



Date: June 18, 2020
To: First 5 Alameda County Commission
From: Kristin Spanos, CEO, First 5 Alameda County
Subject: Resolution on Equity and Justice

ACTION REQUESTED

That the Commission review and approve the following resolution.

BACKGROUND

Repeated instances of racism and violence against African-Americans and other people of color are contributing to a climate of intense sadness, fear, and outrage throughout the nation and in our community. Longstanding inequities, exacerbated by the simultaneous health and economic crises created by COVID-19, imperil the health and well-being of families in our county.

The following proposed Resolution will be distributed in the First 5 Alameda County FYI newsletter, to our community partners, to other First 5's and to local elected officials.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the proposed resolution.

Submitted by:

First 5 Alameda County Senior Leadership Team:

Lyssa DeGolia, Loren Farrar, Lisa Forti, Christine Hom, Lanikque Howard, Rowena Kamo, Carla Keener, Michelle Rutherford, Kristin Spanos, Mojgan Vijeh

RESOLUTION ON EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

WHEREAS, First 5 Alameda County stands united with our African-American colleagues, partners, and the entire Black community against racism in all its forms, and

WHEREAS, recent incidents of violence and injustice, including state-sanctioned violence and the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others, along with the killing of Oscar Grant in Alameda County in 2009, have their roots in historic, structural racism that has created societal barriers to wealth and resources and psychological stress for African Americans and communities of color, with harmful consequences over many generations, and

WHEREAS, Alameda County is the fourth most diverse county in the United States, with over 60% of births to mothers of color, and

WHEREAS, the adverse impacts of racism begin prenatally, and are reflected in large disparities in rates of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and childhood asthma, and

WHEREAS, children from birth to age 5 undergo a formative period of rapid development and thus are particularly vulnerable to the experiences of bigotry, poverty, and violence, and

WHEREAS, racism contributes to the disproportionate experience and occurrence of toxic stress, which can develop when young children and their communities experience prolonged adversity such as family economic hardship, community disinvestment, and consistent lack of basic needs, with potentially lasting impacts on children's physical and emotional health, and

WHEREAS, a history of over 300 years of slavery and oppression, together with intentionally discriminatory practices such as redlining, mass incarceration, deficiencies and inequities in educational funding, and the displacement of families due to gentrification have prohibited access to resources and wealth accumulation among African-Americans and other communities of color, and

WHEREAS, results from First 5 Alameda County's 2019 countywide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment indicate inequities grounded in race and socioeconomics are a major factor in differences in kindergarten readiness, and

WHEREAS, the expanding public health and economic disturbances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic are disproportionately affecting communities of color in multiple ways including morbidity, mortality, and unemployment, and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland has declared a COVID-19 related health emergency for African-American residents, and

WHEREAS, child well-being is intimately tied to family and community health, well-being, and financial stability

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in this national moment of reckoning, First 5 Alameda County reinforces our mission, practices and policy priorities to address inequity and child poverty, in particular for African American children and families. By prioritizing equity and anti-racist work, with a focus on

African-American families, we can best ensure the well-being of all children in our county. We commit to supporting and safeguarding the life-long potential of children and families by evolving, strengthening and deepening our practices of:

1. Adopting “Reducing Inequity” as one of our four (4) Agency Organizing Principles, and implementing an equity approach—recognizing the existence of power and privilege, and addressing inequity--across the organization, including in operations, program and policy
2. Engaging in ongoing staff professional development and training on implicit bias and an anti-racist framework to inform agency practice regarding racial, economic and social justice
3. Diversifying the field through hiring, internships and fellowships; mentoring and providing leadership development opportunities for staff of color; and eliminating minimum education qualifications for staff positions in recognition of the value of past lived experience and expertise
4. Examining our external practices such as purchasing, contracting and community engagement to use our resources to mitigate the effects of historic, structural racism and barriers to wealth
5. Through Training@First5, offering trainings for providers and parents on topics responsive to community need such as education and criminal justice reform, immigration and public benefits, dealing with debt, and housing and economic rights
6. Through both the Fatherhood strategy and Alameda County Fathers Corps, offering opportunities for training and reflection for male service providers and fathers, especially those of color, and allies on topics related to social justice, racial equity, and personal safety
7. Providing guidance to providers and families on talking to young children about racism and social justice
8. Investing in and advocating for programs and policies that address the structural causes of inequity, ensuring basic needs are met with access to quality health, mental health, housing, food, transportation, jobs, child care and educational experiences, economically stable communities, and opportunities for social connections
9. Addressing community needs exacerbated by the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 by race and place through the distribution of supplies and funding from First 5 Alameda County’s Emergency Community Resilience Fund
10. Promoting parent leadership and civic engagement, and engaging community and parents in the selection of investments and in the design of programs and evaluation, with opportunities for culturally and ethnically focused settings and forums
11. Documenting disparities through data collection and evaluation, including our bi-annual county-wide Kindergarten Readiness Study, and using equity to guide our research questions and practices
12. Advocating for just systems and social policies through our policy agenda and membership in the First 5 State Association, advocacy at the local, state, and federal level, and as a partner and a resource to families and community organizations.