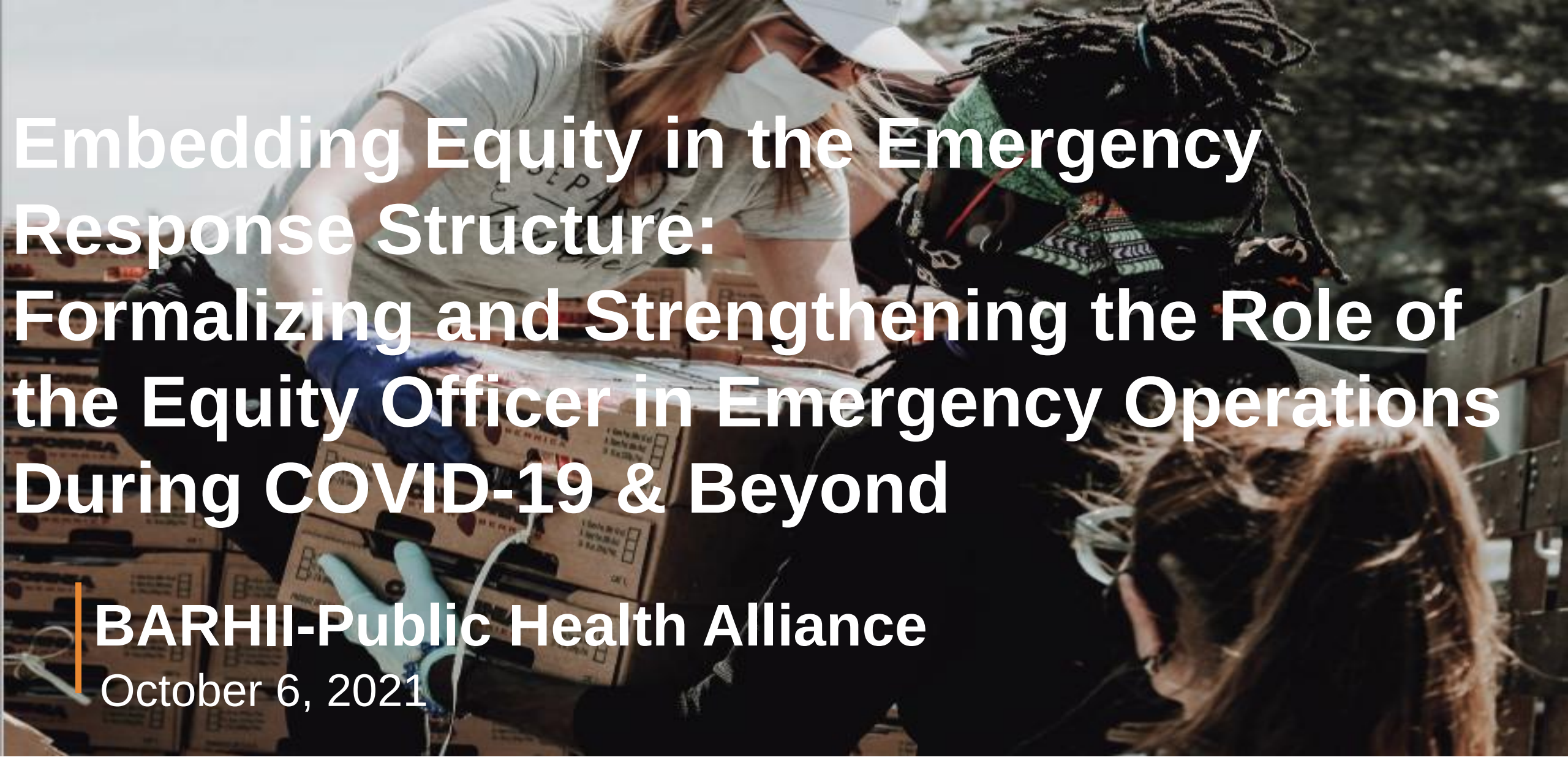

Embedding Equity in the Emergency Response Structure: Formalizing and Strengthening the Role of the Equity Officer in Emergency Operations During COVID-19 & Beyond

