

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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

**Trent Rhorer**, Executive Director, Department of Human Services

**Shireen McSpadden**, Executive Director, Department of Aging and Adult Services

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

[Letter from the Executive Directors](#)

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## 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)
- **Kelly Bryant**, DAAS Integrated Intake Unit
- **Alexis Cobbins**, Families Rising<sup>1</sup>
- **Laura Dueñas**, Welfare to Work Services (SF GARE 2019 Cohort member)
- **Cassandra James**, San Francisco Benefits Net (SF GARE 2019 Cohort alternate member)
- **Ronda Johnson**, Family & Children’s Services (SF GARE 2019 Cohort member)
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- **Priscilla Prado**, San Francisco Benefits Net
- **Paulo Salta**, DAAS Office of Community Partnerships
- **Armando Zapote**, Office of Early Care & Education

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as Project 500

## 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. As a public agency, the San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) not only has the opportunity—but also a significant responsibility—to address these issues.**

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, so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. 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. HSA is one of over 15 City agencies, led by the San Francisco **Human Rights Commission (HRC)**, who have partnered with GARE to ensure San Francisco is a diverse, equitable, and inclusive city.

**Community representation and engagement is central to success of strategic planning for racial equity, and was an organizing principle for the development of this action plan.** 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, 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. Group members met on a monthly basis over the past year to develop the recommendations presented in this report. This planning process was informed by both quantitative and qualitative research, including: a literature review about promising approaches to achieving racial equity; staff focus groups and stakeholder interviews that reached over 70 staff members at all levels of the Agency, plus labor representatives; and a quantitative case study of hiring trends among applicants for HSA's Senior Eligibility Worker role (2905 job classification).

In collaboration with the Agency’s executive management, **the HSA Racial Equity Work Group focused these initial racial equity efforts on challenges and opportunities internal to the Agency’s culture and operations** as opposed to focusing on direct client services, driven by a shared belief that a diverse staff—supported by a strong culture of racial equity—will result in better client experiences and outcomes in the long-run. Equally important, the Work Group sought to help advance HSA’s ongoing efforts to create a welcoming workplace where all people can grow professionally and feel valued for their diverse contributions to the Agency’s mission. In particular, the 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.**

These three areas represent an important starting point for HSA to begin its meaningful and systematic engagement with questions of racial equity. 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. **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.**

### Introduction

## UNDERSTANDING RACIAL EQUITY

Issues of race, racial inequity, and racism are complex, and 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. **Establishing a shared understanding of key concepts and the racial equity framework is critical to facilitating these essential conversations.**

### FOUNDATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS<sup>2</sup>

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. Biases 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, **implicit bias has been shown to be persistent and widespread.**
- **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.
  - **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.
  - **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.

**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. 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 racially equitable conditions, race does not predict someone’s socioeconomic outcomes** (such as employment, education, health, wealth, etc.).

### WORKING AT THE INSTITUTIONAL AND IMPLICIT LEVEL TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity work at the institutional and implicit level of HSA’s policy and programmatic decision-making is essential to bring about enduring structural and cultural transformation to our Agency—and further, **to create profound impacts not only on an individual client or employee basis, but also on the quality of life in the San Francisco community more broadly.** Within this framework, 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). 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 counteract the discriminatory effects of individually-held implicit biases. Ultimately, this approach develops solutions that operate at the level of HSA’s policy and practice to close race-based gaps in client and staff outcomes and improve conditions for all.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see full report for source citations and deeper discussion of concepts.

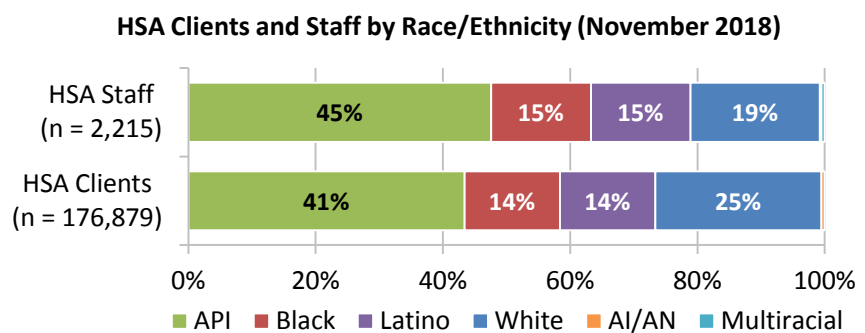


## PRIORITY DOMAIN 1: RECRUITMENT & HIRING

A focus on hiring and recruitment practices at HSA is essential to our efforts to advance racial equity, encompassing the ways in which we engage prospective job seekers and conduct the hiring process from the point of application through the stages of examination, interview, selection, and hire. HSA’s employees are foundational to the Agency’s ability to effectively carry out its mission to promote our clients’ well-being and economic security. HSA’s policies and practices must be designed thoughtfully to avoid reproducing racial inequities that appear in the local labor market and to hire the best candidates to carry out the Agency’s mission, **ensuring that HSA employs diverse staff who reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients, across all programs, positions, and levels of the Agency.**

