

12-2021

Supplementation of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Commitment to Equity

Cristian Paredez
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all

Recommended Citation

Paredez, Cristian, "Supplementation of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Commitment to Equity" (2021). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 1132.
https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/1132

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

Supplementation of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Commitment to

Equity

Cristian Paredez

The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc., Helen Ewan-Storey

Collaborative Health & Human Services

Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy

California State University, Monterey Bay

December 10, 2021

Author Note

Cristian Paredez, Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy, California State University Monterey Bay. This research was supported by the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Cristian Paredez, California State University Monterey Bay, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA, 93955. Contact: cparedez@csumb.edu.

Abstract

The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB) is a non-profit organization that aids low-income clients with emergency, sustaining, and self-sufficiency services through their specialized program areas. Through a micro-level assessment of the County, research indicates a growing rate of poverty among marginalized communities, particularly in the Latinx population. Inequities relating to the low-wage occupational outlook in highly populated Latinx communities coupled with a high unemployment rate in Santa Cruz County only exacerbate the cyclical issue of poverty. Among marginalized community members who are most affected, they are also faced with housing insecurity and lack of health insurance. This project is centered around CAB's commitment to equity. As service providers tasked with dismantling inequities with culturally grounded and relevant interventions to the diverse community, cultural competency is essential. The project implementation of an intern co-facilitated Equity Academy for staff along with an Equity Library shelved with literature recommendations from the community will help supplement staff's knowledge of equity, social justice, and cultural competence when working with vulnerable populations in the County. Findings concluded positive participant feedback from the Equity Academy with new perspectives on the term "equity" and what it means for the community they serve. Recommendations for the future include: a continued facilitation of Equity Academy classes with an increased number of participants and adding additional literature and materials that relate to CAB's core value of equity to their new library.

Keywords: Latinx, equity, poverty, vulnerable populations

Agency & Communities Served

For over 55 years the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB) has been serving low-income and underrepresented populations with their vision of creating a thriving, diverse, and equitable community free from poverty and injustice. This aligns with CAB's county-wide mission, "To partner with the community to eliminate poverty and create social change through advocacy and essential services" (CAB, n.d). With their core values that include service, inclusion, dignity and diversity, they're striving for collective action and advocacy that encourages empowerment and creates the change they envision.

The Community Action Board (CAB) is compartmentalized into four different program areas, each offering their own range of services. The Alcance program provides under-sourced youth and adults with economic opportunities and work skill development, through their Day Worker Center, a service that secures safe employment for day laborers. Another program area that CAB specializes in is housing and homelessness prevention, with services such as rental assistance, a program that assists with rental payments for low-income families at-risk for eviction. In addition to housing assistance, the Community Action Board also works out of their Davenport Resource Center that is dedicated to senior support and food distribution for Northern Santa Cruz County residents. The fourth program area of the agency provides legal immigration services such as work permit, citizenship, and DACA applications or renewals.

In CAB's Journey 2021 presentation Executive Director, Maria Elena de la Garza asserts that there have been over 8,500 clients served from 2020 to early 2021 through their four aforementioned program areas. This 85% Latinx clientele base also includes over three quarters having family incomes of less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline, according to the

same presentation. Below this Federal Poverty Level generally indicates the inability to purchase health insurance, thus remaining uninsured. Demographic data published in their Community Action Plan connects the narrative about poverty and ethnicity in Santa Cruz County. This reveals the Latinx population is disproportionately affected by higher rates of poverty as a result of inequality and inequitable opportunities in the community.

Problem Description

CAB's Community Action Plan outlines both these issues of inequity and inequality that contribute to the growing rate of poverty among the Latinx population in Santa Cruz County. With Santa Cruz being only the second smallest of 58 counties in California, the poverty rate was a staggering 10.6% in 2019 (United States Census Bureau, 2019). While the Hispanic/Latinx community accounts for only 34.0% of the population, the poverty rate for their respective group was 10.9% during the same year, as opposed to 9.8% of the White population (United States Census Bureau, 2019). Furthermore, DataShare Santa Cruz County (2021) shows that the median Hispanic/Latinx household income was \$68,415 compared to their White counterparts' median of \$103,384. This is a clear indication that this group faces financial adversities at higher rates than their counterparts in Santa Cruz County, resulting in the difficulty of meeting basic needs.