BARHII-Public Health Alliance

October 6, 2021

BARHII
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

Public Health Alliance™
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BARHII-Public Health Alliance: Welcome & Overview

Melissa Jones
Executive Director
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)

Marley Williams
Health Equity & Justice Manager
Public Health Alliance of Southern California (Public Health Alliance)

BARHII
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

Public Health Alliance™
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BARHII: Welcome & Overview

OUR MISSION

Is to transform public health practice for the purpose of eliminating health inequities using a broad spectrum of approaches that create healthy communities and economic prosperity for all

OUR COVID-19 RECOVERY PLATFORM

We've known for a long time that our inequitable systems have left certain communities behind. COVID-19 has brought that to the surface with the data we are seeing.

The 4 R's of Recovery:

1. Require Basic Health Protections for Workers
2. Rebuild Financial Stability for Families, Small Businesses, and Social Enterprises
3. Reconnect Communities to Protect Mental Wellness
4. Revolutionize the Status Quo To Protect People of Color

11 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

7 counties with EOs in COVID response, shaping testing, vaccine access, and SDOH priorities

BARHII
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

Public Health Alliance™ OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Public Health Alliance: Welcome & Overview

OUR VISION

All Southern California communities are healthy, vibrant and sustainable places to live, work and play.

10 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

- Imperial
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Orange
- Pasadena
- Riverside
- Santa Barbara
- San Bernardino
- San Diego
- Ventura

Nearly
60%
Of CA Population

BARHII
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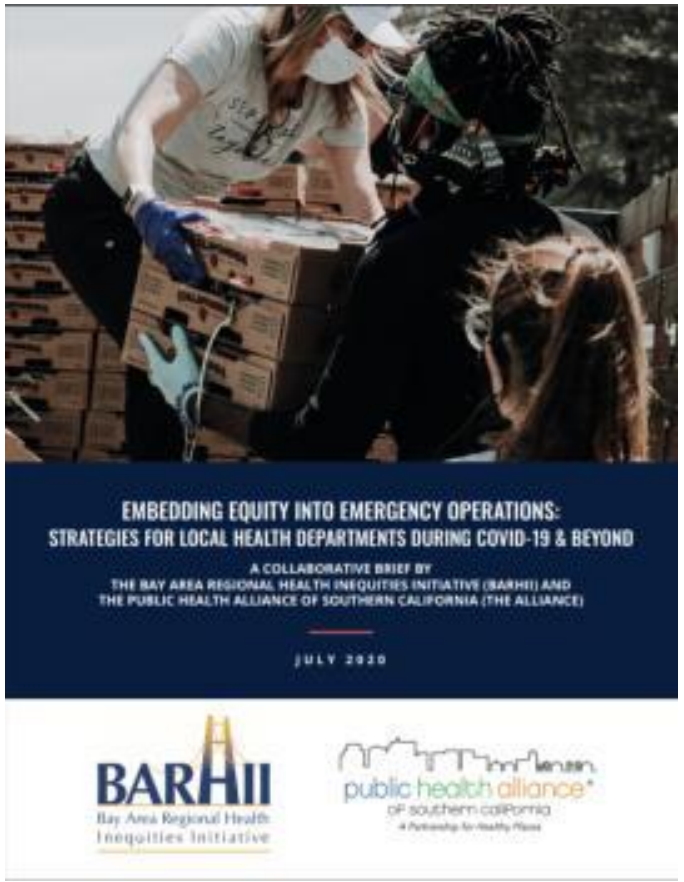
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Embedding Equity Into Emergency Operations: Strategies & Resources for Local Health Jurisdictions

- **Embedding Equity into Emergency Operations Brief & Webinar**
- **Funding Equity Officers in Emergency Management: Webinar**
- **Other Ongoing Work**



BARHII
Bay Area Regional Health
Inequities Initiative

Public Health Alliance™
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Role of an Equity Officer in the EOC

