City Attorney's Office (CAO) Progress Report FY2023/24

Message from the City Attorney Susana Alcala Wood

Every member of the CAO has engaged in efforts to provide the highest quality legal services by embracing opportunities to incorporate diverse perspectives and equitable practices in our work.

We recognize the significant role the CAO serves in providing legal advice to the City Council, city officials, city employees, departments and all city boards and commissions. CAO legal review includes reviewing all proposed documents, contracts and policies to determine compliance with Council directives and policies, such as those related to racial equity principles. Accordingly, the CAO holds itself to the highest standards and obligations to ensure that the department represents these Council (and community) principles.

The work of the CAO in this area was recently recognized by the California State Bar—the regulatory body for all California attorneys. This recognition serves as independent validation of this important work.

CAO Equity Team

As a fundamental element towards meeting specific racial equity goals in 2023, the CAO's Racial Equity Core Team led the effort to meet the requirements of the California State Bar's new DEI Leadership Seal Program and began the work towards completing the action items. In August of 2024, the State Bar awarded the City Attorney's Office the Gold DEI Leadership Seal—the highest distinction offered for legal employers that have implemented research-driven actions that further workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Core Team also created internal committees to develop and implement programs to increase outreach, recruitment, and retention of a diverse workforce (i.e. the Law Day event, the career fairs program, and a mentorship program). Once those programs were established, we appointed staff leaders to continue them on into the future.

With those programs now in place, the office's Core Team is turning its focus on RGEAP outcome #13 (professional development, capacity building, and training to advance racial and gender equity among the workforce) to help ground and support all the work that is being done. In August 2024, the office held its own discussion groups in coordination with the citywide 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge. In November, the office developed and conducted an implicit bias training regarding the legal cases relating to the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. And in January of 2025, the office held a gathering for the National Day of Racial Healing.

CAO Racial Equity Statement

To fulfill the mission of the CAO to provide the highest quality legal services to the City of Sacramento, the diversity of people and perspectives within the office is critical.

The CAO will continue to advance racial equity by:

- Strengthening recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts to enhance diversity in experiences, perspectives, and opinions within the office. Creativity, innovation, and collaboration enhance our ability to provide the best advice to the City of Sacramento.
- Fostering and encouraging safe spaces for discussion to expand our understanding of racial equity, learning from each other to grow our knowledge.
- Acknowledging the historical context of racial harm, not only by individuals in this country, but also by the government, the City of Sacramento, and the City Attorney's Office.
- Consistently incorporating awareness of council adopted racial equity principles and policies in providing legal advice to the City, employees, and commissions to help ensure the City meets those commitments.
- Collecting, analyzing, and using data to identify disparities within the office, to inform decisions, focus efforts, and measure progress towards racial equity.

Outcome Statement, Action and Objectives	Status/Progress to Date	Performance Measures	Careholders	Successes
From the 14 Outcomes of the Race & Gender Equity Action Plan (RGEAP). Include any areas of the 43-Equity Point Assessment Roadmap Tool connected to this outcome, and any specific actions or objectives from the Outcome.	Share major steps your team has taken to move toward the stated objectives.	What indicators did you or will you use to measure success? (Quality and Quantity of Effort)		Provide a narrative of notable best practices and successes that have been achieved beyond just restating the performance measures achieved.
3. Develop a citywide pipeline framework that removes barriers to access to career pathways for people of color and women to move from high school to college to entry level positions with City of Sacramento Dept Assessment Roadmap Tool Section C.1: Practices exist to recruit, retain and develop staff who come from a community of color and/or are proficient in a language other than English.	Established a recruitment and hiring committee. Sought out career fair opportunities for both attorneys and support staff. Identified and purchased needed supplies (e.g. free give-aways, brochures). Created a FAQ document for representatives to review, so they can compentently answer common questions. The office participated in 4 career fairs last year: three for attorneys (UOP McGeorge School of Law Externship Fair, the Sacramento Region Diversity Career Fair, the UC Davis School of Law Public Interest & Government Career Fair) and one for support staff (American River College Spring Career Fair).	Number of attorney-related career fairs participated in. Number of non-attorney-related career fairs participated in. Number of contacts made at career fairs.	CAO Admin, CAO attorneys, CAO suppoort staff, career fair hosts, career fair participants.	We disbanded the committee that led this effort and appointed 3 persons to take charge. Their positions are now also recognized as an official assignment (i.e. it is indicated in our assignment table) to give them credit and keep them accountable.
9. The onboarding process is designed to support all staff to advance racial and equity in all City of Sacramento processes and work-places. Dept Assessment Roadmap Tool Section D.1: There is an effort to recruit, select, advance, or retain employees from racially and gender diverse groups at any level.	Supervising Deputies created a "CAO 101" session which provided an introduction into the various things we do in the CAO and the resources available to its members. All newly hired employees are invited.	Number of CAO 101 sessions. Number of new employees attended. Percentage of new employees attended.	CAO Admin, new employees.	The CAO 101 sessions were successful. The new employees are better informed of how the office works and were able to ask any questions at the end of the session.
14. City of Sacramento hires and supports retention efforts to support a racially and gender diverse workforce. Dept Assessment Roadmap Tool Section D.1: There is an effort to recruit, select, advance, or retain employees from racially and gender diverse groups at any level.	A mentorship program was established in 2023 designed to provide guidance and support to mentees as they navigate their personal and professional growth. The office supports quarterly lunches for the cohorts and monthly lunch meetings between mentors and mentees.	Number of mentorship pairings. Number of new employees enrolled in mentorships. Percentage of new employees enrolled in mentorships. Number of people attending the quarterly lunches.	CAO Admin, new CAO employees, CAO mentors.	The program has paired 100% of the new employees as well as provided a regular forum for mentors and mentees to come together and discuss common issues. Anecdotally, many mentees have reported appreciation for the additional resources as they adjust to working in the CAO.