With poverty being the central issue, the underrepresented Latinx population lacks the opportunities that would break the ongoing cycle of poverty. High unemployment rates, a low-wage occupational outlook, and barriers to accessing resources and services like CalFresh Food or "Section 8" rental assistance are all contributing factors regarding the issue of impoverishment in Hispanic and other marginalized communities. The consequences include: housing insecurity and homelessness, the lack of health insurance coupled with unmet physical

and mental health needs, and prejudice towards Hispanic community members based on stereotypes including socioeconomic status. With a concerning lack of opportunities relating to destitution, the Community Action Board plays a critical role in assisting the vulnerable populations. As their “War on Poverty” continues, so does their commitment to diversity to grow and reflect the community. For CAB, intervention services require cultural competence when integrating their disciplinary knowledge of health and human services at all levels of facilitation, both internal and external. As a result, data from CAB’s Journey 2021, as reported by Maria Elena, indicates that board, leadership, and staff makeup has evolved to include over 50% Latinx representation in all three of these sectors independently. For this community, however, a demographic shift in leadership is only a fraction of the work that is needed to bring social justice and an end to poverty.

Contributing Factors

The Hispanic population in Santa Cruz County is affected by disproportionately higher rates of poverty. One of the contributing factors is the high unemployment rate in the County, particularly in predominately Latinx communities. Of their four major incorporated cities, Watsonville has the second highest population behind Santa Cruz, with 53,800 inhabitants and a 81.9% Hispanic or Latinx population in 2019, according to the latest United States Census Bureau data (2019). This makes Watsonville to be the city with the highest Hispanic population in the County. The unemployment rate during the same time period was at 6.6% in Watsonville compared to 4.3% in the predominantly White neighboring city of Capitola, as shown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Data (2019). The unemployment rate for the Hispanic population in Watsonville was almost double the national average of 3.5% during the same year (Bureau of

Labor Statistics Data, 2019). This employment inequality contributes to the issue of growing insolvency among this marginalized population in Santa Cruz County.

Among the contributing factors is the projected outlook of occupations in the area that happen to be low wage. This is in addition to the slow employment growth rate of 2.0% in South Santa Cruz County, whose residents already face disproportionately high poverty rates (Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board, 2018). These growing occupations are projected to employ +1,000 plus Santa Cruz County residents by 2024. Of them they include: personal care aides, food preparation and services, cooks in restaurants, and laborers with median hourly wages between \$11.38 - \$14.04 as of 2016 (California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, 2016). This is an issue because according to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculation (2019) tool, for Santa Cruz County, CA, calculates that two working adults supporting two children need to both be making \$30.33/hour to sustain a living wage, above the poverty threshold, as opposed to the current minimum wage of \$14.00/hour. In 2016, the employment sector in Watsonville had an average hourly wage of \$15.76, almost half the liveable wage calculation of \$30.33/hour (Santa Cruz Community Ventures, 2016). Currently there are 21,000 farmworkers in Santa Cruz County as stated by Ann Lopez, an independent researcher studying Mexican farmworker families, in her interview with the Santa Cruz Sentinel (2018). The issue with this, is that farmworkers are subject to seasonal employment thus becoming unemployed once particular crop seasons are over for the year. This contributes to the high unemployment rate that the County is facing which happens to be hitting the Hispanic population the hardest.

Barriers to accessing resources and services like CalFresh Food or “Section 8” rental assistance presents another contributing factor. The County of Santa Cruz, Human Services Department (2018) reports that during the 2017-18 fiscal year, only 25,500 County residents received CalFresh food assistance out of the estimated 37,400 residents that were eligible for the service. That is nearly one third of eligible, low-income, residents not receiving benefits meant to combat hunger and poor nutrition. This can be tied to stigmas surrounding government provided food assistance, as identified in community dialogue sessions hosted by the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (2016) where residents expressed this as a concern. This produces a barrier to access for eligible low-income residents. As for “Section 8”, personally communicated information to the Community Action Board from Ellen Murtha, Senior Administrative Analyst, for The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, stated that there were still over 2,600 applicants on the waiting list for rental assistance “Section 8” vouchers (2018). Additionally, The Housing Authority of Santa Cruz website claims that due to a high demand for assistance that outnumbers the amount of vouchers available, the wait for assistance is “typically several years” (2018). These barriers and inequities to services perpetuate the instability of being able to rely on federal, state, and local assistance programs. The issues can also be traced back to the federal poverty threshold, in the reasoning that this arbitrary standard does not take into account the cost of living per region, where it’s worth mentioning that Santa Cruz County is the second least affordable county in the U.S. (Catey Hill, 2016). All of these factors culminate into the bigger problem of growing poverty among the marginalized community members.

