



## Year-1 Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan for the County of Yolo

### Introduction and Background


Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a multifaceted framework and organizational commitment aimed at fostering a workplace or community culture that values and leverages the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of individuals. It involves intentional efforts to create equitable opportunities, remove systemic barriers, and ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of differences in race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, age, or other dimensions of diversity. DEI seeks to cultivate an inclusive environment where every individual feels a sense of belonging, can contribute their best, and where disparities in access and outcomes are actively addressed and rectified.

In today's rapidly evolving world, the imperative of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has never been more pressing. The call for DEI is not just a moral obligation but a strategic necessity. Organizations that embrace DEI recognize that our society is becoming more diverse, both in terms of demographics and perspectives. This transformation demands our attention, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it directly impacts our overall culture and the services we deliver to our clients and community.

DEI is not merely a checkbox or a compliance measure; it's a catalyst for innovation, growth, and resilience. When we foster an inclusive culture where every voice is heard and every perspective valued, we tap into the full spectrum of human creativity. Diverse teams are more adept at problem-solving, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions for the challenges we face.

Moreover, our clients and communities are diverse and multifaceted. To serve them effectively, we must reflect that diversity in our workforce and in the way we design and deliver our services. DEI allows us to build trust, break down barriers, and bridge gaps. It enables us to provide services that are not only equitable but genuinely responsive to the unique needs and aspirations of all individuals.

We cannot afford to delay action on DEI. The urgency is not just about staying relevant; it's about ensuring our organizations remain engines of positive change in an increasingly complex world. By championing DEI, we are committing to a brighter, more inclusive future for our teams, our clients, and our communities. The time to act is now, for the sake of our collective well-being and the legacy we leave for generations to come.



I. Executive Summary: The Yolo County's Proposed 1-Year DEI Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the government and the community. This plan is a response to the growing need for equitable representation and meaningful engagement. By establishing a robust framework and strategically phased actions, Yolo County aims to create an inclusive environment that values every individual's unique perspectives and contributions.

II. Rationale for the Plan: As the fabric of our society becomes increasingly diverse, it is imperative for government entities to reflect the communities they serve and uphold principles of fairness and inclusivity. The 1-Year DEI Plan is driven by the recognition that a diverse workforce and inclusive policies enhance creativity, innovation, and decision-making, ultimately leading to better outcomes for Yolo County residents.

### **Phase 1**

#### I. Key Objectives

- Appoint a Yolo County DEI Manager to spearhead DEI initiatives.
- Initiate the process of creating a representative DEI Team.
- Lay the groundwork for successful implementation of the plan.

#### II. Steps and Actions

1. Hire Yolo County DEI Manager: The County will initiate a rigorous hiring process to select an experienced and dedicated DEI Manager. This individual will lead the DEI efforts and drive organizational change.
2. Listen & Learn, including the Analysis of DEI Reports: A comprehensive review of existing DEI reports and data will be conducted. The insights gained will inform the development of targeted strategies.
3. Create DEI Team: In collaboration with HR Collaborative efforts between the DEI Manager and HR will result in a diverse and inclusive DEI Team, representing various departments and backgrounds.
4. DEI Team Recruitment and Development: DEI Team will be formed, comprising 12-20 participants. This working team will implement Year 1 Plan and creation of future Years.
5. DEI Advisory Groups: A quarterly DEI Advisory Group will be established to provide guidance and feedback on the plan's progress.
6. Strengths Workshops: Regular and ongoing Strengths Workshops will be conducted by multiple facilitators to empower employees to leverage their strengths for DEI efforts.



## Phase 2

### I. Key Objectives

- Integrate DEI principles into core HR processes and departmental practices.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration both internally and externally.

### II. Steps and Actions

1. Focus on HR Orientation Curriculum Training: DEI content will be seamlessly integrated into HR orientation, ensuring all new employees are well-versed in DEI principles.
2. DEI Team Analysis and KPI Creation: The DEI Team will analyze data to create key performance indicators, enabling data informed decision-making.
3. DEI Advisory Meeting: Regular advisory board meetings will ensure ongoing input, and employee surveys will provide valuable insights.
4. Affinity Groups will be established, fostering employee engagement and a sense of belonging. Affinity Groups will continue throughout the Year.
5. Department Meetings and Continuous Communication: DEI updates, trainings, and resources will be shared in department meetings, promoting awareness and collaboration.
6. Collaboration with Other Government Entities: Engaging with other government entities will facilitate knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices.
7. Internal Communication Strategies: The Public Information Officer and HR will collaborate to enhance internal communication on DEI initiatives.

