

## Launching the Work of Alachua County Equity and Community Outreach

### **Executive Summary**

This report includes background and context related to Alachua County's structures and policies on equity and proposes a pathway to embed equity into the systems and work plans of Alachua County explicitly during the next 18 months and beyond in the second phase of activity. This report includes proposals related to four core structures: a core strategic leadership team, an equity advisory council, community engagement management and Board of County Commissioners equity work to be considered for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

### **Introduction: How we arrived here**

The following four actions by the Board of County Commissioners, Alachua County staff, citizens, and community provide the foundation for Alachua County to launch equity work. In this section, each action is summarized with relevant recommendations for the next steps.

#### **A. Equity Advisory Board: Resolution 20-105**

A Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners establishing the equity advisory board; establishing the responsibilities and duties thereof; establishing procedures and rules for membership, elections, meetings, and attendance; providing for bylaws to guide the operation thereof; providing for an effective date.

#### **B. Charter Ballot Amendment: Identification and Elimination of Racial and Gender**

##### **Bias in Alachua County Policies**

"The County officially acknowledges existence of potential racial and gender bias in County policies and the delivery of programs and services the impacts of racial and gender bias are pervasive and increase disparities and inequality to the detriment of the citizens of Alachua County; and the elimination of racial and gender bias in County programs and services will demonstrate the County's leadership in treating all of its citizens fairly; and, racial and gender bias particularly disadvantages low-income communities, communities of color and other vulnerable populations that have fewer resources to withstand negative impacts of such bias; and the County officially acknowledges the need to annually examine policies for all County operations and endeavor to eliminate all elements of racial and gender bias in both the design and delivery of County programs and services..."<sup>1</sup>

**See Recommendation: Section VII**

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<sup>1</sup> Question 6, November 2020, Charter Amendment Ballot submission.

### C. Equity and Community Outreach Manager Position

The purpose of the Equity and Community Outreach Manager position is to develop an initial infrastructure and proposal for both County wide equity and County Wide Community Engagement and to provide leadership for their infusion across Alachua County. This role, as defined in the job description, includes:

"Build(ing) an infrastructure to ensure policy decisions are evaluated through an equity lens to create fair access to opportunity. This will involve collaborating with County departments, employees, community members and other stakeholders to make meaningful movement towards a more equitable Alachua County; providing leadership and vision to ensure the development and management of innovative and effective strategies to achieve equity for Alachua County residents; and collaborating with County leadership and community stakeholders to establish equity as a shared value across the organization and community to further advance the County's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion."

### D. Equity Comprehensive Plan Amendments

On November 12, 2019, adopted the Comprehensive Plan, 2019-2040. Within the comprehensive plan, "social equity" or "equity" is a goal or a principle within the Land Use Element, Economic Element, and Community Health Element. Within the text, social equity is defined as "Principle of fairness, with attention to provision of opportunity to those portions of the community that are less well off; as applied to Comprehensive Plan, related issues include the provision of affordable housing, economic opportunity, and choice of living environments for all members of community without regard to sex, race, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, etc. (p. 125-126). Health equity is defined as "Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care" p. 378).

Additionally, policies related to reducing disparities "as defined by the UF BEBR report exist within the Solid Waste, Capitol Projects, Economic Element (eliminate disparity), Energy Element, and Community Health Element.

