

EQUITY THE LENS

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



EQUITY IN ACTION

Probation, Parks, and Public Health lead this issue's "Big Wins"

YOUR VOICE IS HEARD

The 2023 Equity Questionnaire results are in

A portrait of Greg Rodriguez, a middle-aged man with short hair, wearing a grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a blue and white striped tie. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background behind him is a dark blue gradient with some faint architectural elements.

Gregaricus GREG

Housing and Workforce Solutions' Greg Rodriguez discusses discrimination, perseverance, and his heart for housing



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EAO OFFICER MESSAGE

Hello Riverside County Team!

My name is Barry E. Knight, RivCo's Equity, Access, and Opportunity (formerly diversity, equity, and inclusion) Officer. Welcome to The Equity Lens! This is our first-ever quarterly publication to provide updates on the equity work we are accomplishing here in the County. The work we are doing is not done in a silo. Nearly 7,000 of you voiced your thoughts in our questionnaire last year – thoughts that are now shaping our direction. In future newsletters, we'll dig deeper into the insights gained from this survey and provide updates on key equity initiatives across County departments.

In the Strategic Insights section, we define the words equity, access, and opportunity (EAO). These are not divisive terms, but rather how we collectively improve outcomes for all individuals and communities, especially those among us who are most vulnerable.

In The Equity Lens, you'll discover insights on promising practices and the innovative work initiated by county departments. For example, we now have 18 county departments, each with its own EAO committee, actively working to eliminate disparities. For your convenience, we've embedded links to easily navigate through content relevant to you and your department. Ultimately, our focus remains on refining the efficiency and impact of our services, thereby driving better outcomes for the communities we serve.

I look forward to sharing more in our Summer Edition of The Equity Lens.



BARRY E. KNIGHT
EAO OFFICER



BIG WINS



PROBATION

Probation – For Riverside County Probation, a critical component of our EAO commitment is the robust training curriculum developed for staff aimed at enhancing cultural competence, providing equitable services to all and cultivating an inclusive workplace culture. Since 2022, all sworn staff are required to complete a minimum of four hours of DEI training annually. This requirement prompted the development of a five-year training plan which covers three separate phases: awareness, practice and sustainability. The goal is to equip staff members

with the necessary tools to apply these principles not only in their professional roles but also in their everyday lives.

Anonymous pre- and post-surveys track baseline takeaways from each team. As we see incredible open-ended feedback from class participants, staff members are identifying ways to apply what they have learned to our work with the clients we serve.

PARKS

In 2022, RivCo Parks developed the Outdoor Equity Initiative which focuses on removing economic barriers to regional parks, nature centers, historic sites, and open spaces. This innovative program has become a beacon of inclusivity, working to dismantle financial hurdles that have historically prevented many families from enjoying the numerous benefits of parks.

The introduction of library passes has emerged as a groundbreaking strategy to promote and facilitate increased park engagement among Riverside County residents.

Recognizing the pivotal role of economic barriers in restricting access to outdoor spaces, the initiative strategically influences local libraries to distribute passes that afford youth the opportunity to explore and connect with nature. Through the distribution of library passes, the initiative successfully breaks down financial barriers, ensuring that every child has the chance to enjoy the physical, mental, and social benefits derived from interacting with Riverside County's outdoor spaces.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Riverside University Health System – Public Health (RUHS-PH) has relaunched the Health Equity and Justice Committee. This committee comprises representatives from every branch in the department, bringing unique lived experiences, insights, and expertise. The committee serves as an advisory team for RUHS – PH programs to embed an equity and justice lens throughout all department efforts.

infrastructure, workforce and culture, power-sharing and power-building, equitable data practices, and equity and justice. It will serve as a roadmap to guide RUHS-PH efforts to address historic and systemic racism, increase equity, decrease disparities, and close the gap on injustices. To learn more about this work in Public Health check out their [newsletter](#).

The current focus of the committee is to implement the Health Equity Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is guided by five priority areas: internal capacity and

LEARN WITH US

[Watch this video](#) and take a look at the conversation starter questions.



When we listen with an open mind, we learn more about what our colleagues, friends, neighbors, and family go through. These are real stories, real voices and real experiences of County of Riverside employees. They have shared their personal stories so that others can better understand the impact of discrimination, the power of resilience, and how we can all participate in building a work environment where everyone can grow and thrive to better serve our residents.





STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

To explore the essence of EAO, consider the analogy of elevators and escalators. Just as these machines facilitate effortless movement between floors, EAO initiatives aim to bridge gaps and facilitate smooth journeys for all individuals and communities. While we know these machines enhance accessibility for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility, their benefits extend to everyone. This inclusive approach impacts one group without diminishing anyone else's experience. This is why it is important to note that equity and access elevates everyone.

In RivCo, we view EAO through a lens of equity, recognizing its universal benefits. As we work to enhance services and outcomes for all constituents, let us begin by considering two fundamental questions:

1. What ultimate outcomes do we envision for the individuals and communities we serve?
2. What insights does data offer regarding the challenges that hinder certain individuals or communities from progressing toward these outcomes?

