



County of Santa Cruz

# Equity Statement

October 3, 2023

In 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted its first strategic plan. It set forth a vision of a healthy, safe, more affordable community.

In 2020, the Board declared racism a public health crisis, and directed staff to address inequities\* in County systems.

In 2023, County staff joined with community out to define what it means to achieve the County's vision with equity at the center.



\*Race is a social construct used to establish status, and creating anti-racist systems requires that we look at disparities through the lens of race. Race is only one part of an individual, and equity also requires the examination of the complex intersection of race with age, ability, income, gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation.

# Purpose of a County Equity Statement



## Align County Policies and Services

The *equity statement* is the first step in aligning County work to equitable results, so that \$1 billion in annual spending creates focused opportunities where they are needed most.



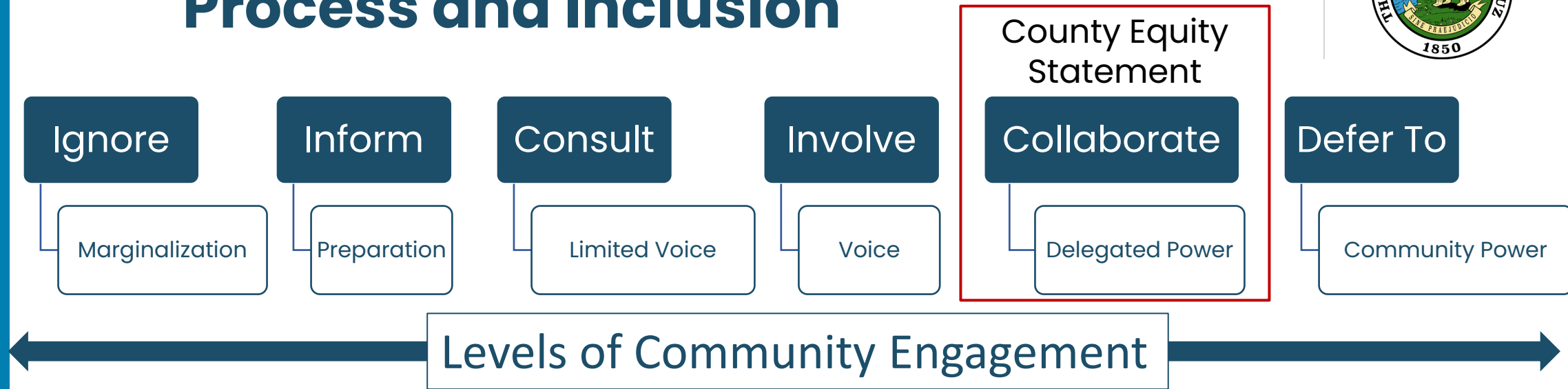
## Explore with Community Partners

The County Strategic Initiatives set up systems and tools to become a learning organization. The *equity statement* calls for that learning to be done in collaboration with community, our partner agencies and organizations, and those most impacted by County programs and policies.

## Expanded Vision

The 2018–24 Strategic Plan put forward the County's first ever vision and mission. The *equity statement* expands that vision through explicit inclusion and commitment of the Board of Supervisors and County staff to transforming systems that uphold racism and other forms of oppression.

# Process and Inclusion



- The Equity Statement process was designed in collaboration with Circle on Anti-Racism, Economic, and Social Justice (CARESJ)
- Over 1,000 staff and community participated
- By supporting community engagement that moves from information-sharing to genuine collaboration and empowerment, the County ensures that the voices and perspectives of residents are not only heard but actively integrated into policies and projects.

# County Equity Statement



Equity in action in Santa Cruz County is a transformative process that embraces individuals of every status, providing unwavering support, dignity, and compassion.

Through this commitment, the County ensures intentional opportunities and access, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive and belong.

# County Equity Vocabulary



## Transformative Process

Equity is an action that requires fundamental shifts in people and practices to address historical and ongoing disparities.

## Individuals of Every Status

We are human and we are complex. Race, immigration status, and gender are strengths, not barriers.

## Dignity

We value and honor the contributions of all community members, ensuring they are treated with fairness and respect.

## Intentional Opportunities

We work with and for people most impacted by racism and systemic inequity, making everyone better off.

## Access

We reduce physical, digital, and systemic barriers to unleash our community's potential.

# Staff and Community Contributors

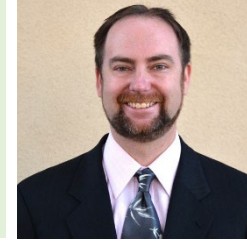
Over 1,000 staff and community participated in the Equity Statement



**Walter** enjoys doing his part to contribute to ensuring equity in the marketplace, protecting the health, safety and welfare of Santa Cruz County's citizens.



**Brenda** advocates for disability inclusion and breaking down language barriers in her Latino community by working as a Healthcare Interpreter.



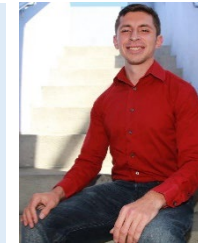
**George** believes in government to positively impact the lives of individuals and families.



**Rebecca** is Mescalero Apache and Mexican-American, and partners with local stakeholders to promote the acquisition, preservation, and use of archival materials that document the communities of Santa Cruz County.



