

Racial Equity Team Update

Presentation to the **Library Advisory Commission**

Monday, February 22, 2021





Welcome!

Today's Presenters:

- **Celia Davis**
Branch Manager, Martin L. King, Jr. Branch
- **Linda Nguyễn**
Teen Services Librarian, César E. Chávez Branch

OPL Racial Equity Case Statement



Racial inequities exist across all institutions in our society, and those in power, including the government, are responsible. We can understand how communities of color are impacted by this locally when we look at data from Oakland's Equity Indicators Report, that shows us:

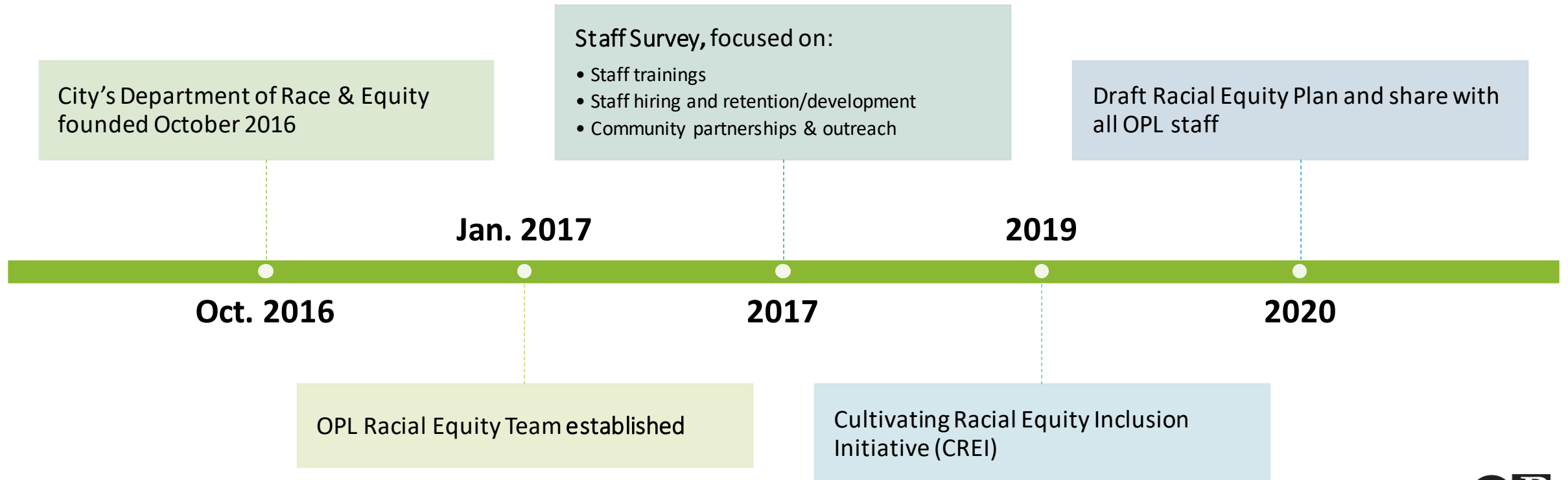
- African Americans are at least three times more likely than Whites to be living at or below the federal poverty level
- Latino and African American students are at least five times more likely than White students to score "Standard Not Met" on 3rd grade reading proficiency tests
- African American youth are at least 110 times more likely to be arrested on felony charges than White juveniles

Another study by Race Counts tells us that, in our community, Indigenous youth are least likely to graduate from high school, and Pacific Islander students are most likely to be homeless. Overall, Alameda County is the 4th most racially disparate county in California.

If the library remains neutral while these staggering disparities exist, we uphold the status quo -- which is inequitable, unacceptable, and out of alignment with OPL's stated mission to empower ALL people to explore, connect, and grow.

We can instead choose to uphold Oakland's rich legacy of racial justice. As library workers, we hold a shared vision for our community to be strong and informed -- and we have the power to shape this together. To realize our vision, we must hold ourselves accountable in our commitment to and work towards racial equity, inclusion, and justice.

***“Racial equity is realized
when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes,
and outcomes for all groups are improved.”***



Cultivating Racial Equity Inclusion Initiative (CREI)

Immersive process designed to infuse a race and equity focus into organizational outcomes and service deliver through evidence-based shifts in operations, processes, and policies. OPL selected as one of 19 public library systems. Our Racial Equity Plan is an outcome.

Figure 1: The Racial Equity Action Plan Process



**Staff survey (2017) +
Ongoing feedback (staff & community) +
Race and Equity Team priorities (2019) +
Data availability (City racial indicators & OPL data) +
Current events (summer 2020) +
Racial Equity Toolkit (results-based accountability)**
=
Racial Equity Plan

***“All people
in Oakland
experience
safety
and
personal
agency.”***



Oakland Public Library is a model for public libraries in having fair and equitable policies of behavior and their enforcement.

Outcomes and Actions:

Having fair and equitable policies of behavior and their enforcement.



