Office of Racial Equity Progress Report
Annual Report for 2021

Part A

Department name: San Francisco Rent Stabilization Board

Date: May 1, 2022

Introduction

The San Francisco Rent Stabilization Board is small but growing City department that consists of 10 commissioners, and Executive Director and Deputy Director, a Hearings Unit (16), Clerical Unit (6), Public Information Unit (15), an Inventory and Fee Unit (8) and IT and finance and operations staff (5).

The San Francisco Rent Board is currently in a hiring period with the potential to have a transformational impact on the culture of the organization and the services we deliver. Entering 2022, the department had over half the permanent positions within the organization to fill including the Executive Director, Deputy Director, Chief Information Officer, the entire newly formed Inventory and Fee unit and positions that support that unit, and supervisor and staff for the Public Information unit.

The Department relies on staff members to volunteer their time to draft and guide implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan and the Recruitment and Hiring Policy, which has been difficult given the challenges discussed in the “Resources” section below. Despite that challenge, the Rent Board has implemented several notable changes that have had a significant impact on staff communication, engagement, and intentionality with regards to furthering the goal of improved racial equity within the Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections from Department Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What specific racial inequities and disparities within your department are you focused on addressing in 2022?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Rent Board is expanding its scope of work, growing its staff and modernizing its current business processes. This is a key time for the department to be looking internally to its commitment to hire and promote BIPOC employees including into open leadership positions. In 2021, we met our goal of having all staff complete a basic training of implicit bias and racial equity. In 2022, we need to operationalize that commitment to insure that new employees receive this training and that continuing staff have opportunities to further their learning. Finally, the Commission refined its understanding of racial equity by upholding symbolic...</td>
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practices such as the reading of the land acknowledgement at each commission meeting while supporting the efforts outlined in the Racial Equity Action Plan.

Please describe your engagement to date with your Racial Equity Leaders. What specific types of support are you providing your Racial Equity Leaders and other employees doing this work?

One member of senior staff co-chairs the Racial Equity Action Team. Updates on the Racial Equity Action Plan are provided during Senior Staff meetings and Commission Meetings. The opinions of both the Commission and Senior Staff are sought on the implementation of the plan.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledged by [name] and [title], [date], [signature]</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christina Varner, Acting Executive Director, 5/1/22</td>
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1. **Hiring and Recruitment**

**Goals and performance measures**

The Rent Board is laser focused on recruiting the most diverse and talented pool of candidates. Our goal is for employees to have deep roots in the neighborhoods of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, a clear understanding of the values underpinning the Rent Ordinance, and ethical standards that hold up under the most transparent and accessible implementation of justice.

**Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year**

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*

The majority of permanent, temporary and promotive positions hired in 2021 and the beginning of 2022 have been to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) employees. Because of the relatively small size of our staff we are not providing a further breakdown by race or ethnicity of these promotions based on guidance from human resources.

In 2021, the Rent Board achieved the following highlights towards meeting its goal of recruiting a more diverse and talented pool of candidates.

- 4 temp positions hired: 3 - 2975, 1 - 2982
- 2 Classification descriptions revised
- Expanded hiring teams to include at least one non-management staff member and one staff member who is a member of the BIPOC community
- Interview teams for permanent hires for 1054, 1406 and 1410 classes expanded to include non-management class, BIPOC hiring team members, and better gender
• Created Racial Equity Hiring policy, which has been circulated to staff for feedback.
• Adjusted hiring process to utilize SmartRecruiters
• Although the Hiring and Recruitment Policy is not final, the recruitment and hiring teams have begun simplifying job descriptions, created structured interview questions, and ensured diverse hiring panels.
• Staff members who participated in hiring panels took a Managing Implicit Bias training.
• All Rent Board job postings were shared internally, with attention paid to both sharing out by email (ordinary method of communication) and having conversations.

Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making
If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.

Going forward, the Racial Equity Action Plan will be part of the employee onboarding process, and the Hiring and Recruitment Policy and Racial Equity Action Plan will be provided to new hires.

In 2022, the Rent Board anticipates hiring over 20 positions. Hiring teams will be crafted to include a member of management, a staff member, and a person from the BIPOC community in order to ensure that a diversity of perspectives from different staff classifications and communities are taken into account when selecting individuals for Rent Board positions—both management and non-management.