Consequences

The consequences of growing impoverishment are of a variety. Housing insecurity and rent burden, the high number of uninsured individuals with unmet health needs, and discrimination and prejudice towards the Hispanic community are all outcomes of this increased rate of poverty. Marginalized members of the community lack equitable and equal access to resources, opportunities, and services. These consequences are generational, this aversive cycle of poverty does not end with just a few individuals or households; it stems greater lengths in the grand scheme. Grandparents, mothers and fathers, and children are all victims of this pernicious effect called poverty.

As stated earlier, Santa Cruz County is one of the top unaffordable places to live in the country. An estimate by Catey Hill (2016) revealed that it would require more than 111% of the average wage to buy and own a median-priced home in the area. Average rent in 2017 was \$1,975 for a two-bedroom unit, or \$2,810 for a single family residence (Year 23 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, 2017). Based on the median hourly wage during that period (\$14.06) it would have required one to work 2.5 jobs to be able to afford rent in the County. More on the subject, an astonishing 40% of renters reported not being able to meet basic needs in 2017 which included food and childcare (Year 23 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, 2017). The effects of the high rent burden and housing insecurity has its own consequences of homeless and overcrowding. The Santa Cruz County Homeless Census & Survey 2017 published the number of homeless individuals in the County which was 2,249, with 80% being unsheltered but nearly a third, or 31%, being employed; moreover, this homelessness was attributed to job loss (25%) and evictions (14%). Overcrowding is another dwelling issue

among residents, where two or more families live in a unit suitable for only one. This can negatively affect physical and mental health, personal safety, and even childhood development and education (University of California Santa Cruz Center for Labor Studies, 2017). The UCSC Center for Labor Studies (2017) has reported that out of the 27% of respondents that have experienced overcrowding, 40% were from Watsonville, the predominantly Hispanic community as shown by previously mentioned demographical data. Respondents from the same survey also answered if they were ever forced to move, with Latinx respondents (55%) experiencing forced moves, higher than White respondents (46%) (University of California Santa Cruz Center for Labor Studies, 2017). This is a fraction compared to the only 16% of those 27% of respondents residing on the west side of Santa Cruz. With this information and supplemental data, it supports the evidence of the ongoing housing crisis and that low paying occupations are just not enough, yet are projected to keep growing, and that the needs of housing vouchers are not receiving enough support from government agencies. Furthermore, it highlights the inequities faced by Latinx population, particularly when connecting the dots between the overcrowding data and Watsonville demographics.

Lack of health insurance is another critical consequence of poverty. Over seven 7% of County residents had no health insurance, this equates to 19,500 people (United States Census Bureau, 2017). This lack of health insurance prevents many individuals and families from accessing healthcare services they may be in need of, it's also necessary to state that there are some low-income households that do not even qualify for Medi-Cal, based on community output. This leads to fewer preventative services and higher rates of hospitalizations and ER visits (Year 23 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, 2017).

Finally, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes towards Hispanic community members is another poverty related issue. One in seven surveyed residents in 2017 reported to have experienced discrimination in Santa Cruz County during 2016, where 19.4% Latinxs indicating yes, more than Whites at 11.1% (Year 23 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, 2017). In the same survey 53.1% felt the discrimination was on the basis or ethnicity or race and 15.4% based on socioeconomic status. On the subject of ethnicity, juvenile arrest rates among particular groups are just as unsettling. The Latinx and African American population only made up 35.3% of the population in 2016, yet accounted for 70.6% of juvenile arrests in Santa Cruz County that year. This outlines a disparity in how our marginalized communities are treated based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status, an issue, and consequence, that has ties back to poverty.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
High unemployment rate in the SCC	There are too many Latinx individuals living in poverty in Santa Cruz County	Housing insecurity and rent burden
Projected outlook increase of low-wage occupations		Higher uninsured individuals with unmet physical and mental health needs
Barriers to accessing resources and services like CalFresh Food or “Section 8”		The cyclical problem of growing discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes towards Hispanic community members based on race and socioeconomic status