- **Ensure Communities Most Disproportionally Impacted are Prioritized Throughout the Response**
- **Apply an Equity Lens to the Decision-Making Process**
- **Build and Activate Community Partnerships for Responsive Equity Solutions**
- **Integrate Equity into the Recovery Planning and Implementation Process**

Example: Louisville Incident Command Structure

BARHII Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

Public Health Alliance™ OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MEET THE PANELISTS

Analilia Garcia
Racial & Health Equity
Senior Manager
Santa Clara County
Public Health

Reginald Harrison
Director of Disaster
Preparedness & Emergency
Communication
City of Long Beach

Katie Balderas
Equity Officer
Office of Equity
City of Long Beach

BARHII
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

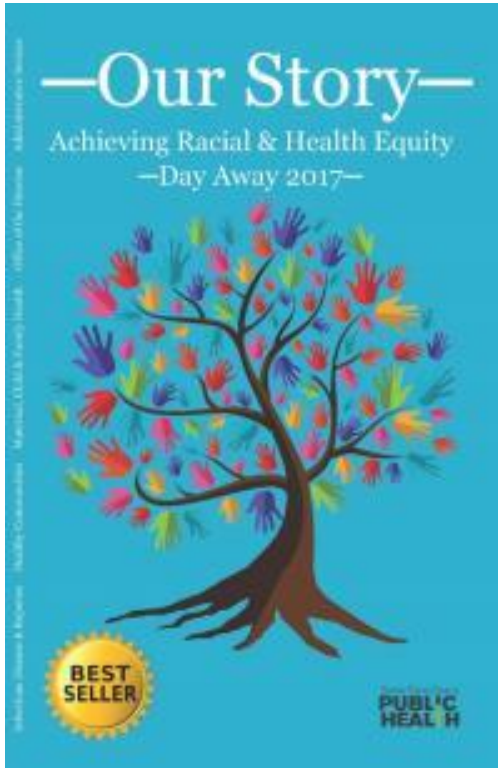
Public Health Alliance™ OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

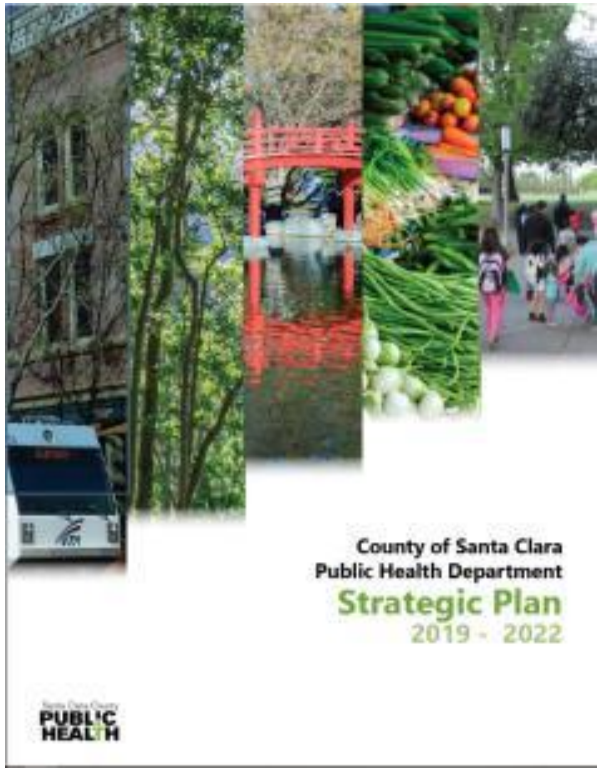
County of Santa Clara: Embedding Equity in the Emergency Response Structure

Analilia Garcia, DrPH, MPH
Racial & Health Equity Sr. Manager, Public Health Department

Public Health Department Racial & Health Equity Infrastructure

- 2015: Advancing Racial & Health Equity Strategic Priority
- 2016: Racial & Health Equity Sr. Manager & Planner positions
- 2017: Racial & Health Equity Learning Institute, Committee & Action Plan
- 2020: Racial Equity & Community Engagement COVID Response Team





County’s emergency operations center

Embedding racial equity across the COVID-19 response, structure and in partnership with community

East San Jose

Community Health and Business Engagement Team

117 specially trained Community Health Workers to individually engage community members and businesses where they live and work in a linguistically and culturally competent manner.