In addition, each hiring team will reconvene after a position has been filled in order to “debrief” the hiring process, to see whether the goals of the Hiring and Recruitment Policy were met, and to identify ways to improve for the next hiring team.

2. Retention and Promotion

Goals and performance measures
The Rent Board is focused on its goal of retaining its talented and diverse staff members and providing increased opportunity for promotion. To achieve this goal, managers will prioritize discussing the workplace climate, staff job satisfaction, and career goals. Retaining existing talent contributes to a staff that has an important mix of experience and fresh perspective.

Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year
In the 2021 calendar year, the Rent Board has had two notable promotions. A Rent Board counselor, was promoted to a management position - acting Rent Board Supervisor. Also, the Rent Board Deputy Director, was promoted to Acting Executive Director. We are currently on track with our Racial Equity Action Plan Promotive opportunities goals. The Rent Board Acting Executive Director has sent all Rent Board job announcements to the entire Rent Board Staff, and encouraged staff members who are interested in applying to discuss their goals with their supervisor, and has also had direct conversations with staff who are interested in finding out about promotive opportunities.

In 2021, the Rent Board, like other City departments, experienced a notable loss of staff members, including people from the BIPOC community. The City lost staff due to a variety of reasons (retirement, transfer to other City departments, or separation due to the City of San Francisco’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement). Because the Rent Board is a small department, for the purposes of maintaining staff confidentiality, we are unable to detail certain information or highlight statistics that involved less than 10 people.

### Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making

*If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.*

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize the following RE Action Plan Items:

- 2.2 Ensure salaries and benefits allow for a dignified livelihood, especially for people of color and women.
- 2.3 Create paths to promotion that are transparent and work to advance equity.

### 3. Discipline and Separation

*Goals and performance measures*

The Rent Board will continue to track and analyze any disciplinary measures or separations.

*Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year*

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*
Because the Rent Board is a small department, there are very few examples available related
to retention, promotion, separation, and discipline. If we were to highlight these changes for
the 2021 calendar year, we would be potentially violating staff members’ privacy as it would
be easy to identify the staff members in question.

As of the date of this report, the Racial Equity team has requested data from the Department
of Human Resources regarding the department’s discipline and separation over the past 5
years. Once the data is received, it will be analyzed to identify gaps or disparities with regard
to Racial Equity.

In 2021, the Rent Board has prioritized approaching any discipline and separation incidents
from an educational and resource-based approach, which included written materials, one-on-
one conversations, and facilitating access to resources.

**Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-
making**

*If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major
revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.*

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize RE Action Plan Item 3.1 -
Create a clear, equitable, and accountable protocol for disciplinary actions.

### 4. Diverse and Equitable Leadership

**Goals and performance measures**

The Rent Board is focused on recruiting and maintaining diverse leadership in its senior staff
in order to ensure that the Executive Director and Leadership team have a strong
understanding and commitment to Racial Equity.

**Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year**

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*

During 2021 the Rent Board’s Executive Director retired and multiple leadership positions
were created. This challenge also provided the department with a unique opportunity to build
a staff who meets the Rent Board’s goal of recruiting and maintaining a diverse senior staff.
One challenge in filling certain leadership and staff positions in 2021 was due to the city-wide transition into using the SmartRecruiters program. The system allowed for increased recruitment efforts but the implementation of SmartRecruiters delayed hiring multiple positions.

**Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making**

*If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.*

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize the following RE Action Plan Items:

- 4.1.1 Hiring and recruitment policy
- 4.1.2 Racial equity training for leadership
- 4.1.3 Leadership demographics in annual report
- 4.1.4 Anonymous feedback to senior staff

**5. Mobility and Professional Development**

**Goals and performance measures**

The Rent Board is focused on encouraging staff professional development by requiring staff to attend various trainings throughout the calendar year, and making additional trainings available to staff on an optional basis. Implementing an effective employee development program increases the competency of staff, boosts job satisfaction, and contributes to staff retention. It can also improve the overall efficiency of the organization, and improve workload flow between employees with a common knowledge base and skillset.

**Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year**

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*

In the 2021 calendar year, the Rent Board prioritized formal training for staff, opportunities for continued learning and professional development. To that end, the Rent Board has made available the following trainings for staff members.