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

The proposed Capstone project is the creation of a physical equity library with relevant training and capacity building materials to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) objectives. These materials will include educational materials and resources relating to DEI, session reflections from the newly formed Equity Academy, and will be open to all agency staff. Materials will be derived from presenters and facilitators of the Equity Academy initiative as well as work developed by professionals in the diversity and equity field. Physical materials will include: literature surrounding the topic of inequities as suggested by the intern, staff, and community agencies such as academic institutions, local bookstores, and libraries in Santa Cruz County; and outsourced informational pamphlets. The intern, as an Equity Academy co-facilitator over the course of four sessions, will allow them to explore and understand the needs and assets of the communities through the perspectives of the service providers selected to be in the academy. The current eight participants were all nominated by their respective program directors within CAB. Monthly sessions include guest speakers with presentations revolving around DEI-related subjects. The ultimate goal of the academy is to leverage data for community action for grant applications, reports, letters, and partner communications. Furthermore, this Equity Academy will plant the seed for future concrete strategies for participants' equity journey at CAB and beyond. A digital Equity Library will be published in a place that is available to all of the agency through OneDrive, or other means as it continues to develop and grow, and the physical library will be placed in the staff break room. This is designed to support the

Community Action Board staff and those they serve by ensuring the practice and knowledge of cultural competency, in turn benefitting the culturally diverse Santa Cruz County community.

Project Purpose

Previously mentioned data established that the Latinx population faces a disproportionate rate of poverty in Santa Cruz County due to a number of contributing factors. The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County works to dismantle these social inequities, such as advocating for further funding for wider accessibility to food or rent resources and services. With a large vulnerable Latinx population it's critical that Community Action Board staff properly utilize knowledge of health and human services coupled with cross cultural competency to serve Latinx, and other ethnic minority groups, appropriately and effectively. By understanding the differences between self and others, and engaging in a process characterized by mutual respect and sensitivity of culturally diverse populations, CAB is able to deliver the appropriate health and human service to the greatest degree possible.

The Equity Library establishment project will supplement the agency's existing equity values. This equity approach will encompass cultural humility, advocacy, and internal action and reflection for external involvement in community wide equity efforts. The development of this physical and digital library will aid CAB's mission of eliminating poverty and creating social change in a manner best representative and reflective of the community they serve.

Project Justification

A culturally diverse community means a diverse set of needs, as well as capabilities. The creation of the equity material library will serve as a tool for agency staff in furthering their ability to support the variety of groups in the community as culturally competent as possible. The

Community Action Board has a commitment to diversity in their agency. According to Medina, 87% of all nonprofit executive directors or presidents are White (2017). And just as alarming, almost 79% of nonprofit board members are of the same race too (The Nonprofit Times, 2018). CAB also draws attention to the fact that almost 83% of full-time staff members are White in non-profits across the country (Sullivan, 2020). CAB's Executive Director Maria Elena poses the question "why are these the people in charge of creating change for communities that look nothing like them?" (CAB's Journey 2021 PPT, 2021). It's with these statistics in mind that CAB has challenged these traditional demographics. Since Maria Elena's onboarding five years ago, the leadership demographic has shifted to be reflective of the 85% Latinx clientele. Since 2013, board make up has shifted from 68% White and 16% Latinx, to 54% Latinx and 39% White in 2021, leadership has also had a significant change from 75% White and 25% Latinx in 2013, to 25% White and 75% Latinx in 2021 (CAB's Journey 2021 PPT, 2021). Currently, CAB's staff demographics include 81% Latinx, 16% White, and 2% Pacific Islander, unfortunately data from 2013 CAB staff makeup was never surveyed (CAB's Journey 2021 PPT, 2021). However, this clearly articulates their commitment to change and diversity. With a staff representative of the community, the Equity Library will continually assist in educating new hires and current staff of other areas of growth within the DEI subject matter.

Project Implementation

Implementation has started with the formation of the Equity Academy, where eight participants from different program areas within the organization were nominated to be a part of. Monthly sessions, totaling four from March - June 2021, were attended and co-facilitated by Isai Ambrosio, Program Director of the Davenport Resource Service Center, and the intern, Cristian

Paredes. Each session was joined by an expert on the DEI subject, with discussions and activities following the presentation. To name some of these experts they were: Alfonso López Vázquez, President of ALVA Equity and Diversity Consultants, and Elaine Johnson, Program Coordinator of Neighborhood Courts. Reflections were then written up by the co-facilitating Capstone author and published with the review and approval from Program Director, Isai Ambrosio and Assistant Director of CAB, Helen Ewan-Storey.