**Daisy** is proud to serve the County of Santa Cruz and be connected to the community.



**Hector** is a UCSC Alumnus and Latino community organizer and advocate for diversity in local political engagement, supporting marginalized workers and unionization.



**Nessa** loves her work in juvenile dependency because of its mission to ensure that the County's youth population are cared for properly and have safe and stable housing.



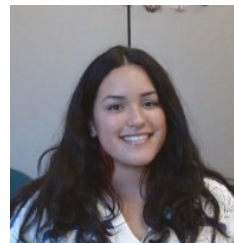
**DeAndre** ensures an opportunity for every individual to attain the highest level of health and wellness regardless of barriers.



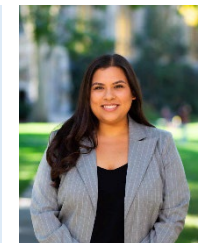
**Nada** has always been proud to do her part in providing technology solutions to help County departments become more accessible.



**Brenda** is a local community leader, who stands on the values of justice, integrity, and compassion. Brenda has lived in Santa Cruz for 20 years and fought for social justice, education, visibility, and the celebration of Black life.

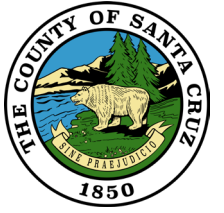


**Lunamar** is passionate about equity on a personal level and strives to turn that passion into action within every aspect of her work.



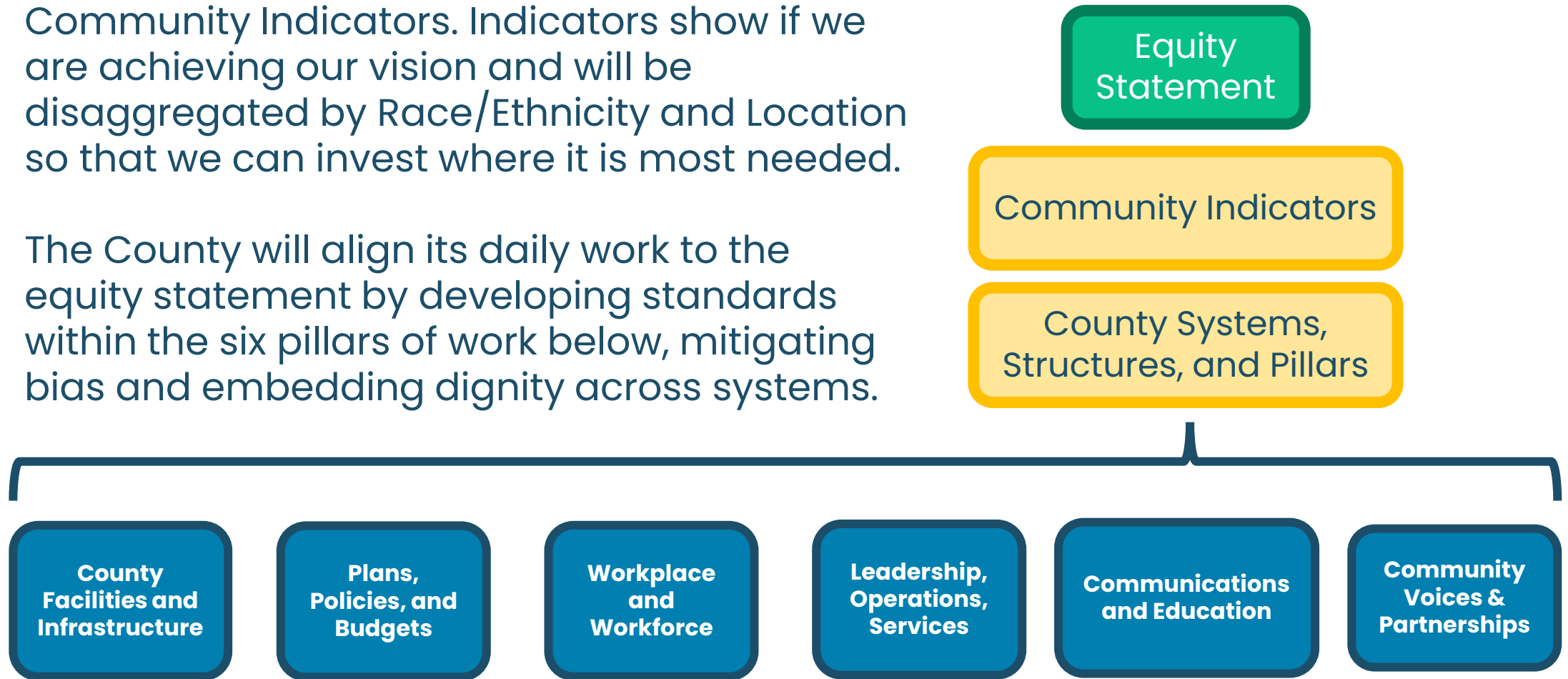
**Julisa** is Mexican American and a member of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Julisa orients herself as a research scientist, data warrior and social justice scholar.

# What is next?



In January 2024, the County will propose Community Indicators. Indicators show if we are achieving our vision and will be disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity and Location so that we can invest where it is most needed.

The County will align its daily work to the equity statement by developing standards within the six pillars of work below, mitigating bias and embedding dignity across systems.





# Learn with us.

More information at:  
[vision@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:vision@santacruzcountyca.gov)