In August 2021, The US Census Bureau will begin to release data from the 2020 Census. This data, along with the outcomes related to the strategic plan referenced herein, should be utilized to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

**See Recommendation:** Section V

## D. Alachua County Strategic Guide- FY 2022

<p><b>Equitable and Resilient Community:</b></p> <p>Definition: "Equitable means striving to treat everyone justly according to their circumstances, providing opportunity and access for everyone, while focusing on closing existing equity and access gaps"</p> <p><b>Guiding Principles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address the root cause of issues and inequities</li><li>• Use a collaborative approach where we seek to hear from all voices, consider others point of view and coordinate and leverage relationships to get more done than we could on our own</li><li>• Continue to provide mandated services and discretionary services expected by our constituents in a transparent, accountable, efficient, and effective manner</li></ul>	<p><b>Strategic Goals with Direct Equity and Community Outreach Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build equitable access to health (physical and mental), safety, and opportunity, especially for people who haven't traditionally had access to those systems (Social and Economic)</li><li>• Focus our Economic Develop efforts on local businesses and removing barriers to economic opportunity (Social and Economic)</li><li>• Drive the discussion and implement a central receiving facility as a way to deliver coordinated services (Social and Economic)</li><li>• Invest intentionally to reduce the gap in available public housing (Housing)</li><li>• Coordinate proactively with agencies, municipalities, and other entities (Housing)</li><li>• Focus community planning and growth to address climate change and community and environmental resiliency (Environment)</li><li>• Create a Climate Action Plan and implement Climate Action Plan recommendations (Environment)</li><li>• Identify and report transparent priorities and progress dashboards (Infrastructure)</li><li>• Address internet affordability and accessibility gaps throughout the County (Infrastructure)</li><li>• Improve community mobility and transportation options (Infrastructure)</li></ul>
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## Proposed Structures and Next Steps

To infuse the value, principles, goals, processes, organizational infrastructure, and outcomes associated with equity is a multi-year, multi-phase effort exemplified by a continuous assessment and improvement culture. At the core of this work are the functions of the administrative staff and leadership and the allocation of resources dedicated to addressing equity. The following section describes a workplan comprised of an initial foundational 18-month period (Phase I) that launches the Alachua County work sets forth future work (Phase II).

**I. Phase 1--Building Equity Knowledge and Infrastructure**—Goal 1: Alachua County staff, Board, and Equity Advisory Council acquire the readiness, understanding, literacies, and ability to advance equity.

### **A. Structure 1: Core Strategic Leadership Team Racial and Social Equity Onboarding**

Purpose: “[R]esponsible for designing, coordinating, and organizing racial equity plans and activities across a government jurisdiction...committed to equitable systems change. The Core Team...serves as the engine for change, leading the way, pulling others along, chugging through sometimes challenging terrain... building the movement and momentum to arrive at the destination of equitable outcomes.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **Core Strategic Leadership Team Objectives:**

- Establish shared, definitions, baseline data, assessments, and knowledge on root causes of inequity.
- Create a shared culture related to equity, justice, racial and social identity, and shared values related to transformational change.
- Develop organizational goals and priorities related to creating equity and reducing inequities.
- Align with current performance measure/audit process.
- Allocate resources for equity tools, innovative plans, and community engagement.
- Create processes for equitable community engagement/collaborative planning.
- Establish plans, delineated and delegated tasks and timetables.

#### **Equity and Community Outreach Staff Competencies**

- Understand terms such as racism, privilege, intersectionality, social equity, environmental justice, health equity,
- Understand and articulate how inequity shapes experience in Alachua County and why anti-racism and social equity work is important to the mission of the organization.
- Articulate organizational theory of change to reduce inequity
- Demonstrate willingness to identify, accept and manage socio-emotional effects of change.
- Utilize innovative, results-based decision-making frames to close existing equity and access gaps in departmental and program planning

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<sup>2</sup> Governmental and Regional Alliance on Racial Equity (Gare), Racial Equity Core Teams: The Engine of Institutional Change (p. 4)

