

RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE REPORT CAI COUNCIL -SEPTEMBER 2023

OUR GOAL

For more than 30 years, CAI has worked to ensure the safety and improve the lives of children and youth in California and across the nation. In January of 2022, CAI established a Committee on Racial Equity to thoughtfully examine how to specifically enhance CAI's efforts to positively impact children and families of color, who disproportionately come in contact with child-serving systems and experience disparate treatment within them.

OUR COMMITTEE

The Committee includes CAI staff members Melanie Delgado, Amy Harfeld, Jessica Heldman, and Elisa Weichel, and CAI Council member Gary Richwald. We receive assistance from Sarah Bryer, a consultant with Racial Equity Partners.

Our Committee meets every other Friday with the following agenda:

1. Sharing knowledge gained from readings, webinars, and trainings.
2. Discussion on integration of research into CAI's work
3. Reviewing progress on existing action steps and identifying new action items

KEY ACTION STEPS (2022-2023)

CONDUCT ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

The full CAI staff engaged in an organizational self-assessment using a tool designed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The goal of the assessment process is to raise organizational awareness and start focused conversations around being intentional in promoting racial equity in our work.

The assessment produced several key findings:

- CAI needs to institute a race equity analysis as part of our policy work
- CAI needs to explicitly articulate that reduction of racial disparity and disproportionality is a goal of our work and is part of our mission and vision for children
- CAI needs to ensure that a commitment to the reduction of racial disparity and disproportionality is reflected in our resource allocations

These findings led to the development of additional action steps, indicated below.

INCORPORATE A RACE EQUITY LENS IN CAI'S ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

After consulting resources for conducting a curriculum review, the lessons for the Child Rights and Remedies course and the Child Advocacy Clinics were updated to ensure coverage of the history of racism and racial

discrimination impacting children and families of color, the historical consequences and current impacts of that history, and the continued existence of explicit and implicit bias within communities and systems today.

INCORPORATE A RACE EQUITY ANALYSIS INTO OUR POLICY WORK

The Committee developed specific questions to add to our staff's examination of potential policy proposals, including the following:

1. When considering the need for making a policy change, consider:
 - a. *Are there any racial or ethnic groups that are disparately impacted by this issue?*
 - i. *Is there research or media available to accurately identify the impact?*
 - b. *What are the potential short-term and long-term consequences of leaving this problem unaddressed and how do those consequences specifically affect children and families of color?*
2. When considering the potential policy proposal, consider:
 - a. *Have stakeholders from Different Racial/Ethnic Groups – especially those most adversely affected – been informed, meaningfully involved, and authentically represented in the development of this proposal?*
 - i. *If not, who is missing and how can they be engaged?*
 - b. *Have any current approaches to addressing the issue had an impact on disparities and discrimination? Are there any approaches that have better outcomes related to reducing disparities and discrimination?*
 - c. *Will CAI's proposed policy change reduce these disparities?*
 - i. *If so, how?*
 - d. *Could CAI's proposed policy change negatively impact communities any racial or ethnic groups?*
 - i. *If so, how?*
 - ii. *If so, are there ways to limit or eliminate this impact?*
 - e. *How will we engage stakeholders, including stakeholders from different racial and ethnic groups who are affected, in meaningful implementation of this policy?*

These questions will now be part of all conversations regarding the development of CAI's federal and state legislative agenda.

ENSURE CAI'S MISSION ARTICULATES A COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

Updated vision and mission statements have been drafted, reviewed by the full staff, and provided to our consultant. Feedback has been incorporated and they are now ready for review by and feedback from the CA Council.

Once finalized, these statements will be featured on CAI's website, included in publications, and incorporated into marketing and fundraising materials.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Among the developing priorities for the committee's work are the following:

- Increasing team diversity and opportunities to engage stakeholders with lived experience
- Supporting increased diversity among the USD Law student body