By addressing these two questions, we initiate a dialogue that digs deeper into the complex challenges and barriers confronting various demographics. As we gain more clarity, we, as a County, can proactively begin the process to mitigate challenges and create better opportunities for success (i.e., build elevators and escalators). Let's prioritize the removal of barriers and work to ensure equitable access and inclusive opportunities for all those we serve.

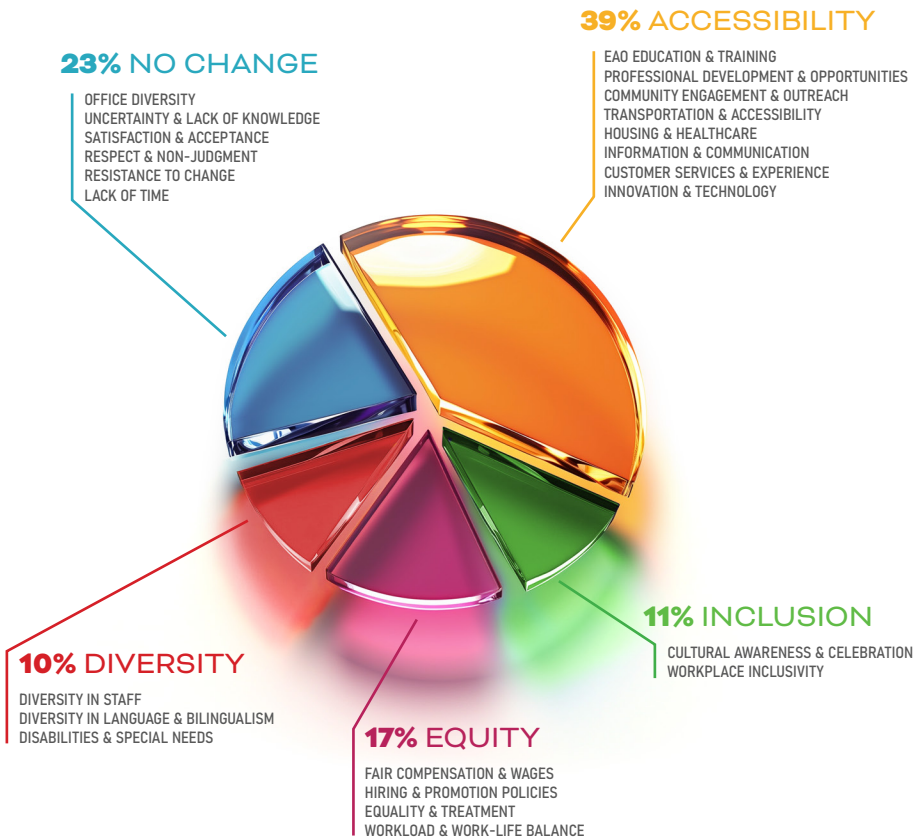
To read the definitions of Equity, Access, and Opportunity (EAO), please [click here](#).

THE EQUITY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Here is an update on the analysis of our equity questionnaire completed February 2023. After receiving an overwhelming response of almost 7,000 completed open-text questionnaires. We are pleased to inform you that we have diligently analyzed each and every response. While it took longer than anticipated, we firmly believed that every voice deserved to be heard, and we are grateful for the time individuals took to share their perspectives.

The insights gleaned from these responses are invaluable and will significantly shape our EAO initiatives for the County of Riverside. Your input has been instrumental in guiding our efforts towards creating a more equitable and accessible environment for all.

Below is a visual breakdown of the 6,949 questionnaire responses, highlighting the main themes identified as most important pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

SurveyMonkey was used to collect the data. The survey was deployed to about 20,000 employees, 6,949 (30.51%) completed it. Responses were collected through six open-ended questions, and key themes were identified to better understand the participants' perceptions. About (18%) answered at least one open-ended question.

DIVERSITY: Participants recognize the value of diversity in the workplace, and they encourage the hiring of individuals from various racial backgrounds to improve representation.

EQUITY: Fair treatment and equitable opportunities for all employees were key concerns, with recommendations for addressing issues of bias promotions, and payment compensations.

INCLUSIVITY: Several respondents emphasized the need for inclusivity and representation, ensuring that all voices, including cultural and background differences and

underserved populations, are heard, and valued. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating and acknowledging different cultures and traditions and creating an inclusive environment for all.

ACCESSIBILITY: Many participants suggested the importance of training programs to enhance cultural competence, diversity, and equity awareness among staff. Several responses also highlighted the need for community engagement and outreach to connect with underserved populations. Moreover, respondents emphasized the importance of improving customer service and communication within the organization, providing easy access interpretation and translation services, and spreading awareness of EAO initiatives.

NO CHANGE: Some participants express contentment and support for current efforts, others reveal uncertainty, and a need for more information and education regarding the subject.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2024

DATE

Monday, April 29
Monday, May 13
Friday, May 31

EVENT

Listos Training
Health Equity: Improving Data Quality
EDD America Job Center (AJCC) Mini Job Fair

ADDRESS

850 Country Club Dr., Banning
Online ([Register](#))
1325 Spruce Street, Riverside

TIME

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.





EQUITY THE LENS