**Proposed Structures and Next Steps**

Process:	Strategic Leadership Core Groups Makeup	Assessments:	Outcomes:
<p>30 Member staff onboarding workshop(s) with professional services contract.</p> <p>12-15 hour Workshop &amp; 8-10 facilitated bi-weekly meetings with contractor and ECOM</p>	<p>Group 1: County Manager; Assistant County Manager-Public Safety and Community Services; Director-Community Support Services; Director: Growth Management; Strategic Initiatives Manager; Sustainability Manager; Director-Human Resources; County Attorney; Operational and Strategic Performance Manager; Economic Development Manager, 4 additional staff members from across organization</p> <p>(Group 2) County Manager; Assistant County Manager- OMB; Assistant County Manager- Chief of Staff, Parks, Rec, Admin; Director- Communications/Legislative Affairs; Director-Solid Waste and Resource Recovery; Director- Court Services; Deputy County Manager and/or Director/County Engineer- Public Works; Director: Environmental Protection; Director: Facilities, 4 additional staff members from across organization</p>	<p>Informal diagnostic pre/post qualitative assessment of knowledges related to social identities, structural racism, local inequity history, and diagnostic assessment of departmental data collection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report with adopted theory of change, equity definitions, principles, and organizational readiness that include plans for equity departmental Infrastructure, goals, and process for performance measures structure in the organization and identified departments for FY 2023.</li> <li>• Recommendations for amendments to Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• Inclusion of equity strategy and tools into Board identified strategic priorities. These include equitable access to health, safety, and opportunity, building a community food system, addressing climate change and creation of a climate action plan, investing to reduce the gap in public housing, focusing on extremely low- and low-income housing and a Housing Trust Fund, identifying and reporting transparent priorities and progress dashboards, providing public safety infrastructure, and improving community mobility and transportation options.</li> </ul>

**Recommendation:** Adopt the Phase I Plan for the Core Strategic Leadership Team Racial and Social Equity Onboarding

## Proposed Structures and Next Steps

### **Equity Foundations, Definitions, and Concepts:**

Equity is an emerging field with foundations in equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion, social justice, and academic theories of racial identity, social identity, intersectionality, and organizational change. The term equity applies processes for action and outcomes related to the quality of life in various related spheres of social activity such as health, education, housing, employment, and economic status. Operationalizing equity requires understanding these concepts, their relationship to one another, and employing evidence-based practices for transformation.

The following set of concepts, definitions, and measures are proposed for exploration and analysis by staff during Phase 1 work to be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

#### **A. Organizational Theory of Change:**

Organizational Change occurs when an organization has values, commitment of resources and will, capacity, processes, and structures in place that are informed by best practices in organizational development and removing structural racism and other identity-based oppression and frameworks for (diverse) human thriving and wellbeing.

#### **B. Equity Definitions:**

The terms racial equity and social equity each have specific implications. The comprehensive plan establishes social equity as “Principle of fairness, with attention to provision of opportunity to those portions of the community that are less well off; as applied to Comprehensive Plan, related issues include the provision of affordable housing, economic opportunity, and choice of living environments for all members of the community without regard to sex, race, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, etc. (ps. 125-126)

#### **C. Proposed Equity Principles:**

1. Understand the root causes of local patterns of inequity by identity, region, community, and historical and contemporary narratives presented by those with lived experience with problems/issues related to inequity.
2. Collaboration requires establishing internal trust and maintaining high-quality workplace morale and culture and sharing power and access with external partners through dialogue and contribution that offers rewards, benefits, and potentially compensation for labor and work.
3. Enacting equity requires a commitment to institutional transformation where resource allocation and program operations are reconfigured to align with equity goals and are responsive to people experiencing inequities.
4. (Achieving) Equity is ultimately measured by reducing inequity for some subpopulations and improving quality of life and ability to thrive.

#### **D. Proposed Organizational Readiness Measures:**

1. Senior leadership of organization (Board, County Manager, and Assistant Managers) understand root causes and local patterns.
2. Organizational capacity and infrastructure are in place to assess baseline data and create plans.
3. Departmental level staff and infrastructure is in place to undertake equity work and plans.
4. Mechanisms and pathways for power-sharing and knowledge transfer and other aspects of collaboration have been developed, piloted, and refined with community stakeholders and partners.
5. Mechanisms for public community engagement and community education have been developed, piloted, and refined related to equity.
6. A system to publicly explain the organization's equity efforts is in place to build transparency with constituents.

