

# Racial Equity and Inclusivity Task Force Final Report

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## Contributors

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## Executive Summary

Racial equity and inclusivity are important in ensuring that all people feel safe, empowered, and welcome into the community. In 2020 in the midst of a national call to racial justice and equity, the Los Alamos Racial Justice Action Advisory Council (RJAAC), a group of community members, petitioned the Los Alamos County Council (County Council) to develop the Racial Equity and Inclusivity Task Force (REI Task Force or Task Force). Once the task force charter was adopted on March 30, 2021, the Task Force had a limited time to provide County Council with recommendations. The recommendations here offer a starting point for Los Alamos County (LAC) to start addressing racial justice and equity issues.

The report outlines four recommendations for County Council:

1. Develop and implement an active body (board or commission) of community volunteers
2. County sponsored community training
3. Expand outdoor and recreational opportunities for the BIPOC community
4. County oversight on REI topics and trainings including a community speaker series

Recommendation	Short Term	Long Term	Within 1 year	Within 1-5 years	Within >5years
Develop and implement an active body (board or commission) of community volunteers	X		X		
County sponsored community training	X			X	
Expand outdoor and recreational opportunities for the BIPOC community	X			X	
County oversight on REI topics and trainings including a community speaker series		X			X

This report outlines the work and recommendations developed by the Task Force and are intended to provide the entire county and their partners (i.e. LANL) with

recommendations on how to cultivate a more equitable and inclusive community for all people who live, work, and visit LAC.

## **REI Task Force Charter**

### **Charter for the 2021 Los Alamos Racial Equity and Inclusivity Task Force on 6/29/2021**

#### **I. Purpose**

The Los Alamos Racial Equity and Inclusivity Task Force (“Task Force”) was created through an action of the County Council on March 30, 2021, when the Council formally adopted this Charter. The Task Force will serve as an advisory body to the County Council for the purpose of developing and recommending how the County can promote equity, inclusivity, and a feeling of belonging to the benefit of all and the betterment of the community. Providing a framework and forum for open and transparent discussions to understand and identify sustainable ways to continue progress towards this goal will be a key element of the Task Force’s efforts. This will be a working Task Force; members will be responsible for collaborating with each other and other stakeholders.

#### **II. Scope of Work**

The Task Force will provide a final report to the County Council prior to the expiration of this Charter that provides the results of the following specific tasks:

- Honing an overall perspective of racial equity and inclusivity throughout the community through:
  - Briefings and discussions with the Los Alamos Public Schools, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos Police Department, Los Alamos Fire Department, Los Alamos Medical Center, Los Alamos County Community Services Department, other Los Alamos youth and social service providers, and community members at large via town halls and surveys.
- Identify best practices that have already been developed by universities, industry, and other organizations, and could be applicable to promoting racial equity, inclusivity, and a feeling of belonging in the Los Alamos community.
- Engaging leaders in other towns/cities, including regional neighbors, to understand how the work of racial equity and inclusivity has been operationalized at the municipal level.
- Understanding where the county has discretion to advance racial equity and inclusivity, such as revisions to policies, practices, budget allocations, and program recommendations.
- Considering how the County can feed into and/or support efforts of the Governor’s

Advisory Council on Racial Justice.

- Drafting a vision and mission statement for racial equity and inclusivity in the County and mechanisms by which progress will be monitored.
- Proposing near-term actions to address immediate opportunities as well as longer term efforts to promote sustainable progress and benefit to the community. Examples could include:
  - Starting from what has worked in other communities, agree on a shared language and understanding of terminology to use within the Task Force.
  - Identifying opportunities to integrate racial equity and inclusivity into routine operations.
  - Developing a draft racial equity and inclusivity action plan to address, develop, and implement policies and actions to ensure a more equitable and inclusive Los Alamos County community.
  - Creating, through collaborative efforts with other county organizations and community members, a forum for ongoing community conversations regarding racial equity and inclusivity that builds trust and reflects the genuine commitment to hearing and addressing concerns and ideas for progress.
- Engaging the community to obtain feedback on Task Force products before finalizing the report.

