



Racial Justice Task Force Kickoff Meeting Minutes
Racial Justice Task Force Members
2.14.18

| Member | In Attendance |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Todd Billeci, Chief Probation Officer | Present |
| 2. Debra Mason, Mount Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) | Present |
| 3. Robin Lipetzky, Public Defender | Present |
| 4. Dennisha Marsh, First Five CCC, City of Pittsburg Community Advisory Council | Present |
| 5. Venus Johnson, Assistant District Attorney | Present* |
| 6. Magda Lopez, Director of Court Programs and Services | Present |
| 7. Harlan Grossman, Government Alliance of Race & Equity (GARE) | Present |
| 8. John Lowden, Contra Costa County Sherriff’s Office | Present |
| 9. Dr. Christine Gerchow, Psychologist at Juvenile Hall Martinez | Present |
| 10. Stephanie Medley, RYSE & AB109 CAB | Present |
| 11. Marcus Walton, Director of Communications West Contra Costa Unified School District | Not Present |
| 12. Bisa French, Assistant Chief at Richmond Police Department | Present |
| 13. Dr. Cardenas Shackelford, Coordinator Student Intervention and Support, Antioch Unified School District | Not Present |
| 14. Tamisha Walker, Founder & Director Safe Return Project | Not Present |
| 15. Pastor Donnell Jones, Richmond Ceasefire | Not Present |
| 16. Reverend Leslie Takahashi, Mt. Diablo Universalist Church | Present |
| 17. Dr. William Walker, Health Services Director | Not Present |

**Note: Venus Johnson has officially replaced Assistant district Attorney Tom Kensok*

Resource Development Associates

- Mikaela Rabinowitz
- David Muhammad
- Jasmine Laroche

Public Attendees

- Judith Tannenbaum
- Allison Pruitt
- Chris Broglio
- Doug Leich
- Cheryl Sudduth





Meeting Notes

- I. Introductions
- II. Meeting Objectives
 - RDA will review the project timeline, inform task force members of tentative plans to prepare for community forums, review local criminal justice data, and drivers of disparities.
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - January meeting minutes were approved with revisions and abstentions from Magda Lopez, Dennisha Marsh, and Stephanie Medley.
- IV. Public Comment (items not on the agenda)
 - The Racial Justice Coalition supports the recommendations for diversion programs and the creation of a restorative justice work group throughout the county.
 - No other public comments.
- V. Planning for Community Forums
 - Community forms will be held in May and community members will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the preliminary recommendations presented at the forums. Task force members will finalize recommendations after community feedback.
 - Task force members were concerned with not having enough time to respond to community member feedback in order to appropriately finalize recommendations.
 - Task force members requested the project timeline be extended if need be.
 - **RDA will follow up with the County about the possibility of extending the project timeline.**
 - **Leslie Takahashi, Stephanie Medley (limited availability) and Harlan Grossman volunteered to join the Community Forum committee**
- VI. Review of Criminal Justice Data
 - RDA presented national arrest data, aggregate level court data, individual data from the Public Defender's office, and custodial data from the Sherriff's office.
 - RDA clarified that the data presented does not take into account the population from the previous decision making decision. This is a flaw of the data given that this data is not publically available to calculate the relative rate index.
 - Task force member shared that Richmond PD has an in house DA to determine what cases are chargeable before sending to the DA.
 - RDA highlighted that disparities are largely found at the decision to charge and pre-trial detention phase within the criminal justice system.
 - Task force members raised the discussion around charging enhancements and how that can exacerbate disparities.
 - Public Comment:



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- RJC members would like to see up to date data across all decision points to better discern disparities at each point within the system.
- RJC members would also like to understand “the why” behind the disparities.
- RJC members also would like to know what charging enhancements are most commonly used within Contra Costa County.

VII. Data Gaps and Reasons for Disparities

- Task force member attention to the fact that clients that are kept in pre-trial jail are more likely to plead their case to get out of jail rather than take their case to trial.
- Several factors, such as juries and judges, can contribute to disparities.
- **Task force member requested that the task force include county wide diversion programs as a recommendation and to keep a list of data gaps**
- Task force member explained Contra Costa County’s jury selection process. Previously, the county would select jurors regionally where the case was being held, but now presently jurors can be summoned from anywhere within the region and they are requested for duty at the court in Martinez. This poses as a challenge for those with limited access to transportation and other socioeconomic factors. The jury pool presently is disproportionately white.
- Task force member also raised the need for more support services, such as text reminders, child care support, etc., for those that are released pre-trial to ensure that they can make to their next court appearance.
- Public Comment:
 - RJC member requested clarification around how the decision to change the jury selection process was made.
 - RJC member requested if AB109 funds can fund supportive services for people that have been released pre-trial.
- **Task force member requested to review AB109 budget, Office of Reentry and Justice stated that they would share this report.**

VIII. Next Steps

- **RDA will present preliminary recommendations and best practices for reducing racial disparities in the criminal justice system at the next meeting.**