## Proposed Structures and Next Steps

### **Structure 2: Equity Advisory Council (EAC)**

Purpose: The Equity Advisory Council is to collaborate with the Board, Staff Core Team and Community on creating and administering equity plans and processes for Alachua County. The EAC will assist the Board of County Commissioners in examining policies for all County operations and endeavor to eliminate all elements of racial and gender bias in both the design and delivery of County programs and services and collaborate with Alachua County on, on closing existing equity and access gaps and providing services that treat everyone justly according to their circumstances.

The following is a proposal to revise the enabling resolution of the Equity Advisory Board to further reflect definitions, principles and organizational theories of change associated with equity.

<p><b>Responsibilities and Duties:</b></p> <p>To elect officers pursuant to this (revised) Resolution</p> <p>To establish an annual work program for the Equity Advisory Council</p> <p>To assist and advise the County on equity action plans.</p> <p>To collaborate with Alachua County Staff Core Team on citizen participatory research related to organization and departmental equity plans and processes.</p> <p>To assist the County in reviewing policies, programs, and services for racial and gender bias, and make recommendations to the County on means for eliminating such bias.</p> <p>To engage with other County committees, relevant stakeholders, agencies, non-profits, and communities related to equity.</p> <p>To ensure that input from neighborhoods and communities that are most impacted or disadvantaged by racial and social inequity is included in the development of policy recommendations and the design and delivery of County programs and services.</p>	<p><b>Membership and Qualifications:</b></p> <p>15 Voting Members, at least one (1) alternate member, appointed on an at-large basis,</p> <p>All members shall be residents of Alachua County.</p> <p>Lived experience with racial, gender, or other social inequity such as disability, LGBTQIA+</p> <p>Demonstrated commitment, interest, and connection with local historically marginalized neighborhoods and communities affected by inequity.</p> <p>Availability and wiliness to invest in Alachua County through learning, dialogue, and collaboration with people of diverse perspectives and experience.</p> <p>Lived experience with/ or expertise in education, employment, housing, health and human services,criminal justice, or business; policy development, research, evaluation,program/service design and delivery.</p> <p>Priority given to intersectional identities (i.e., Latinx and LGBTQ identified), members of ACCRP and other Alachua County Committees, Representation from rural municipalities and communities</p>
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**Appointments:**

Members of the Equity Advisory Board shall serve a pilot 18-month term of office each. After pilot period, Members of the Equity Advisory Council shall serve three (3)year terms of office each; provided, however, that two (2) of the initial appointments shall be for a term of one (1) year, two (2) of the initial appointments shall be for a term of two (2) years, and three (3) of the initial appointments shall be for three (3) year terms, and thereafter all appointments shall be for three (3) year terms. Future vacancies created in the Equity Advisory Board membership may be filled by appointment of the Board of County Commissioners to the term(s) remaining of the vacated member(s).

**Recommendation:** Adopt a revised Enabling Resolution for the Equity Advisory Council and direct staff to begin community engagement and recruitment for Equity Advisory Council.

Proposed Structures and Next Steps

**Structure 3: Community Outreach Management Structure (FY 23)**

Purpose: To create an infrastructure for transformational and culturally responsive community and citizen engagement in Alachua County Board of County Commissioners that builds awareness and involvement with diverse citizen populations in the activities of Alachua County. To serve as a citizen friendly welcome center that is a hub into Alachua County processes, operations, and structures. To cultivate participation in Alachua County through committees, academies, commissions, and projects. To foster relationships and build capacity with equity partners from historically marginalized communities for participation, power-sharing, and access with Alachua County. To relay County efforts related to organizational core values especially related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

This plan describes steps and actions to launch a community outreach hub in Alachua County that acts as a “front door” into the organization of Alachua County and especially attends to the needs of diverse populations and those from historically and contemporarily marginalized communities. Phase I work includes examination and feedback on this plan with staff to launch in Phase II- FY 2023.