Sí Se Puede! Collective

25 CHW
15 hours/week

SOMOS Mayfair
Amigos De Guadalupe
Grail Family Services
The School of Arts and Culture
Veggielution

Community Health Partnerships

15 CHW
35 - 40 hours/week

Gardner Health Services (5)
Indian Health Center (2)
AACI (2)
School Health Clinics (2)
Ravenswood (1)
Planned Parenthood (2)
North East Medical Services (1)

Roots Clinic

7 CHW
15 - 20 hours/week

Roots Clinic
Ujima Adult and Family Services
Unity Care
African American Community Services Agency

Fair Workplace Collaborative

60 CHW
35 - 40 hours/week

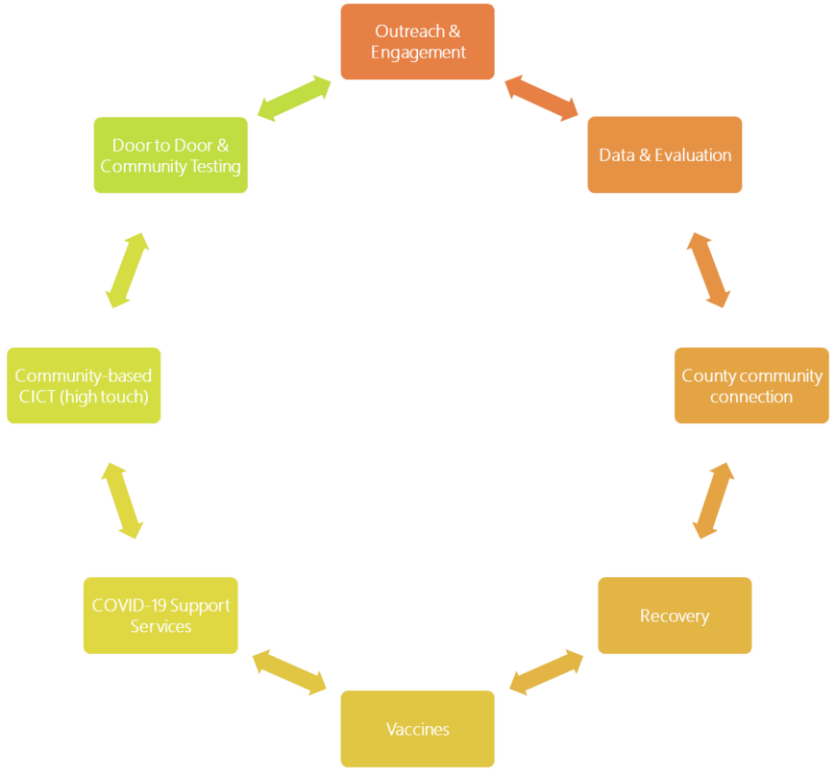
Working Partnerships USA
Day Worker Center of Mt. View
Step Forward Foundation
Pilipino Association of Workers and Immigrants
Vietnamese American Roundtable
Enterprise Foundation
Latino Business Council of SV