A mid-term progress report approved by the Task Force shall be presented to the Los Alamos County Council during the month of November 2021 at a regular meeting of the County Council.

### **III. Task Force Representation and Training**

The Task Force will be composed of nine members appointed by the County Council through an application process. In appointing members, the County Council shall seek members reflective of the Los Alamos community regarding race, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. Task Force members will be individually appointed by the County Council after having submitted letters of interest. Task Force members shall participate in appropriate subject matter training, as determined by the County in consultation with the Task Force at the earliest opportunity. The subject-matter of the training is to support effective engagement with the community to understand issues and opportunities, learn from experiences of the other communities, and identify existing tools and strategies that could promote progress towards the overall goal of promoting inclusivity and a feeling of belonging to the benefit of all and the betterment of the community. Reasonable costs for this training shall be paid by the County.

### **IV. Charter and Member Terms**

The term of this Charter shall expire June 1, 2022, and the term of each member shall run until the term of the Charter expires. If during the term of the Charter a member resigns or is otherwise unable to serve, Council shall appoint a new member to fill that

member's remaining term.

#### **V. Quorum**

A quorum of the Task Force is defined as a simple majority of the appointed members of the Task Force. Task Force actions can be taken and considered valid only if a quorum has been established at the meeting.

#### **VI. Resources**

The County will provide staff responsible for coordinating the Task Force in meeting logistics and other needs. Other County staff may be available based upon identified needs or specific topics of discussion.

#### **VII. Meetings**

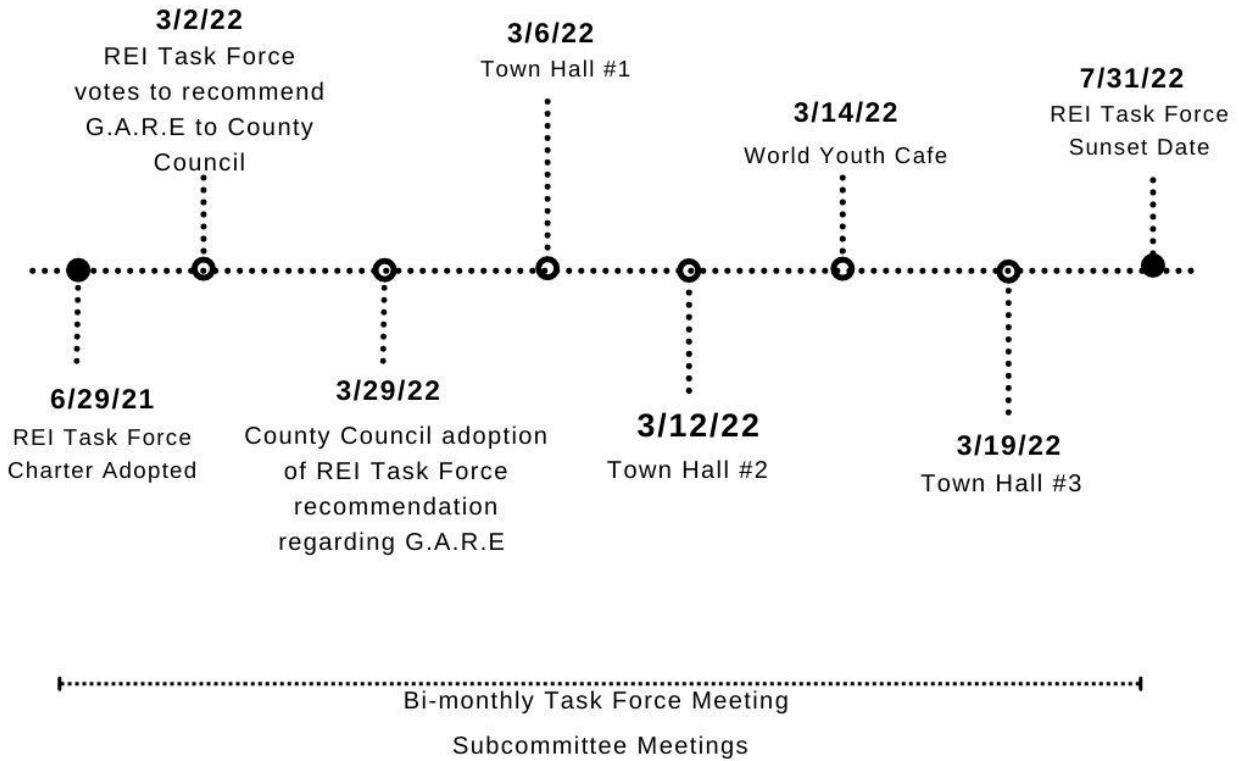
All meetings of the Task Force are subject to and shall comply with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1 to 10-15-4, and shall adhere to the requirements outlined in the County's Resolution adopted annually pursuant to Section 10-15-1(D) of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act.