### CURRENT CONDITIONS AT HSA

HSA’s workforce as a whole is racially and ethnically diverse. Moreover, our employees’ backgrounds generally reflect the race/ethnicity of the clients we serve, as illustrated by the chart to the right. While these trends may vary considerably by division and program,<sup>3</sup> an Agency-wide perspective offers an important starting point for understanding conditions with respect to racial equity in staffing, especially in light of high-level City trends that may affect our ability to continue recruiting and hiring representative staff.



*\*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 CalWIN database.*

### WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE CONDITIONS?

Current economic trends in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area region threaten HSA’s ongoing ability to retain a diverse workforce. The rise of gentrification and economic inequality have contributed to the particularly dramatic displacement of the City’s African American population, which has dwindled to about 5% of the population today from a peak of approximately 13% in the decades following World War II. As a public sector employer, 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 to maintain and grow its diverse staff—ensuring racially equitable access to employment at the Agency, even as changing conditions in the San Francisco Bay Area may make that work more challenging over time.

### WHAT CHALLENGES MUST WE ADDRESS?<sup>4</sup>

While the racial/ethnic composition of HSA’s workforce is diverse and generally consistent with the demographic makeup of our clients, the Agency still faces challenges in racially equitable recruitment

<sup>3</sup> See Recommendation 3B in the section on Organizational Culture.

<sup>4</sup> Please see full report for more detailed focus group and research literature findings



and hiring. Staff focus group research and scholastic literature note the bureaucratic nature of processes that govern City hiring, emphasizing the ways in which these processes may produce disproportionate burdens on job seekers of color relative to their white peers and obscure the role of implicit racial bias in decision-making. In particular, our research identifies the following challenges that we must address to advance racial equity at HSA: **the lack of a recruitment pipeline for job seekers of color, a lack of clarity and accessibility in the hiring process, and a lack of transparency and fairness in the hiring process.**

**HOW IS THE AGENCY WORKING TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?**

Over the past five years, HSA HR, in partnership with the City’s Department of Human Resources (DHR), 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. These initiatives include strategies to make outcomes among job seekers—internal and external—more equitable along a number of dimensions, including race. **Two notable ongoing initiatives include the establishment of a specialized unit in HSA HR to support the selection process, and presentations on navigating the City’s recently adopted De-Identification process.**

In light of the current conditions and challenges in recruitment and hiring, HSA should continue its existing efforts and take additional action. The HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three main strategies to advance racial equity in this domain. These strategies, and the recommendations that support them, are described below.

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
<b>1. Perform active recruitment in underrepresented communities of color</b>	A. Cultivate recruiting relationships with educational institutions and professional associations primarily serving people of color <i>HSA Program Managers &amp; staff involved in hiring, HSA HR Exams</i>
	B. Advertise job opportunities on select community job boards, with community-based partner agencies, and in newsletters primarily serving job seekers of color <i>HSA Program Managers &amp; staff involved in hiring, HSA HR Exams</i>
<b>2. Enhance clarity and accessibility in the hiring process</b>	A. Improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of job announcements <i>HSA HR Exams Unit, SF Department of HR (DHR)</i>
	B. Adopt tools for job-seekers to track the progress of their application <i>HSA HR Leadership, DHR</i>
<b>3. Use data to inform hiring policy and practice</b>	A. Conduct a gap analysis of the hiring process <i>HSA HR Exams &amp; Operations Units, HSA Innovation Office, SF Office of the Controller (CON)</i>
	B. Perform longitudinal analyses of hiring outcomes by race/ethnicity <i>HSA HR Exams &amp; Operations Units, HSA Planning Unit, DHR, CON</i>
	C. Continue participation in the Citywide HR Data Quality Work Group <i>HSA HR Operations Unit, HSA Planning Unit</i>