**Trainings required for all staff members include:**
• Racial equity and Implicit Bias – which was attended by 18 Rent Board staff members.
• COVID-19 Basic Health & Safety (two versions)
• Introduction to Implicit Bias
• Cybersecurity Training
• Self-Service Time Entry
• Whistleblower Training
• Bystander Training

Trainings required for staff members who were on a hiring panel include:

• Fairness in Hiring Interviews

Trainings required for managers or supervisors include:

• Core Interactive Ethics & Sunshine
• Cybersecurity Training for Managers
• Whistleblower Protections – Supervisor Duties
• The Government Alliance on Racial Equity ("GARE") training – attended by the acting Executive Director

Additional trainings made available to all staff members include:

• Updating your resume
• Applying for City jobs
• Exams and interviews

Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making

If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize the following RE Action Plan Items:

5.1 Offer professional and skill development opportunities that center individual goals first, then organizational needs.

5.2 Encourage collaboration between staff and supervisors that are consistent and thoughtful.

5.3 Ensure staff needs are centered and timely met in order to perform and excel at their jobs.
6. Organizational Culture of Belonging and Inclusion

Goals and performance measures

The Rent Board is focused on providing an inclusive and open environment where staff members feel listened to, where their expertise is recognized, and where they feel open to participate in discussions regarding racial equity and inclusion.

Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*

The following changes have been implemented over the 2021 calendar year:

- **Racial Equity Team.** A Racial Equity team consisting of staff member volunteers was convened in 2020. The Team drafted and published the Rent Board’s Racial Equity Action Plan, and drafted the Rent Board’s Hiring and Recruitment Policy.

- **Brown bag lunches.** The Racial Equity Leaders have implemented a recurring Racial Equity Brown Bag Lunch. The Brown Bag lunches provide staff members an opportunity to discuss and share ideas, feelings, and opinions on racial equity issues that are relevant to their own community, and the community served by the Rent Board.

- **Hiring and Recruitment Policy** – The Racial Equity leaders distributed a draft of the Rent Board’s Hiring and Recruitment Policy to all of the Rent Board Staff and encouraged staff to review the policy and provide any feedback prior to finalization.

- **Racial Equity Survey** - The Racial Equity leaders have created two racial equity surveys - one for the Rent Board staff and one for the Rent Board commission. In creating the survey, the Racial Equity leaders evaluated the 2020 Racial Equity Survey data and drafted a new survey that both measures progress of some of the issues raised in the 2020 survey, and provides a space for the staff and/or commission to give feedback on various Racial Equity issues at the Rent Board.

Common responses from staff members included general feelings that staff would be more inclined to participate in Racial Equity work if they had more time; that language access at the Rent Board needs to be prioritized; that the Rent Board should prioritize diversity when hiring; and that the Rent Board
should prioritize addressing racial disparities in implementation of the Rent
Ordinance.

The staff survey revealed the following notable responses regarding the
department’s current culture related to racial equity.

“I feel comfortable talking about racial equity at work”

Staff was also asked open ended questions such as:

“What areas of racial equity training would benefit you in your job?”
“What commitments would you like to see the department make to improve racial equity?”
And “If the Rent Board were to update its mission and value statement, what elements would
you think are important to include and/or expand?”

The Commission survey revealed the following notable responses regarding
the department’s current culture related to racial equity.

“I feel open to discuss racial equity within the commission setting”
The department’s leadership demonstrates support for racial equity

The commission was also asked open ended questions such as:
“If the Rent Board were to update its mission and value statement, what elements would you think are important to include and/or expand?”
And “What commitments would you like to see the department make to improve racial equity and eliminate disparate outcomes?”

Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making
If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize the following RE Action Plan Items:

6.1 Foster an intentional organizational culture that is committed to inclusion and belonging.

6.2 Develop internal communication processes and procedures that promote equity.

6.4 Expand the internal culture of belonging by fostering relationships with external communities the department serves.
### 7. Boards and Commissions

#### Goals and performance measures

The Rent Board is focused on maintaining and improving diversity and equity on the Rent Board Commission.

Goals for the 2022 calendar year include:
- Exploring the feasibility of a Commission retreat
- All Commissioners complete a Racial Equity and Inclusion and Bias training.