## Phase 3

### I. Key Objectives

- Deepen community engagement through DEI-focused events.
- Ensure the sustainability of DEI efforts and ongoing improvement.

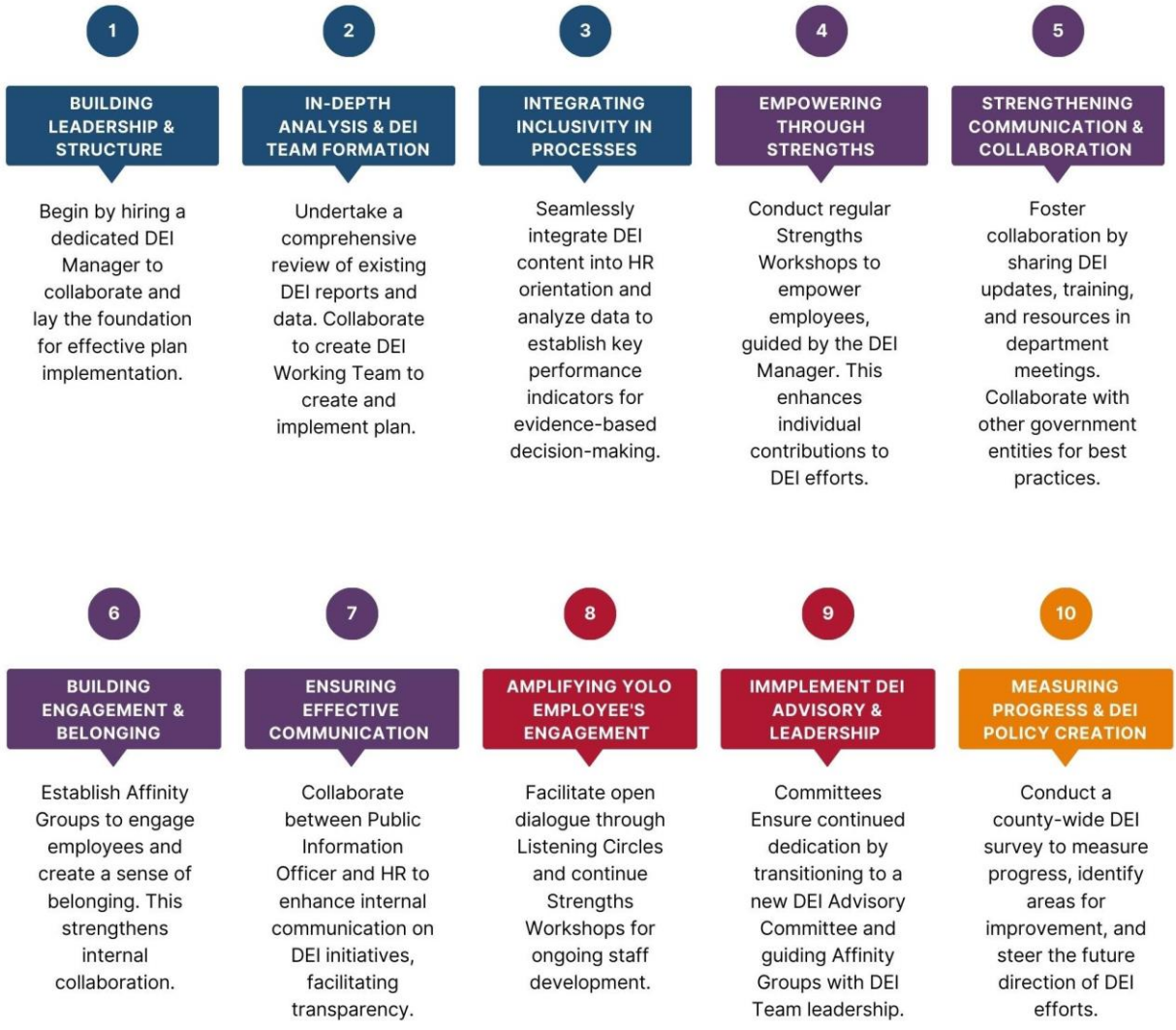
### II. Steps and Actions

1. Listening Circles for Line Staff: Listening circles will create a platform for open dialogue and feedback, ensuring all voices are heard.
2. Regular Strengths Workshops: Continuation of regular Strengths Workshops will provide ongoing support for staff development.
3. DEI Yolo Staff Events: A DEI-focused internal events will be organized to engage staff in DEI conversations and celebrations.
4. DEI Advisory Meetings Continuously: Advisory groups are inclusive and welcoming to all staff and will take place 3-4 times per year.
5. Affinity Groups with DEI Team Leadership: Affinity Groups will be launched with DEI Team leadership, fostering a sense of ownership and support.

6. Create DEI Policies: The DEI team will develop a comprehensive DEI Policy to present to leadership. Policy will be created in collaboration with Advisory and Leadership Committees.
7. County-Wide DEI Survey: A bi-annual county-wide DEI survey will be conducted to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.

Conclusion: Yolo County's 1-Year DEI Plan is a holistic approach to creating an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes equity. Through strategic actions, ongoing communication, and community engagement, Yolo County aims to enhance its organizational culture and community relationships. By focusing on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the County is committed to a more equitable future for all its residents.







## Phase 1: Create DEI Team and Lay Foundation

### I. Key Objectives

#### 1. Appoint a Yolo County DEI Manager to spearhead DEI initiatives.

- Appoint an experienced and dedicated DEI Manager who will serve as the driving force behind Yolo County's DEI efforts, guiding the implementation of the plan and facilitating organizational change. This role is crucial to ensure that DEI is embedded in the core values of the county and that it drives a culture of inclusivity and equity.

#### 2. Initiate the process of creating a representative DEI Team.

- Begin the formation of a diverse and inclusive DEI Team that will collaborate to implement the 1-Year DEI Plan and lay the groundwork for future years. The DEI Team will be a cross-functional group, representing various departments, backgrounds, and perspectives, ensuring that the initiatives are well-rounded and reflect the diversity of the community.