## PRIORITY DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE

**Leadership development and promotion is another priority domain in which HSA can and should take strategic action to advance racial equity.** 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, 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 take steps to ensure that staff reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of clients at every level of the Agency’s management hierarchy.**

### CURRENT CONDITIONS AT HSA

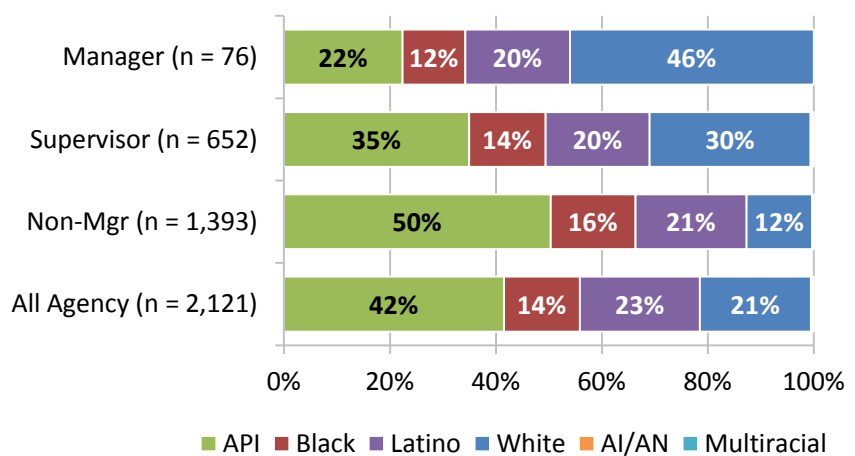
While the HSA workforce as a whole generally reflects the racial and ethnic backgrounds of our clients, our leadership does not. **White employees are overrepresented among the leadership ranks at HSA, with the most pronounced disparities at the highest levels of management.**<sup>5</sup>

White staff members 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, Asian/Pacific Islander workers are nearly 2 times less likely to serve as a

manager. Latino employees, by contrast consistently make up about 20% and African American staff about 15% of the employee population, regardless of management level.

**HSA Staff Race/Ethnicity by Management Level\***

(n = 2,121)



*\*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). 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.** Research has shown that minority racial/ethnic representation in public sector management improves the ability of public agencies both to address minority client and frontline employee needs. Notably, **supervisors of color are likelier than their white peers to advocate for, recognize, and mentor line staff of color.**

<sup>5</sup> 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).

These research findings are paralleled by the results of **the 2015 HSA All-Staff Survey, which revealed racial disparities in staff feelings of inclusion and respect, and a general distrust among line staff of the Agency’s management, particularly senior management.** These findings may be unsurprising for an agency of HSA’s size and hierarchical structure, where frontline workers don’t often have the opportunity to build trusting relationships with management. However, given the racial disparities in the composition of HSA’s leadership, it is worth considering the ways in which race may play a role in shaping staff experiences of communication, decision-making, inclusion, and trust across the hierarchy.

**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, echoed by research literature on these topics. Staff across the management hierarchy 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. Challenges identified through focus group discussions include **a lack of a supportive culture and infrastructure for workers of color to advance professionally, and a lack of resources to guide long-term career planning, professional growth and promotion at the Agency.**

**HOW IS THE AGENCY WORKING TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?**

Within HSA HR, the Learning and Organizational Development (L&OD) unit is responsible for providing quality learning and professional development opportunities for staff and using data-informed approaches to improve staff productivity, personal success, and growth throughout the employment lifecycle. L&OD is currently carrying out two notable initiatives to make outcomes among new and existing staff more equitable along various dimensions, including race. **One is the development of a workforce analytics team, responsible for an Agency competency modeling initiative** to support professional growth and **workforce interviews** to gather insight about areas for growth and improvement at HSA. The other is the expanded training course curriculum, which includes a course on emotional intelligence, a cultural competency series on topics such as racial/ethnic, LGBTQ, and generational diversity, and training for new supervisors to standardize supervision practices across units, programs, and divisions at the Agency.

In light of the current conditions and challenges in leadership development and promotion, the HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified two additional strategies to advance racial equity in this domain. These strategies, and the recommendations that support them, are described below.