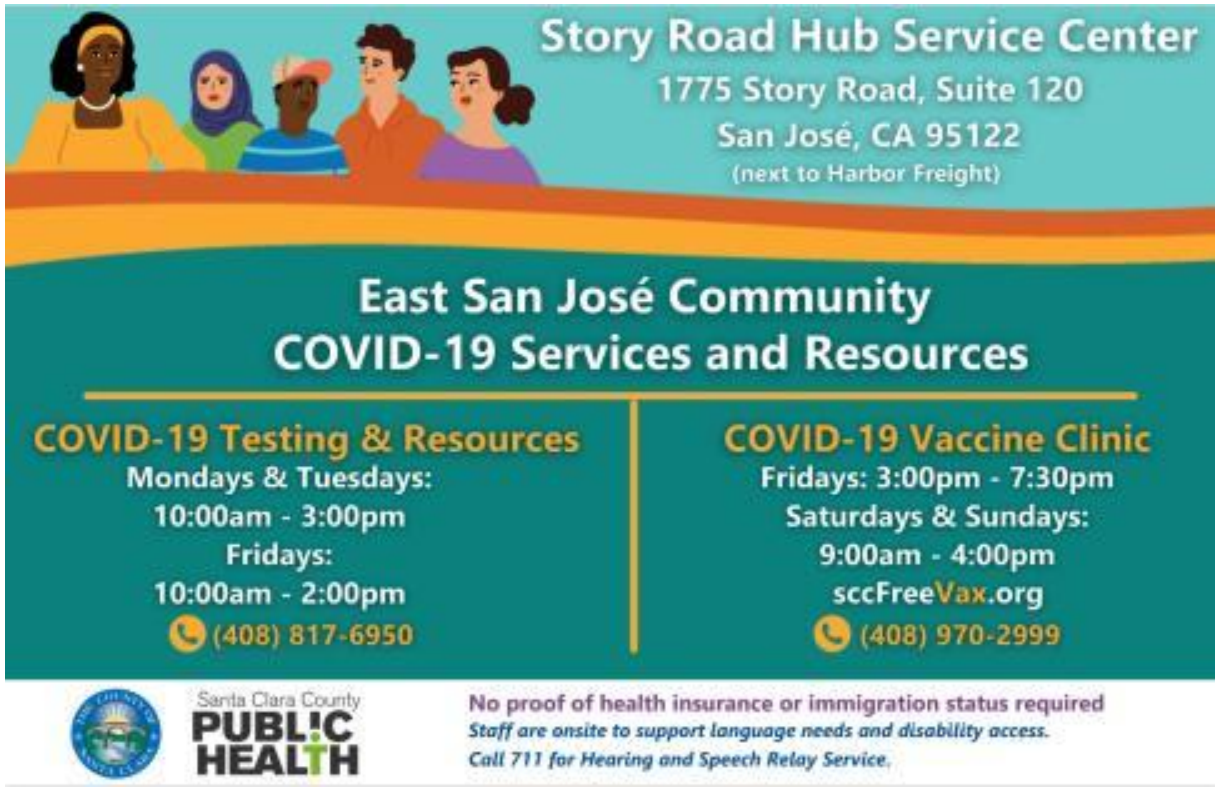
Nueva Vida

10 CHW
15 - 20 hours/week

South County Outreach

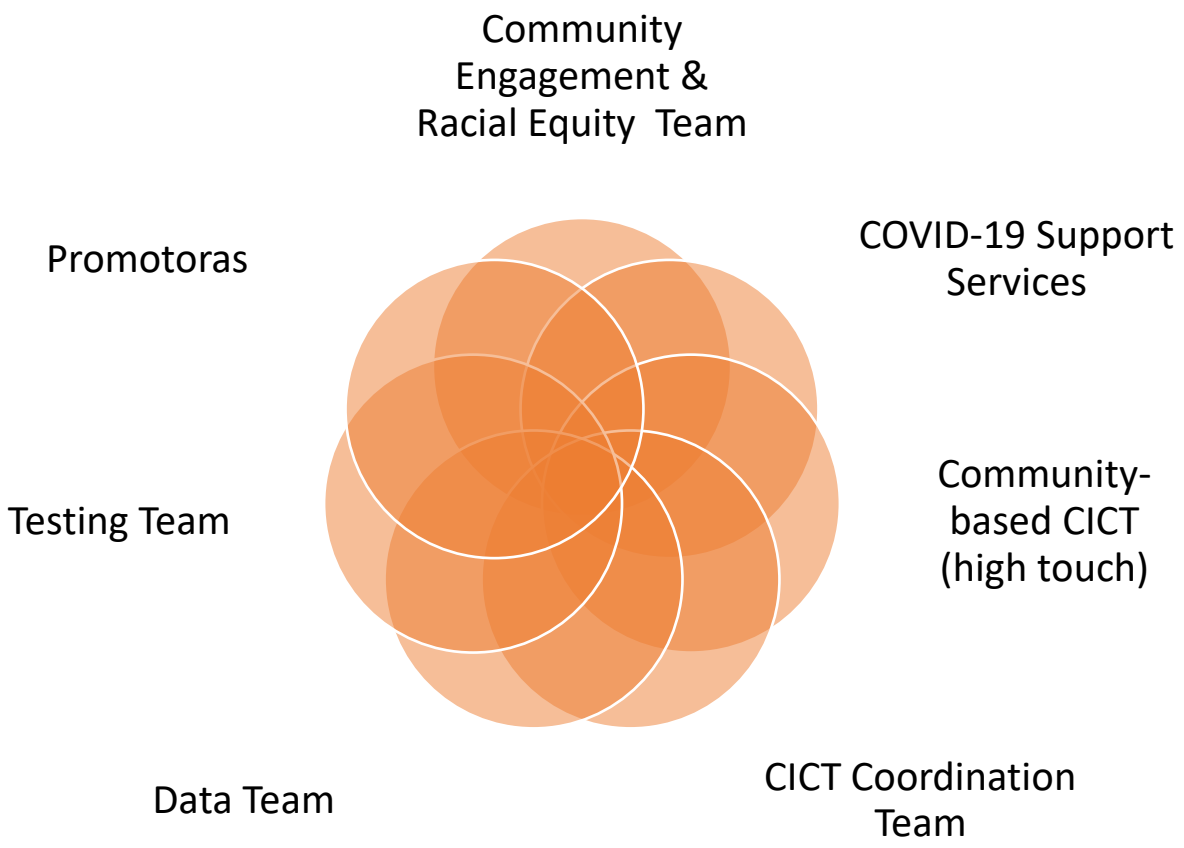
Accomplishments

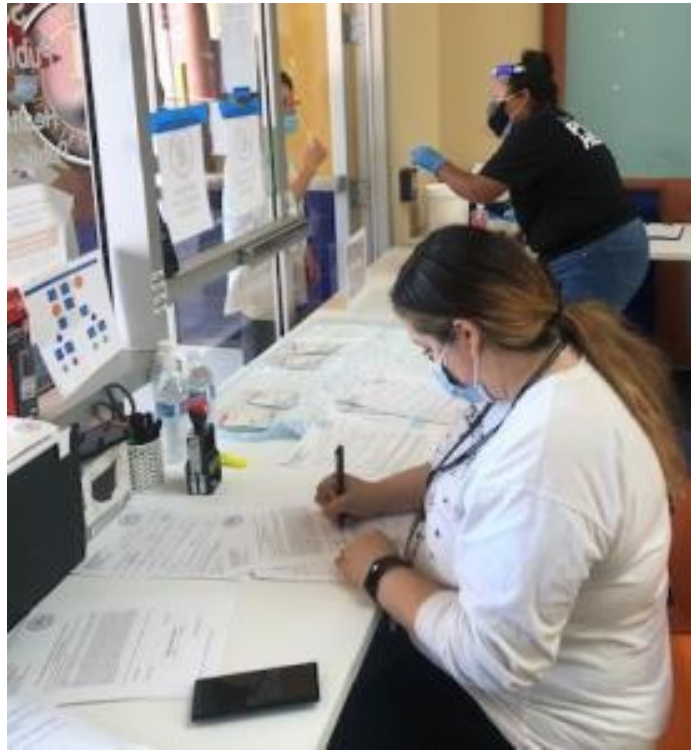


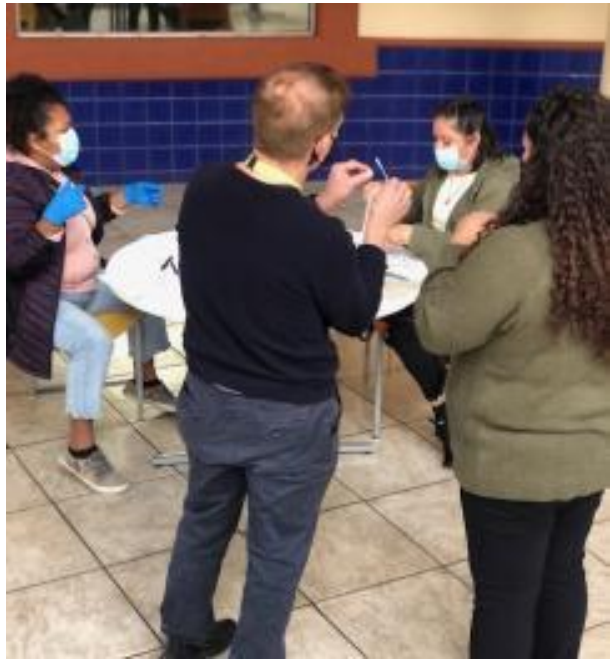


Racial Equity COVID-19 Strategies

Neighborhood Door to Door Testing







African/African Ancestry Community Partners of Santa Clara County

AACSA

SINCE 1993 UNITY CARE

ROOTS community health center

Ujima

¡Sí Se Puede! Collective

Challenges & Opportunities

EMBEDDING EQUITY IN THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRUCTURE

EMBEDDING EQUITY IN THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRUCTURE

Formalizing and Strengthening the Role of the Equity Officer in Emergency Operations During COVID-19 and Beyond

CITY OF LONG BEACH

KATIE BALDERAS, MPH
Equity Officer
City of Long Beach Office of Equity

REGINALD HARRISON
Director
City of Long Beach Department of Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Operations