#### 3. Lay the groundwork for the successful implementation of the plan.

- Establish the necessary infrastructure, processes, and communication channels to support the successful execution of the 1-Year DEI Plan. This includes creating feedback mechanisms, tracking progress, and ensuring that the initiatives are aligned with the county's overall strategic goals.

### II. Steps and Actions

#### 1. Hire Yolo County DEI Manager:


- Initiate a comprehensive hiring process to identify a qualified and dedicated DEI Manager. The selection of this manager will be critical in ensuring the success of DEI initiatives in the county. This process will involve defining the role's responsibilities, qualifications, and desired attributes, advertising the position widely, conducting interviews, and selecting the most suitable candidate.

#### 2. Listen & Learn, including the Analysis of DEI Reports:

- Conduct a thorough review of existing DEI reports, data, and initiatives within Yolo County. This step is essential to understand the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the organization. By identifying strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities related to DEI, the county can develop informed strategies.

#### 3. Create DEI Team:

- Collaborate with HR to establish a DEI Team with representation from various departments and backgrounds. Defining the criteria for team membership to ensure diversity and expertise



is essential in forming a team capable of driving impactful change. Additionally, orientation sessions for team members will ensure a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

#### 4. DEI Team Recruitment and Development:

- Finalize the composition of the DEI Team, ensuring a balanced representation of skills, perspectives, and experiences. Building team cohesion and collaboration through team-building activities and regular meetings will be crucial to their effectiveness. Providing them with the necessary tools and resources will equip them to execute the 1-Year DEI Plan successfully.

#### 5. DEI Advisory Groups:

- Establish a quarterly DEI Advisory Group comprised of internal and external stakeholders. These groups should include representatives from different demographics, roles, and community sectors to ensure diverse perspectives. Effective communication of the roles and expectations of advisory group members and scheduling regular meetings to review progress, provide feedback, and offer insights are pivotal to the success of this initiative.