<p><b>Responsibilities and Duties:</b></p> <p>Amplify and assist with community engagement for departmental events and activities.</p> <p>Coordinate Alachua County Citizen Academy</p> <p>Coordinate Alachua County Youth Commission</p> <p>Engage citizens with Alachua County Truth and Reconciliation/ACCRP efforts</p> <p>Climate Action Plan</p> <p>Create events and symposia on Alachua County Strategic Priorities and efforts for citizens.</p> <p>Build capacity and infrastructure for citizen engagement with BIPOC/Immigrant/Community-Based Organizations through an Equity Partnership Program with Grant opportunity</p> <p>Liaise with the EAC and provide information to citizens on equity efforts.</p>	<p><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <p>Staff Coordinator</p> <p>Communications Infrastructure (equity opportunity and access Eboard, Listserv, Community Engagement Newsletter, equity transparency dashboard)</p> <p>Incubation services and equity partner facilitation</p> <p>Grant support and innovation partnerships</p>
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**Recommendation:** Direct staff to develop Community Outreach Management plan and allocate resources for FY 23.

## Proposed Structures and Next Steps

### **Structure 4: Board of County Commissioners**

Purpose: Champion, lead, and direct equity efforts across Alachua County with policymaking and oversight.

#### **Developing Board equity policies and lens**

Given the significant work the Board has already directed to launch Alachua County in the direction of equity, this plan identifies a number of next steps for the Board to approve and direct during Phase I. Recommendations for Phase II Board work include:

- A. Review and adopt Staff Core Team Plan (FY 2022)
- B. Undergo Racial and Social Equity Onboarding Workshop (FY 2022)
- C. Develop Board of County Commissioners Equity Tools for policymaking (FY 2023)
- D. Realign strategic priorities using equity theory of change, definitions, principles, and foci (FY 2024)

**Phase I Proposal: Schedule, Timeline and Resources**

Activity	Dates	Staff Resource Allocation
<b>Present plan to Board of County Commissioners for adoption</b>	August 24, 2021	Equity and Community Outreach Manager
Develop Staff Racial and Social Equity Onboarding Workshop and Process	September - October 30, 2021	Equity and Community Outreach Manager and Professional Services
Develop and initiate recruitment events for Equity Advisory Committee	September - October 30, 2021	Equity and Community Outreach Manager with Communications
Appoint members to Equity Advisory Board	November 2021	Board of County Commissioners
<b>Undergo Racial and Social Equity Onboarding Workshop and Process</b>	November 2021-February 2022 (Core Team I) March 2022- June 2022 (Core Team II)	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Professional Services, Leadership Team Special Project Pay Policy:
Launch Equity Advisory Council and hold initial meeting	January 2022	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Staff Liaison
Develop Equity Advisory Council structure, chair and co-chair and work plan	March 2022-Aug 2022	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Staff Liaison, EAC
<b>Develop Equity Plan Staff Report with FY 2023 Goals, Actions, Outcomes, Resources for Board Adoption</b>	June 2022-July 2022	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, professional services, staff core teams
<b>Announce Organizational Equity Goals for FY 2023</b>	August 2022	Board of County Commissioners
Establish new equity infrastructure in organization	August 2022- Oct. 2022	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Equity Analysts,
Establish community engagement infrastructure	Aug 2022-December 2022	Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Community Outreach personnel, Communications
<b>Phase II: Continue iterative yearly process of organizational engagement, planning, goals, actions, and outcomes</b>	FY 23 and FY 24.	Board of County Commissioners, Staff Core Leadership, Equity and Community Outreach Manager, Equity Analysts, Community Outreach Staff

**Fiscal Considerations:**

(To Discuss)