Discussions during these sessions included an introduction to DEI; dialogue of structural inequities and their role as service providers to dismantle them; identifying needs and assets in our community; discussing results-based frameworks for internal and external equity development; and leveraging data for community action to create a powerful narrative for reports, letters, and partner communications. Activities during these sessions were icebreakers to create a comfortable environment; breakout rooms to discuss the above mentioned topics; activities to discuss these topics as a whole group in an online interactive polling format known as Mentimeter; and the distribution of “goodie bags” before the first session with supplies for miscellaneous activities during these meetings. At the end of each meeting a survey was conducted by the participants that measured the session speaker and topic relevance to their work. As the Equity Subcommittee expands in the coming months, materials will be added to the digital and physical Equity Library. A detailed implementation plan and timeline can be seen in the Scope of Work in Appendix A.

The physical Equity Library is located in the staff break room for ease of accessibility. During the initial development stage the intern reached out to local bookstores, the Watsonville and Santa Cruz Public Libraries, and Cabrillo College for their literature recommendations on

the topic of equity. The reasoning behind this was to encompass public reflection on this topic from community agents themselves allowing for an accurate representation on the issue. Of the responses received, three prints were chosen: *Song of the Stubborn One Thousand The Watsonville Canning Strike, 1985-87* by Peter Shapiro, *Dear America, Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* by Jose Antonio Vargas, and the first edition of *Journal X*, a collection of creative works published by the Cabrillo College Wastonville Center and edited by English 1B students seeking to bring awareness about global and local social justice issues. These pieces of literature will be used as the foundation of the Equity Library and labeled as “Community Picks”. Moreover, a section is designated for “Staff Picks”, which as of December includes four books as recommended by the Capstone author and open for further additions by agency staff.

Assessment Plan

To measure the effectiveness of the Equity Academy sessions surveys were sent out after every session. These surveys were used to assess the effectiveness of guest speakers’ presentations and its relevance to participant’s programs. It was also used to measure how important the participants found the topic of the session to be. As for the Equity Library, assessments were done via Zoom conversations with the intern’s primary and secondary mentor after they’ve had a chance to review the library and materials. This assessment gauges whether they’ve gained, or developed, a further understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion and its importance to CAB and the community.

Expected Outcomes

The intern believes that the project will supplement CAB’s commitment to equity and their promotion of social justice in their equity-based approaches. Also, current and new staff

will be able to relate to the importance of DEI after reviewing the contents of the newly established library. The ultimate goal for this project is to aid and support the practice and knowledge of cultural competency by the service providers at the Community Action Board as they work with the culturally diverse and vast Santa Cruz County population.

Project Results

Surveys were developed and conducted by Program Director, Isai Ambrosio and the intern for three out of the four Equity Academy Sessions for the eight participants. Session one yielded six responses, Session two - four responses, and Session four - five responses. Out of the six responses from the first session's survey, out of 5, when asked about the importance they found in the discussion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) the calculated average response was 4.5. A quote included by a participant under the question about whether there were any topics still unclear stated "I think these types of conversations are still new to me. In general I'd like to get more familiar with DEI and eventually implement what I learn to better serve my community". This response was the aim for this discussion and overall implementation of the Equity Academy, which was furthering CAB's service providers knowledge on DEI and equity that they are able to then reflect in their work with clients.

During session two, CAB Director, Maria Elena de la Garza was invited to speak about her personal experience and journey regarding equity at the agency. In the post-survey the question of "What is 1 point that you feel is important to know as a CABista (agency service provider), based on Maria Elena's presentation?" One response asserted that:

"I think it is [very] important for all Cabistas to know that this has been such an intentional journey for CAB to get to where we are today and to understand the

value of an agency that values equity in all areas, board, staff, clients, mission statement etc.”

This response indicates the relevancy of the topic in discussion, that equity is valued and of importance at all levels of the agency.