This Task Force shall utilize the LAC Orientation Manual for the Members of Boards and Commissions as guidance for roles, responsibilities and procedural rules.

#### **VIII. Subcommittees**

The Task Force may form subcommittees as needed. These may include content experts and interested parties. Subcommittee reports will be available to the public and presented to the full Task Force. All recommendations to the County Council should be that of the full Task Force, as indicated by a majority vote of Task Force members. The subcommittees may include persons not otherwise identified as members of the Task Force. However, subcommittee membership does not convey an ability to vote on any recommendations. Subcommittee formation may be for the purpose of research, education, and outreach.

# Timeline Visual



## Introduction

Racial Equity and Inclusivity are goals that communities all over the nation are striving for. The social and policy structure around such work is on-going, but any efforts that try to progress in this area are a step forward to racial equity and inclusivity for all.

The REI Task Force was divided into subcommittees to collaborate and listen to partners throughout the community. These subcommittees were:

### COMMUNITY LIAISON

- BIPOC Caucus
- Community Educators
- Churches
- LANL
- RJAAC
- State Government Subcommittee Liaison
- Youth Resiliency



## WORKING GROUP

- Public Outreach Working Group: planned and hosted town halls
- Youth Outreach Working Group: planned and hosted youth outreach event
- Schools and Education Working Group
- Health and Wellness Working Group
- Research Working Group
- Justice Working Group

Each subcommittee had a Task Force member that served as liaison and would attend meetings, provide updates, and provide insight on REI topics.

In addition to subcommittees, the REI Task Force held three town halls and youth outreach event that were open to the public. The purpose of these town halls were to listen to community members and discuss various issues around racial equity and inclusivity within the community.

In these meetings, the Task Force was able to get a better idea of the perspectives and issues that community members are facing within LAC. Below are the topics that were provided by community members:

Category/Issue	Quantity
Want to see change in schools	3
Want to see action towards change	7
Identification and tracking issues	1
Safer community for people of color	7
Reduction in hate	4
Empower people	9
Bystander Training	9
Address Structure/System of racism	11
Education about racism and costs	2
Bullying at School (intersectional)	3

History is omitted from schools	3
Bullying at school (race)	3
BIPOC caucus for youth	1
“The Talk”	1

Additionally, the Task Force was able to vote on recommending that LAC procure membership the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (G.A.R.E.) at the core membership level so that the REI Task Force members and LAC employees may have access to G.A.R.E. resources and expertise. The recommendation also encouraged LAC employees and managers to explore how G.A.R.E. resources can be leveraged to support staff in training, planning, operations, recruitment, and budgets. G.A.R.E. is national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. This national platform provides municipalities with training and collaboration space to promote racial equity. On 3/29/22, the County Council adopted this recommendation.

