend to take strategic action to eliminate racial inequity in San Francisco. Such a public statement of intent ensures a measure of accountability to the community HSA serves.

The Racial Equity Work Group recommends that HSA share this report with the Agency’s department commissions and citizen advisory boards, and issue a formal resolution to advance racial equity. This action will provide HSA’s executive management an opportunity to reaffirm to all staff that our racial equity efforts are not restricted to internal conversation at the Agency, but rather that we are prepared to make a public commitment to these goals. Moreover, to the extent that HSA identifies racial equity as a key component of its mission, it is important to communicate this newly articulated priority to the bodies that oversee the Agency’s activities to ensure their alignment with the City’s values and HSA’s

mission. By making a public resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency’s department commissions and advisory boards, HSA has the opportunity to stand up as a proactive leader on racial equity issues in San Francisco.

Recommendation	Issue a resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency’s department commissions and advisory boards
Key Implementation Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSA Executive Management

TRACKING PROGRESS & MEASURING OUTCOMES TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

Tracking the outcomes of HSA’s efforts to advance racial equity through the recommended actions outlined in this report is essential to ensure that our work has the intended impact. Performance measurement is particularly critical given the nature of this work. Problems of racial inequity are immense and may seem intractable to change. But with sustained and strategic effort to advance racially equitable policies and practices—starting with our internal goals for equity in hiring, promotion, and culture at the Agency—HSA can begin to close race-based gaps in the San Francisco community.

Ongoing performance measurement is necessary to support iterative planning and improvement, and to ensure accountability for continually working towards and achieving HSA’s racial equity goals. It helps us to develop programmatic baselines, set goals, and track our progress towards those goals as well as to evaluate the success of specific programmatic and policy changes intended to advance more racially equitable outcomes.

This section describes how HSA can leverage the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to help the Agency track its progress toward its internal racial equity goals; maintain a sustained sense of urgency to improve equity conditions in hiring, promotion, and organizational culture; and remain accountable for eliminating racial inequities more broadly in the short- and long-term. **RBA is a planning and assessment tool that helps organizations and communities develop solutions to complex social problems like racial inequity. It emphasizes the use of data to inform decision-making and policy development for collective impact.** As highlighted in the *Strategic Planning Process* section of this report, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group developed recommendations for advancing racial equity guided by this framework.

RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY (RBA) FRAMEWORK

Organizations begin with an iterative process of planning and assessment by identifying the population-level results for well-being they wish to achieve. Then, working backwards from their desired results, they use data and stakeholder input to identify gaps between current conditions and their goals, perform analysis to determine why those gaps exist, and develop promising solutions to close those gaps and achieve their desired results. As organizations implement these solutions, they conduct ongoing performance measurement, setting benchmarks that help track their progress toward these high-level goals and evaluate/assess the success of programmatic or policy changes.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

HSA’s strategic planning process for racial equity focused on the RBA model components which are most immediately actionable and within the Agency’s locus of control: chiefly, stakeholder-informed policy development focused on HSA’s internal operations related to hiring, promotion, and organizational culture. **Following from RBA, as HSA carries out the recommendations contained in this report, it is essential that implementation occurs in an iterative manner, bolstered by performance measurement for accountability.**

The table below summarizes, at a high level, the goals that have shaped the development of policy strategies and recommendations in each of the priority domains that serve as the pillars of this report and HSA’s efforts to advance racial equity. It also includes potential indicators that may be measured periodically (i.e., on a quarterly or annual basis) to track HSA’s progress in advancing racial equity in each domain, as a collective marker of the impact of our many implementation activities.

Advancing Racial Equity at HSA: Domains, Goals, and Potential Indicators for Success

Domain	Goal	Potential Indicators
Recruitment & Hiring	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all Agency departments and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial/ethnic composition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SF residents eligible for HSA services (individuals in poverty, older and disabled adults, children, etc.) ○ HSA clients, disaggregated by division/program ○ HSA staff, disaggregated by division/program
Leadership Development & Promotion	Employ diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of HSA clients, across all levels of the Agency leadership hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial/ethnic composition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HSA clients, disaggregated by division/program ○ HSA staff, disaggregated by division/program and management level
Organizational Culture	Cultivate a workplace environment in which HSA employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel respected, valued, and supported to carry out the Agency’s mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA All-Staff Survey components related to organizational culture, disaggregated by race (and program, where feasible). Increased percentage of staff who agree with the following statements (compared to baseline 2015 All-Staff survey): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In my program, the clients are treated fairly and with respect ○ My program manager seeks input before making decisions that affect my work ○ I have a high level of trust and confidence in executive management/my program manager/my supervisor ○ My supervisor is open to using new ideas from staff to improve program operations

Ongoing performance measurement helps us to ensure accountability for advancing racial equity at the action-specific level and adjust our approach as needed to better achieve our overarching goals in each priority domain. It helps us to determine if our actions are having the desired impact, confirm that we are optimizing our resources, and make the necessary adjustments to keep improving outcomes. Moreover, performance measurement supports transparency and public engagement with our work, provides essential opportunities for community participation in improvement planning, and maintains a shared sense of urgency and stability across multi-year programs and initiatives.

