



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 22, 2024

TO: EDB Advisory Board

FROM: Ethan Brown, Executive Director

SUBJECT: DEI and DEBA practices at the EDB




While the mission of the EDB is expanding in breadth, the core work of the department aligns with the definition of economic development: *The creation of wealth from which community benefits are realized, investment in growing the economy, and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all residents.*

While this has historically been practiced through our strong relationships with local businesses, the past seven years or so have raised the importance of a holistic, community-oriented approach, as well as acknowledgment that equity is not simply providing resources equally; it is understanding how to create and deliver individualized and culturally relevant resources to all members of the community. Without this approach, it would be impossible to ensure we are enhancing quality of life and prosperity for all residents.

Against this backdrop, in 2020, the County of Sonoma launched its Office of Equity as a stand-alone department. Though focused on internal DEI practices, the coursework, convenings, workshops and other learning opportunities the department facilitated have been a valuable resource for staff and have helped to inform our community focused approach.




As requested by the EDB Advisory Board at its April meeting, below is a brief list of DEI focused programming and practices EDB staff have developed or continue to undertake in their daily work. The list is intended to be a high-level overview of select examples, not an exhaustive inventory.

- GARE toolkit application as prescribed by the CAO and County Clerk through the BOS agenda process for significant items. Broader use at the beginning of project development will be possible as resources become less constrained.
- The EDB logo and brand refresh (as well as other programmatic designs) were created with accessibility and cultural relevancy as top priorities
- Staff are currently undertaking the first major effort to invest in the Business Diversity program in nine years (since inception)
- Translation of critical information without dedicated funding from the BOS for the purpose, and well ahead of formal policy direction
- Broadband staff are exploring unique partnership to facilitate broadband access in low income Multi Family Dwellings

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- Staff undertook a program redesign of Restaurant Week to include more family-oriented options, provided translation of materials, workshops and facilitated outreach through trusted community partners
- Since 2016, Creative Sonoma has included a question in grant applications on whether an organization provides programs within/to residents of underserved communities and populations, along with a tie in to communities highlighted in the Portrait of Sonoma.
- Staff have successfully launched and executed two COVID-related business grant programs, each with a representation at or above population share for successful BIPOC applicants.

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