In the third and final post-session survey that concluded the Equity Academy, participants were asked to give feedback on their experience and knowledge gained as a result of the entire four 2-hour sessions collectively. One question asked participants to explain their definition of equity, and whether it was changed or reinforced. Here are some of the expected outcome responses the Equity Committee hoped to achieve:

“I was not familiar with the term equity before this academy as I always thought it was the same as the term equal. Equity in a community is the idea of eliminating all the gaps in social issues (racism, unfair pay, etc..) by providing a personalized type of support for each individual based on their need”

“Equity is everyone having equal access to services, whether it’s coming from nonprofit, medical, justice system, etc. I feel like my definition has changed because I was mainly thinking of services that are low cost, or at no charge, but Equity is much more than just that. It goes all the way to lawmaking, and policies”

Responses like these reinforced this section of the project's importance. The Equity Library section of the Capstone project yielded positive feedback from staff. This was in

the form of electronic responses to the all-staff email chain sent out by the intern about the newly developed library after it's implementation.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The completion of the author's Capstone project produced a quantified high level of satisfaction with a high qualitative significance within the agency as noted in the previous section. The intern's conclusion based on the results gathered is that inclusiveness yielded responsiveness, an important step when sparking a discussion about equity. This was a key takeaway from the Equity Academy where the participants provided valuable feedback about the inequities they witnessed firsthand as service providers in the community. In turn this information was presented in the form of an executive summary to Executive Director Maria Elena de la Garza. This research communicated to the author that both initiatives should be continued within the agency, which are: rotations of staff members in Equity Academy every four calendar months, and the continued supplementation of the physical Equity Library in the breakroom with literature that promotes the knowledge of equity and social justice topics. Recommendations moving forward, as presented by the intern, are that new hires be considered as priority candidates for the Equity Academy so that they have ensured understanding of CAB's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion priority with an anti-racism foundation and impact.

Personal Reflection

During my time at the Community Action Board I was taught a great deal about the inequities that plague Santa Cruz County, particularly marginalized communities that include Latinx and African American populations. Income gaps, disproportionate poverty rates, and low-wage occupational growth rates in densely populated Latinx areas were quantified to me for

the first time. It shocked me, being a resident of this County all of my life yet ignorant to all of the social issues around me when it came to the bigger picture. This is where my planning and implementation of my project started, this was my baseline. Being a part of this agency I also learned their core values as an anti-poverty agency, where equity was their top priority. With these two topics in mind, social justice and equity, I looked to tie these together to develop a project that supplements their mission and vision of an equitable and thriving community. This, of course, was a “planting the seed” project that is useful in the long-run by providing equity insights to staff through the academy and literature, and gathering their feedback to be provided to the Executive Director.

There were many factors that contributed to the success of this project. A collaborative team effort to jumpstart the Equity Academy with a Program Director knowledgeable on the topic was a critical component to the success. Furthermore, collaboration and strong communication with my primary mentor, Assistant Director, Helen Ewan-Storey, encouraged my project development and implementation. The few limitations to the project came with the implementation of the physical Equity Library, where room for such a bookshelf was limited, even in the breakroom; however, this did not stop full development. Another limitation was the ability to gather staff feedback on the library due to time constraints with the date of the library put-together and write-up due dates.

This Capstone project addresses the broader social issue by planting the seed of the importance and knowledge of equity as it relates to the community and our service providers work and cultural competence. Culturally grounded, relevant, and competent interventions are constantly developing at the Community Action Board to address their mission and it’s what I

believe should continue to best assist their client's varying needs. For future capstone students that will intern at CAB I believe it's beneficial to understand all of the agency's moving components and programs, and to attempt to recognize how they all relate to each other in a collaborative effort. With this fundamental understanding of the CAB capstone ideas will seem abundant. This will provide them with the opportunity to develop a project that they are passionate about and that benefits the community, with the assistance of the Community Action Board staff.

References

23 Year Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project. (2017). Retrieved from

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5176dcd7e4b0e5c0dba41ee0/t/5a0c83eee4966b4ad903814c/1510769658644/CAP+23+Report_FINAL.pdf

Community Action Plan Full Report. (2019). Retrieved from

<https://cabinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CAB-Community-Action-Plan-Full-Report.pdf>

County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department FY 2017-18 Annual Report. (2018).

Retrieved from

<https://santacruzhumanservices.org/Portals/0/hsd/reports/FY%2017.18%20HSD%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Cruz, S. (2021). DataShare Santa Cruz County. Retrieved April 05, 2021, from

<https://www.datasharescc.org/demographicdata?id=281&ionId=936>

de la Garza, M. E. (2021). *CAB's Journey 2021* [PowerPoint slides].