Goal I: *OPL operationalizes racial equity*

Main themes:


- Changes in structure, culture and transparency at OPL
- Ongoing training and learning opportunities
- Strategies for addressing racial incidents
- Engagement with the community





Action items:

- Systemized incident report collection
- Update OPL Guidelines of Behavior
- Invest in staff education and training
- Reform security guard model
- Partner with community organizations



Goal II:
Patrons feel respected and are treated with dignity



Goal III:

OPL is an equitable employer and staff at all levels represent the full diversity of the Oakland community

Improved Workplace Culture for BIPOC staff

Enhanced Recruitment Strategies
Representing Oakland's Diversity

Transparent Career Process
Understanding Civil Service Positions

Updating Library Job Class Specifications

Goal IV: *Programming will serve needs & interests of BIPOC communities*

- Racial Equity Lens applied to **all** programming decisions
- Enhanced community engagement
- Increased opportunities for BIPOC community members & organizations



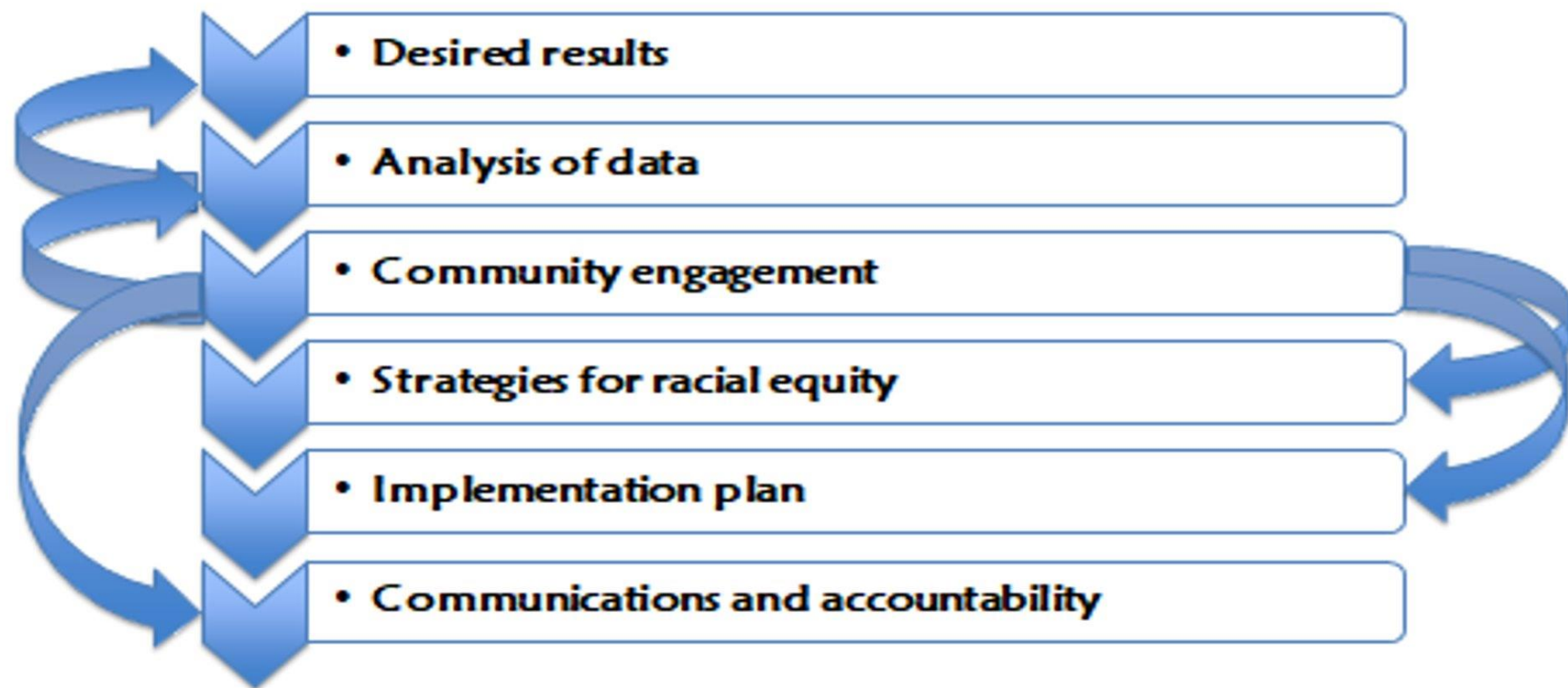
LAC & the Racial Equity Plan

(From Goal 1)

Support FOPL and the Library Advisory Commission in developing racial equity approach

- Staff will communicate its racial equity vision with FOPL and Library Advisory Commission and will offer support as needed to help align their racial equity goals with those of OPL

What is a Racial Equity Tool process?



Questions & Discussion:

What tools does LAC use to achieve racial equity?

What challenges do you currently face in working towards racial equity?

What kind of support do you need from the RET to help you meet your racial equity goals?

Resources

- City of Oakland's Department of Race & Equity:
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/departments/race-and-equity>
- Oakland Public Library's "A Letter to Oakland":
<https://oaklandlibrary.org/news/2020/06/letter-oakland>
- Oakland Equity Indicators Report:
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/documents/2018-oakland-equity-indicators-report>
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity's Racial Equity Toolkit:
<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-toolkit-opportunity-operationalize-equity/>

The image features a decorative background consisting of three overlapping circles in shades of green, arranged horizontally. A horizontal beige bar with a slight gradient is positioned across the middle of the circles. The text "Thank you!" is centered within this beige bar.

Thank you!