It will be essential for HSA to develop performance measures for every one of the recommendations contained in this report as they are implemented, ensuring that we institute measures that are meaningful, manageable, and cohesive across related initiatives (i.e., recommendations that fall within a shared priority domain). Effective performance measures answer the following three questions:

- How much did we do? (Quantity);
- How well did we do it? (Quality); and
- Is anyone better off? (Outcome/Impact)

In programmatic contexts, HSA has historically been effective in tracking units that measure quantity (e.g., client enrollment volume, average benefits awarded) and quality (e.g., service wait times, consumer satisfaction) in our delivery of direct services. This information is important to understand the scope of our work, but it is also essential that we measure performance based on outcomes to ensure our activities are having the desired impact (e.g., the percent of individuals receiving nutrition assistance who report a decrease in food insecurity).

The example provided in the table below illustrates possible performance measures that could be used to evaluate outcomes related to the recommendation that HSA staff attend introductory racial equity training (*Recommendation 2A* in the *Organizational Culture* section of the report).

Performance Measurement: A Framework for Developing Meaningful Measures

<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of staff who attend introductory racial equity training • # racial equity training activities hosted at or sponsored by HSA 	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <p><i>Universal Metrics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff satisfied with the racial equity training curriculum <p><i>Activity-Specific Metrics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff who have completed training
<p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #/% skills and knowledge → % of staff who learned what racial equity is • #/% attitude and opinion → % of staff who feel better equipped to participate in workplace discussions of racial equity • #/% behavior → % of staff who apply racial equity tools in their work • #/% circumstance → % of staff who promote to management positions in the City 	

Ultimately, as HSA begins to carry out the recommendations described in this report, it will be critical to for the key stakeholders responsible for implementation—and related data collection, analysis, and reporting for evaluation of implementation activities—to develop performance measures and target benchmarks tied to their actions to advance racial equity. Performance measurement development should be facilitated by the Agency’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in partnership with the Planning Unit and the programs responsible for implementation. Once these measures are agreed upon, the DEI Office should document the performance measures, target benchmarks, reporting deadlines, and staff responsible for reporting; the Office should also provide oversight and technical assistance to program as needed to support accurate and timely reporting.

CONCLUSION

HSA is uniquely poised to address issues of racial inequity and make a positive impact on the lives of San Franciscans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. As an organization whose mission is to promote the well-being and economic security of the City's diverse residents, HSA recognizes how considerations of racial equity are central to the success of our work. As a local government entity that touches the lives of over a quarter of the City's individuals, families, and communities, HSA has the opportunity to shape more racially equitable outcomes in San Francisco.

Advancing Racial Equity at the San Francisco Human Services Agency, and the staff-driven strategic planning process that supported its development, represent an important first step in the Agency's effort to advance and institutionalize racial equity. We have examined conditions at the Agency to understand what racial inequities exist in our workplace, how these inequities may bear on our clients' outcomes, and the role we play in shaping more equitable outcomes. We have engaged staff at every level of the Agency to weigh in throughout the process of research and policy development, leveraging the expertise of our partners in the GARE network and using data-driven approaches to inform our thinking. Ultimately, we have identified strategies and actionable recommendations for HSA to carry out over the next several years as we seek to close race-based outcome gaps in hiring, promotion, and workplace inclusion—and by extension, to eliminate racial inequities among low-income San Franciscans and the broader City community.

Implementing strategies and recommendations outlined in this report will undoubtedly be a challenging task. It is important to move forward with urgency and intentionality, understanding that the work of advancing racial equity will be a learning process that requires staff at all levels of the Agency and across all programs to share responsibility for achieving our intended impact. **Transforming HSA's culture to one where racial equity is deeply embedded in our work requires us to make a collective and enduring commitment to advance racial equity in all aspects of our professional practice, across all levels of the Agency.**

Considerations of racial equity must be deliberately woven into the fabric of policy-making, into partnerships with community organizations, into relationships with clients, and into engagement with other members of the workforce until asking these critical questions becomes second nature. We must be prepared to have difficult conversations with those who have been historically marginalized in society and at work. Our Agency must be prepared to make mistakes and be willing to learn from them without resentment and guilt.

Ultimately, we must cultivate an environment in which HSA's employees of all racial/ethnic backgrounds feel heard and valued at work. Collectively, in partnership with stakeholders throughout the City community, **we can begin to transform the conditions in which we live so that San Franciscans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds can achieve well-being and economic security.**

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