Within one year, the REI Task Force has completed some of its goals. As this work is on-going, the Task Force developed recommendations outlined below that will help progress LAC to be a more racially equitable and inclusive place for all.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation #1: Develop and implement an active body (board or commission) of community volunteers.**

**Time Frame:** short term - within 1 year

**Background:** The Task Force had a year to gather data and provide recommendations outlined in the Charter (see REI Task Force Charter). The Task Force has identified that more work is needed to help progress LAC in being more inclusive and equitable. Additionally, the Task Force is limited in their scope of work and unable to provide policy advice or recommendations to County Council.

Implementing a board or commission will allow the work of racial equity and inclusivity to expand and provide recommendations to the county to strive to meet their goals.

An example of a commission is the Racial Equity in Policing Commission <sup>1</sup> in Salt Lake City, UT. This commission was formed to examine city policies, culture, and budget. Below is a brief outline of the commission's history and deliverables:

#### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

In Phase 1, the Commission was led by the six core members and assisted by the selected facilitator, were asked to:

- meet regularly
- host community listening sessions
- develop a Commission Compact that identifies the rules of engagement and desired outcomes
- participate in the City Council's zero-based budgeting work, as appropriate
- evaluate national best-practice policies for alignment with SLCPD policies
- recommend policy changes to SLCPD based on best practices and local needs
- create recommendations for a police department-specific racial equity plan
- explore ways to increase diversity (including cognitive diversity, racial diversity, and cultural diversity, and diversity of thought, culture, and approaches) in the SLCPD
- recommend ways to more meaningfully work with the Community Advocates Group and others
- recommend national memberships/initiatives the City should join (i.e., Not in Our Town, Campaign Zero, 8 Can't Wait, etc.)
- review the Civilian Review Board's role, processes, and policies and compare with recognized best practices for civilian review and oversight
- develop next steps for the REP Commission at the conclusion of its work

The Commission may also determine other objectives and priorities, including but not limited to:

- Recommending ways to more meaningfully work with the Community Advocates Group and other community members
- Reviewing the Civilian Review Board's role, processes, and policies and compare with recognized best practices for civilian review and oversight within the context of existing state statute
- Identify and recommend ways to increase diversity in the police department

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<sup>1</sup> Salt Lake City, UT. Racial Equity in Policing Commission. Retrieved from: <https://www.slc.gov/boards/racial-equity-in-policing-commission/>

A similar commission or board could exist in LAC and could follow the phased format as the Salt Lake City commission.

**Outcome:** The board or commission would be composed of at least 7 community member volunteers with a Chair and Vice Chair, who would take the lead in representing the group. They would meet regularly and interact with community members, county employees, and County Council as needed.

Additionally, these members would provide LAC and County Council with recommendations and policy advice on racial equity and inclusivity. This body would also continue the work of the REI Task Force by hosting focus groups with professionals in the community and other groups. They would also continue to have liaisons to the various community partners to continue that relationship and efforts to create an inclusive space.

**Strategy:**

- County Council would pass a resolution to establish a Racial Equity and Inclusivity Commission (or board)
- Members of the public would apply and be accepted to serve a 2 year term
- Host first meeting:
  - Appoint Chair and Vice Chair
- Outline mission, objectives, liaisons, and activities
- Provide community and council with annual updates and any special activities

## **Recommendation #2: County sponsored community training**

**Time Frame:** short term - within 1-3 years

**Background:** In the REI town hall meetings many community members voiced their perspective and opinions for trainings that would improve education, awareness, and knowledge about racial and inclusivity issues. One training that was mentioned repeatedly is bystander training.

There are many training topics that the community could receive, but the first recommended training would be bystander training. In New York City, New York the New York City Human Rights Commission and community partners established a city-wide bystander training event. According to the commission, the purpose of this training is to regularly co-host bystander intervention trainings to provide New Yorkers with the tools and strategies to safely respond when they witness bias incidents and discrimination. Participants leave these trainings equipped with verbal and behavioral de-escalation strategies to non-violently intervene to disrupt hate-violence or hate speech. The trainings explore the meaning of safety, of being an effective ally, and how identity plays a role in the ways we choose to intervene<sup>2</sup>.