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
<b>1. Encourage learning at every level of the HSA workforce</b>	A. Promote existing opportunities for skills development <i>HSA HR Learning &amp; Organizational Development Unit (L&amp;OD), HSA Program Managers</i>
	B. Adopt a Learning Management System to track training and professional education by race/ethnicity <i>HSA HR L&amp;OD, DHR</i>
	C. Create a mentoring program <i>HSA HR L&amp;OD, HSA Directors, Managers &amp; Supervisors, HSA Planning Unit, HSA Racial Equity Work Group</i>

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
<b>2. Facilitate career development aligned to professional growth</b>	A. Create a career planning guide highlighting advancement opportunities <i>HSA HR Exams and L&amp;OD Units</i>
	A. Use competency models & success roadmaps Agency-wide <i>HSA Directors, Managers &amp; Supervisors, HSA HR L&amp;OD</i>
	B. Conduct annual performance reviews in a consistent and timely manner <i>HSA Directors, Managers &amp; Supervisors, HSA HR L&amp;OD</i>

## PRIORITY DOMAIN 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture refers not only to why we do our work, but also how we do our work and how we feel doing it. **Integral to HSA’s effectiveness and the health of the workplace environment, organizational culture is the third domain in which HSA should take action to advance racial equity.**

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

Since 2018, at the initiative of HSA’s executive management, HSA has partnered with GARE, convened a diverse staff Racial Equity Work Group to conduct a robust strategic planning process, and produced this report. Over the past few years, in response to the All Staff Survey, HSA has also created a Communications Office to help improve communication at all levels of the agency and boost employee engagement. **Collectively, these actions represent a major step toward institutionalizing and advancing racial equity at the Agency.** Also relevant is the noteworthy work HSA HR has done using data-informed approaches to improve efficiency and guide employment decisions. **Most notable is HR’s ongoing effort to establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion responsible for managing the Agency’s racial equity work and ensuring accountability for outcomes.**

### WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS SHOULD HSA TAKE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY?

The HSA Racial Equity Work Group has identified three main strategies, supported by recommendations, to advance racial equity in the area of organizational culture. They are described below.

Domain 3: Organizational Culture	
<b>Goal</b>	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
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
<b>1. Demonstrate leadership commitment to promoting a culture of racial equity</b>	A. Adopt racial equity as a core value of HSA’s mission and vision <i>HSA Executive Management</i>
	B. Provide HSA leadership with introductory and ongoing racial equity training <i>HSA Directors, Managers, &amp; Supervisors, HR L&amp;OD</i>
	C. Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion <i>HSA Exec Management, HSA HR Dir, Office of the Mayor, Office of Public Policy &amp; Finance Review</i>
	D. Use the GARE Racial Equity Tool to support review of HSA policies <i>HSA DEI Office, HSA Directors &amp; Senior Managers, HSA Program Managers and Analysts, HSA Planning Unit</i>
<b>2. Foster staff capacity to operationalize racial equity in professional practice</b>	A. Provide HSA staff with introductory and ongoing racial equity training <i>HSA DEI Office, HSA HR L&amp;OD, HSA Racial Equity Work Group, HSA staff</i>
	B. Develop an internal communications strategy to normalize racial equity frameworks <i>HSA DEI Office, HSA Communications, HSA Innovation Office</i>
	C. Design a racial equity brown bag series and curriculum <i>HSA DEI Office, HSA Racial Equity Work Group</i>

Domain 3: Organizational Culture	
<b>Goal</b>	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
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
<b>3. Sustain an explicit and ongoing commitment to advancing racial equity</b>	A. Incorporate racial equity into existing high-level policy development and strategic planning processes at HSA <i>HSA Executive Management, HSA DEI Office, HSA Planning Unit</i>
	B. Conduct staffing analysis at the division and program level <i>HSA Planning, HSA Program Analysts, CON</i>
	C. Convene a standing Racial Equity Work Group to facilitate policy development and implementation <i>HSA DEI Office, HSA Racial Equity Work Group Steering Committee</i>
	D. Issue a resolution to advance racial equity before the Agency's department commissions and advisory boards <i>HSA Executive Management</i>

## 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. **The HSA Racial Equity Action Plan, 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.** 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.

**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. 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.

Leveraging the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework will support HSA to track progress and remain accountable in this work. **RBA is a planning and assessment tool that helps organizations and communities develop solutions to complex social problems like racial inequity, emphasizing the use of data to inform decision-making and policy development for collective impact.** Indicators must be regularly measured to track our progress in advancing racial equity in each domain, as a collective marker of the impact of our many implementation activities and also to allow us to evaluate impact of each recommendation to ensure we are optimizing resources and strategies are having the intended effect.

**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.**

### Conclusion