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

- Serves as the focal point for the City's emergency response efforts
- Brings together highly trained staff and state-of-the-art technology
- Coordinates resources, information and emergency communications
- Monitors information sources for existing and potential threats

LONG BEACH OFFICE OF EQUITY

- **2017:** Office of Equity Established in LB Dept. of Health & Human Services
- **2019:** Released Equity Toolkit for City Leaders and Staff
- **2020:** Equity team established in EOC for COVID-19 response
- **2021:** Equity officer role developed to deploy at activation of Level 2 or above

Equity is when everyone can reach their highest level of health and potential for a successful life, regardless of their background and identity.

ICS STRUCTURE AND EQUITY

The **Incident Command System** (**ICS**) is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective.

ROLE OF THE EQUITY OFFICER

- **Function:** Assure that vulnerable population needs are included in EOC response and recovery plans, and equitable considerations and accommodations are made at the field level.
- **Example Tasks:**
  - Coordinate with EOC Director and staff on EOC response plans to ensure they include equity considerations (i.e. multi-lingual shelter staff, accessible testing sites for all populations)
  - Work with PIO/JIC to ensure communications being disseminated are equitable to all communities
  - Ensure EOC staff are updated on equity-related issues and report out on equity considerations
  - Interface with vulnerable populations and trusted messengers to provide situational awareness

"Equity is the consistent and systematic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals."

FEMA Definition of Equity, Sept. 2021

EMBEDDING EQUITY IN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

The Office of Equity was officially embedded in the Emergency Operations Structure during the COVID-19 activation.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