#### 6. Strengths Workshops:

- Organize regular Gallup Strengths Workshops facilitated by multiple trainers. These workshops should be interactive and tailored to employees' individual strengths, encouraging them to apply their strengths to support DEI efforts. Continuous assessment of the impact of these workshops on employee engagement and collaboration is important to refine the approach.

Through the successful completion of Phase 1, Yolo County will establish a robust foundation for its DEI initiatives. The appointed DEI Manager and the diverse DEI Team will collaborate to gather insights, set clear objectives, and prepare for the implementation of the 1-Year DEI Plan. The establishment of advisory groups and the integration of strengths workshops will further empower employees to contribute effectively to the organization's journey towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.


### **Phase 2: Embedding DEI Principles and Enhancing Communication**

#### I. Key Objectives

##### 1. Integrate DEI principles into core HR processes and departmental practices.

- Seamlessly infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations into the County's fundamental operations and practices. By incorporating DEI principles into HR processes, such as recruitment, training, and performance evaluations, and departmental practices, the County ensures that these principles become ingrained in the way the organization operates.

##### 2. Strengthen communication and collaboration both internally and externally.



- Enhance dialogue, information sharing, and collaboration within Yolo County's internal teams and with external stakeholders. Effective communication and collaboration are essential to ensure that DEI initiatives are well-understood, supported, and that they resonate both internally and externally.

## II. Steps and Actions

### 1. Focus on HR Orientation Curriculum Training:

- Collaborate with the HR department to integrate DEI content into the orientation curriculum for new employees. This step ensures that all new hires are introduced to DEI principles from the very beginning of their journey with the county. Developing engaging materials that educate new hires about DEI principles, policies, and expectations is crucial to build a foundation of understanding.

### 2. DEI Team Analysis and KPI Creation:

- Leverage the expertise of the DEI Team to analyze the data collected during Phase 1. Data analysis is essential for making informed decisions about the direction of DEI initiatives. Identifying relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) that will measure the impact of DEI initiatives is important. These KPIs will help in monitoring progress and assessing the effectiveness of the plan.

### 3. DEI Advisory Meeting:


- Schedule regular advisory board meetings to ensure ongoing input and feedback. Collaboration with advisory group members to review the implementation of the 1-Year DEI Plan and suggest improvements is vital. These meetings serve as a platform to discuss challenges, opportunities, and emerging trends and ensure that the plan remains dynamic and adaptive.

### 4. Affinity Groups:

- Establish and nurture affinity groups that cater to the diverse backgrounds and interests of employees. These groups provide employees with a sense of belonging and support. Providing them with resources and support to facilitate their activities and initiatives fosters a sense of community within the county.

### 5. Department Meetings and Continuous Communication:

- Incorporate DEI updates, trainings, and resources into department meetings. These updates help keep DEI on the forefront of employees' minds, ensuring that they are continuously informed about the progress of DEI initiatives. Facilitating open discussions where employees can share their experiences and provide feedback encourages active engagement.



## 6. Collaboration with Other Government Entities:

- Engage with other government entities through workshops, conferences, and collaborative projects. Sharing Yolo County's DEI strategies, learning from others' experiences, and identifying best practices are essential to foster collective efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. Building partnerships with other organizations amplifies the impact of DEI initiatives.

## 7. Internal Communication Strategies:

- Collaborate between the Public Information Officer and HR to enhance internal communication. Developing communication plans that keep employees informed about DEI initiatives, events, and achievements is critical. Utilizing various communication channels ensures that information reaches all employees effectively.

Phase 2 is pivotal for embedding DEI principles throughout Yolo County's operations and enhancing communication both within the organization and with external stakeholders. By integrating DEI content into HR orientation, analyzing data for KPI creation, fostering affinity groups, and facilitating collaboration with other government entities, the County is creating a culture of inclusivity and innovation. Regular advisory meetings and continuous communication will further ensure that the DEI efforts are well-informed, collaborative, and aligned with the community.

## **Phase 3: Deepening Engagement and Ensuring Sustainability**

### I. Key Objectives

#### 1. Deepen community engagement through DEI-focused events.

- Foster a stronger connection between Yolo County and the community through events that center on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The aim is to create a bridge between the county and its residents, making the community an active participant in the DEI journey.