#### Changes implemented over the 2021 calendar year

*If relevant, include action numbers from the RE Action Plan.*

In the 2021 calendar year, the board has achieved the following notable action items:

- Adopt Commissioner Isbell's Resolution on Racial Equity with Commissioner Hung's edits. 12/8/20
- Adopt Rules and Regulations changes regarding Board Alternates and Election of Board Officers 2/16/21.
- Adopt a resolution on the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgment. 3/16/21
- The Board discussed plan for racial equity trainings for commissioners. 6/15/21
- Commissioner Kion Sawney joins the Rent Board 11/9/21
- In November of 2021, two commissioners attended implicit bias training
- Commissioner have completed 2 annual racial equity survey
- Racial Equity regularly added as a part of the monthly meeting agenda.

#### Priority actions for 2022 calendar year, including opportunities for staff input and decision-making

*If relevant, include action item numbers from the RE Action Plan. Please also highlight any major revisions made to RE Action Plan since first submission.*

In the calendar year 2022, the Rent Board intends to prioritize the following RE Action Plan Items:

- 7.1.2 Track commission demographics
- 7.2.2 Racial Equity training for Commissioners
- 7.2.3 Mentorship between newer and more experienced Board members. Also, orientation for new commissioners, and including the Racial Equity Plan as part of the training binder.
- Rental Housing Inventory Legislation Implementation
### Department Resourcing for Phase 1 RE Action Plan

Please describe your department’s resourcing for Phase 1 RE Action Plan implementation in 2021. Include employee names, titles, and organizational chart. Note the designated Racial Equity Leader(s) with an asterisk. Please clearly distinguish between:

- **Staff who were assigned full-time** (all responsibilities were directly related to Phase 1 RE Action Plan and other departmental racial equity work)
- **Staff who were assigned part-time** (had responsibilities not directly related to racial equity, which were reduced for them to take on racial equity work)
- **Staff who were voluntary** (had responsibilities not directly related to racial equity, which were not reduced for them to take on racial equity work)

Currently, the Rent Board does not have any consultants, vendors, or staff who are assigned either full-time or part-time to work on Racial Equity work.

At the beginning of 2021, the Racial Equity team consisted of the following staff member volunteers:

- Christina Varner, Deputy Director*,
- Jennifer Rakowski, Rent Board Supervisor*,
- Erin Katayama, Administrative Law Judge, and
- Tania Chacon, Administrative Analyst.

In July of 2021, Tania Chacon departed the Rent Board to work as a Senior Administrative Analyst with the Board of Supervisors. In November of 2021, Christina Varner became the Rent Board’s Acting Executive Director and had to step down from the Racial Equity team to accommodate her added responsibilities.

Since November of 2021, the Racial Equity team has consisted of the following staff member volunteers:

- Jennifer Rakowski, Rent Board Supervisor*, and
- Erin Katayama, Administrative Law Judge*.

In order to achieve the Department’s racial equity goals in a meaningful way, in the 2022 calendar year, the Rent Board will prioritize addressing the lack of staff ability and/or willingness to participate in racial equity work on a volunteer basis on top of their base responsibilities and new responsibilities that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (such as loss of staff, managing workloads while navigating office
restrictions and staff absences, and a recent legislative change that resulted in a
massive Rent Board fee invoice collection project that all staff members of all levels
have been asked to work on).

The 2021 Racial Equity staff survey revealed that staff members would be more
inclined to participate in Racial Equity work if they had more time. In light of these
responses, the Racial Equity leadership plans to take the following action:

(1) Work with Rent Board management to explore ways for staff to engage in racial
equity work without falling behind on their responsibilities or feeling overburdened.

(2) Hire a part-time or full-time staff member who, at least half of their responsibilities
would be directly related to the Racial Equity Action Plan and other departmental
racial equity work. As of the date of this report, the Rent Board has received approval
to hire a 1823 position, and half of that position’s time will be dedicated to Racial
Equity work.

(3) Complete the hiring and training of additional staff members to manage the San
Francisco Housing Inventory.

Attachments

Workforce and board/commission demographic data
Include relevant data on status of racial equity within department, such as race/ethnicity by job
classification, average pay, discipline and separation, promotions, and changes over the last
calendar year.

As of the date of this report, the Racial Equity team has requested this data from the
Department of Human Resources. Once the data is received, it will be analyzed to
identify gaps or disparities with regard to Racial Equity.

Racial Equity Action Plan
Link to or attach current version of department Racial Equity Action Plan
Part B

Submit final to ORE by April 1, 2022

Attend ORE working sessions in January-February 2022 to develop Part B.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Attachment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget Equity Tool: Department Inventory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Completed department inventory spreadsheet</em></td>
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(See attached Rent Board Inventory Tool)