Hill, C. (2016, September 30). The Most Unaffordable Place to Live in America Is... Retrieved

April 06, 2021, from

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-most-unaffordable-place-to-live-in-america-is-2016-06-23>

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz. (2018). Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<https://hacosantacruz.org/program/housing-choice-voucher-section-8-program/#w1%20info>

The Issues. (2017). Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<https://noplacelikehome.ucsc.edu/en/the-issues/>

Living wage calculator. (2019). Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06087>

Long-Term occupational EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS. (n.d.). Retrieved April 06, 2021,

from

<https://data.edd.ca.gov/Employment-Projections/Long-Term-Occupational-Employment-Projections/4yzm-uyfq/data>

Medina, S. (2017, June 14). *The Diversity Gap in the Nonprofit Sector*. Philanthropy News

Digest (PND).

<https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/columns/the-sustainable-nonprofit/the-diversity-gap-in-the-nonprofit-sector>.

Sullivan, P. (2020, May 1). *In Philanthropy, Race Is Still a Factor in Who Gets What, Study*

Shows. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/philanthropy-race.html>.

Santa Cruz at a Glance, 2016 Financial Assets and Access. (2016). Retrieved from

https://www.sccvonline.org/uploads/3/3/6/1/3361833/2016_santacruz_glance_1.pdf

Santa Cruz County Community Health Assessment—2017. (2017). Retrieved from

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/2017PHCHA.pdf>

Santa Cruz County Workforce Development. (2018, June). Retrieved from

<http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/portals/0/SCWDB%202018%20Report.pdf>

Santa Cruz Sentinel, & Zonszein, M. (2018, September 11). 'Legalized SLAVERY': Democratic women's club of Santa Cruz County HOLDS meeting on farm labor. Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2017/10/21/legalized-slavery-democratic-womens-club-of-santa-cruz-county-holds-meeting-on-farm-labor/>

Santa cruz-watsonville, CA - May 2020 OEWS Metropolitan AND NONMETROPOLITAN

AREA Occupational employment and wage estimates. (2021, March 31). Retrieved April 06, 2021, from https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_42100.htm

The NonProfit Times News February 20, & The NonProfit Times. (n.d.). *Nonprofit Boards Don't Resemble Rest of America*. The NonProfit Times.

https://www.thenonproffitimes.com/npt_articles/nonprofit-boards-dont-resemble-rest-america/.

United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=watsonville&tid=ACSDP5Y2019.DP05&hidePreview=true>

York, J. (2017). 2017 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census & Survey Comprehensive Report.

Retrieved April 06, 2021, from

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3894455-SantaCruzCounty-HomelessReport-2017-FINAL.html?sidebar=false>

Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
1. Receive approval of Capstone project by mentor	Approval by mentor	May 14, 2021	Assistant Director, Helen Ewan-Storey
2. Prepare Equity Academy materials and agenda	Materials relating to session topic	March - June 2021	Program Director, Isai Ambrosio
3. Co-facilitate 4 2-hour Equity Academy sessions	Discussions, activities, guest speakers	March - June 2021	Program Director Isai Ambrosio
4. Develop and publish Equity Academy reflections	Approved reflections	March - June 2021	Mentor / Staff
5. Prepare and deliver 4 Equity Academy session surveys	Approved surveys	March - June 2021	Program Director, Isai Ambrosio
6. Review survey feedback for improvements	Data analysis on surveys with supporting staff	March - June 2021	Program Director, Isai Ambrosio
7. Attend weekly Equity Subcommittee meetings	Review required materials before meeting	March - June 2021	Assistant Director, Helen Ewan-Storey / Program Director, Isai Ambrosio / Equity Specialist Eli Garnica
8. Initial development of physical Equity Library	Add approved literature and materials on equity	November 2021	Assistant Director, Helen Ewan-Storey / Program Director, Isai Ambrosio
9. Continue to update Equity	Continue adding	November -	Mentor / Staff

Academy Library and gather staff feedback	approved materials to library	December 2021	
10. Final preparation for Capstone Festival	Final preparation for Capstone Festival	December 2021	CSUMB Peers

Links to Equity Academy Post-Session Surveys

1. [Equity Academy Session 1 Survey](#)
2. [Equity Academy Session 2 Survey](#)
3. [Equity Academy Session 4 Survey, Overview, and Feedback](#)