March 2020

Language Access efforts integrated with COVID-19 Emergency Response

April/May 2020

COVID-19 Focus Groups with Black, Cambodian & Latinx community leaders

June 2020

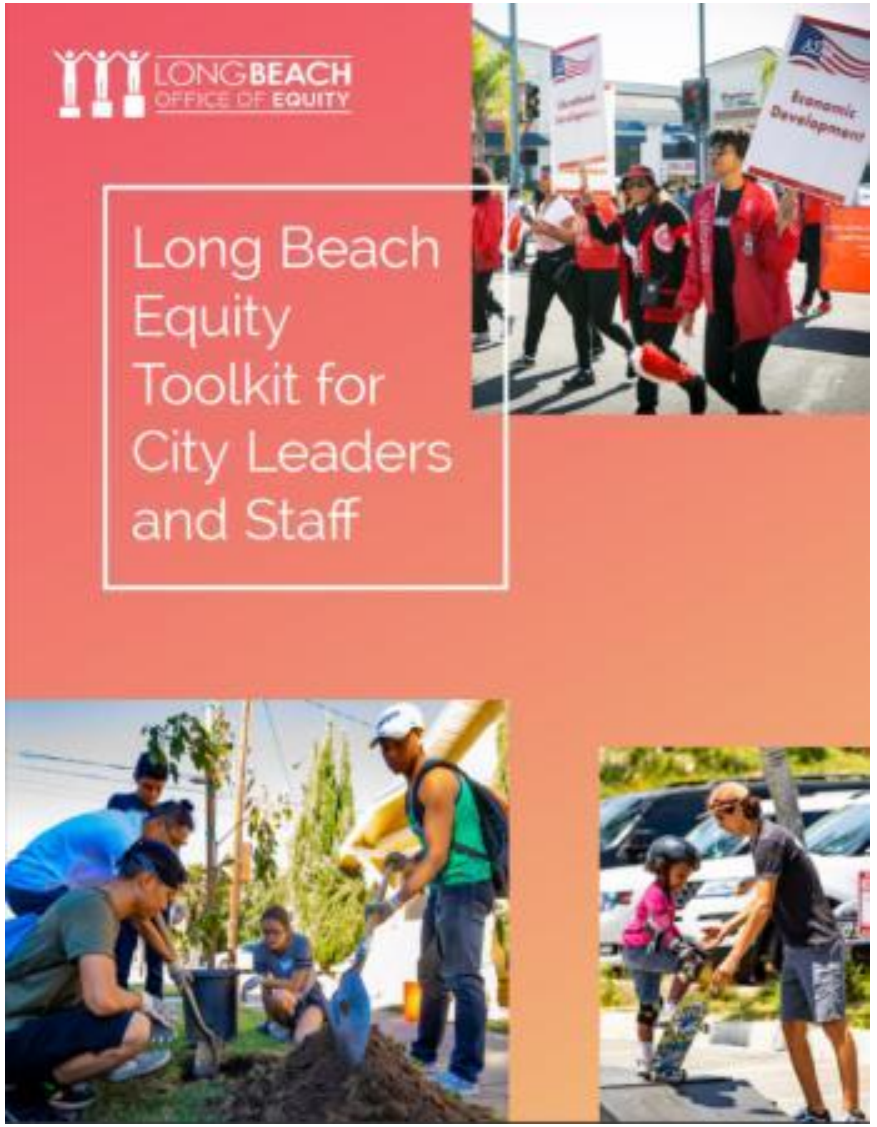
Shifted equity team's focus to Framework for Reconciliation

December - July

Vaccine equity planning and collaboration

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Used input from impacted communities to shape strategies for testing & vaccination rollout
- Developed culturally focused education & communications strategies
- Collaboration with grassroots community organizations & leaders
- Focused on equity-centered and trauma informed narrative



LOOKING AHEAD

- Train & prepare equity reps to step into disaster response role
- Adapt equity tools & templates for response plans
- Explore opportunities to institutionalize position with FEMA resources & training
- Share our experience & learn what other jurisdictions are doing

THANK YOU!

REGINALD HARRISON
Director
City of Long Beach Department of Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Operations
Reggie.Harrison@longbeach.gov

KATIE BALDERAS, MPH
Equity Officer
City of Long Beach Office of Equity
Katie.Balderas@longbeach.gov

The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) is a coalition of the San Francisco Bay Area's eleven public health departments committed to advancing health equity. BARHII's mission is to transform public health practice for the purpose of eliminating health inequities using a broad spectrum of approaches that create healthy communities. For more information about BARHII, please visit http://barhii.org.

Contacts:
Melissa Jones, Executive Director, mjones@barhii.org

The Public Health Alliance of Southern California (Alliance) is a coalition of ten local health departments in Southern California. Collectively our members have statutory responsibility for the health of nearly 60% of California's population. Our mission is to "mobilize the transformative power of local public health for enduring health equity." For more information about the Alliance, please visit http://PHASoCal.org/.

Contacts:
Marley Williams, Health Equity & Justice Manager, mwilliams@phi.org