#### 2. Ensure the sustainability of DEI efforts and ongoing improvement.

- Establish mechanisms for continuous assessment, improvement, and the long-term integration of DEI principles. Sustainability is key to ensuring that DEI becomes an enduring part of Yolo County's culture and that progress is constantly monitored and enhanced.

### II. Steps and Actions

#### 1. Listening Circles for Line Staff:

- Organize listening circles where line staff can share their perspectives, experiences, and feedback in a safe and open environment. The voices of frontline staff are essential in shaping DEI initiatives, and these circles create a platform for their voices to be heard. Insights from these circles will inform future strategies and ensure that the plan remains relevant.



## 2. Regular Strengths Workshops:

- Continue to deliver regular Gallup Strengths Workshops to provide ongoing support for staff development. These workshops, held consistently, not only reinforce the importance of individual strengths but also promote a culture of continuous learning and self-improvement. Employees are encouraged to apply their strengths to contribute to the success of DEI efforts.

## 3. DEI Yolo Staff Events:

- Organize internal events that focus on DEI conversations and celebrations, providing staff with opportunities to engage and learn. These events can include workshops, seminars, and presentations that facilitate open dialogues, increase awareness, and foster a sense of community. They provide an avenue for staff to actively participate in DEI initiatives.

## 4. DEI Advisory Meetings Continuously:

- Maintain a regular schedule of DEI Advisory Group meetings, ensuring that feedback, insights, and suggestions are continuously gathered. The advisory group plays a pivotal role in guiding DEI efforts, and their continuous input is essential to adapt strategies as needed.

## 5. Affinity Groups with DEI Team Leadership:


- Launch affinity groups with active involvement from DEI Team members, providing guidance, resources, and leadership. Affinity groups are vital in ensuring that employees feel included and supported. Having DEI Team members involved ensures that these groups receive the necessary assistance, and that diverse voices and experiences are celebrated.

## 6. Create DEI Policies:

- Collaborate with the DEI Team, Advisory, and Leadership Committees to develop comprehensive DEI policies. These policies should align with best practices, address specific challenges, and articulate the County's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Policies provide a framework for ongoing commitment to DEI and establish clear expectations for all staff.

## 7. County-Wide DEI Survey:

- Conduct a bi-annual county-wide DEI survey to measure progress, gather feedback, and identify areas for continuous improvement. The insights from the survey can be analyzed to inform strategic decisions, modify initiatives, and refine long-term plans. It's a critical tool for ensuring that DEI efforts continue to evolve to meet the changing needs and expectations of the community and staff.



Through the completion of Phase 3, Yolo County will deepen its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, while also ensuring that DEI efforts remain sustainable and dynamic. By actively engaging line staff, maintaining ongoing training, hosting DEI-focused internal events, and leveraging the insights of the DEI Advisory Group, the County will continuously evolve its approach to align with the needs of its employees and community. The development of DEI policies and the regular county-wide DEI survey will solidify the institutional commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable environment for all.

**Conclusion:** Yolo County's 1-Year DEI Plan represents a comprehensive and integrated strategy aimed at fostering an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and advances equity. Grounded in a meticulous and phased approach, this plan lays the foundation for a transformational journey towards a more equitable and inclusive future. Through strategic actions, persistent communication, and meaningful employee engagement, Yolo County is poised to not only enhance its internal organizational culture but also fortify its bonds with the community it serves.

By placing a deliberate emphasis on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the County demonstrates an unwavering commitment to addressing societal disparities and promoting justice. The integration of DEI principles into core HR processes and departmental practices signifies an institutional shift towards a more inclusive framework. This approach is set to yield positive outcomes in fostering collaboration, embracing innovation, and ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Moreover, Yolo County's dedication to enhancing internal and external communication underscores its intention to create a cohesive network of individuals, teams, and stakeholders who are aligned in their pursuit of a shared vision. The regular advisory meetings and engagement platforms ensure that the implementation of the plan remains dynamic, responsive, and continuously evolving.

Through these multifaceted efforts, Yolo County aspires to not only cultivate a culture of understanding and acceptance but also to establish a model that can be replicated and emulated. By focusing on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the County lays the groundwork for a more equitable future where every resident can thrive, contribute, and partake in shaping the community. With an unyielding commitment to these principles, Yolo County sets forth on a journey that holds the promise of a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow for all its residents.