LAC could use the newly formed commission (Recommendation #1) to work with county staff and community partners to host similar trainings. Some partners could be the LANL Employee Resource Group and bystander training leaders that could provide insight and training for the community.

**Outcome:** Community members of LAC would be able to attend bystander training and other future trainings that would provide education, awareness, and knowledge on racial and inclusivity topics. Community members will leave these training sessions feeling equipped and empowered to safely respond and disrupt situations that result from inequity and discrimination.

### **Strategy:**

- County proposes budget and lead on community training events
- County Council approves this budget line
- County leadership and newly formed commission work together to outline training topics and schedule
  - Work with community partners that could host training

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<sup>2</sup> New York City Government. Bystander Intervention. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/bystander-intervention.page>

## **Recommendation #3: Expand outdoor and recreational opportunities for the BIPOC community**

**Time Frame:** short term - within 1-3 years

**Background:** Los Alamos County prides itself on its unique outdoor and recreational resources for community members to enjoy and experience a higher quality of life. Health benefits from access to outdoor and recreational activities include lower blood pressure, decrease in diabetes, better quality sleep, and decreased anxiety and depression. Nationally such health risks are documented as being disproportionately higher for lower income populations who are disproportionately BIPOC.

Many environmental and social justice issues are rooted in BIPOC-led community action going back to the social movements of the 1960s. Additionally recreational and outdoor education and outreach<sup>3</sup> that recognize and address BIPOC issues has demonstrated strong success in creating and encouraging safe and empowering spaces for all participants to enjoy outdoor and recreational activities for improving quality of life.

LAC offers numerous outdoor and recreational facilities that include:

- Golf Course
- Ice Rink
- Disc Golf
- Aquatic Center
- Parks
- Trails
- Skate Parks
- Tennis Courts
- Ball Parks

LAC currently coordinates various contract instructor-led programs such as dance, volleyball, basketball, exercise and fitness, martial arts, softball, swimming and running. Listings of classes and courses are on the LAC website. Unfortunately, many of these activities have fees, timing, and transportation issues that directly affect the ability of BIPOC and low-income members in the community to participate.

### **Outcome:**

First, LAC provides “recreational scholarships<sup>4</sup>” for low-income youth to realize the benefits of our outdoor and recreational resources. Such scholarships would be

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<sup>3</sup> Diversity Outdoors. Resources. Retrieve from <https://www.diversifyoutdoors.com/resources>

<sup>4</sup> Growing Wild Forests School. Retrieved from <https://www.growingwildforestschool.org/post/anti-racism-resources-outdoor-nature-based-parents-environmental-educators>

administered by leaders recruited for their special skills as well as their sensitivity and appreciation for the cultural and economic challenges faced by recipients.

Second, a committee established by Council identifies recreational and outdoor areas of special interest to the BIPOC community and identifies leaders who will bring unique perspectives and skills to interested Los Alamos residents.

**Strategies:**

- County Council established a committee for reaction and outdoor development for BIPOC and low-income community members in LAC.
- The committee develops a model policy for “recreational scholarships” for presentation to County Council.
- County Council works with PEEC and the Committee to identify local resources and provide programmatic support for unique cultural opportunities.
- These are marketed to economically and marginalized groups in the community<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> WCF Coalition. Protect Outdoor Access. Retrieved from <https://lwcfcoalition.org/blog/2020/10/27/protect-outdoor-access-for-healthy-living>

## **Recommendation #4: County oversight on REI topics and trainings including a community speaker series**

**Time Frame:** long term - within > 5 years

**Background:** Los Alamos is a unique community with acceptance and encouragement from our diverse community members and visitors from all over the world. The Task Force encourages LAC to have a similar commitment to learning, accepting, and valuing contributions from all people that work, visit, and reside here.

County Council approved the REI Task Force recommendation that LAC procure G.A.R.E. membership and that employees and managers be encouraged to explore how G.A.R.E. resources can be leveraged to support staff in training, planning, operations, recruitment, and budgets (see Introduction for additional details). This resource can be used as a starting point to develop strategic initiatives around REI trainings and topics for community members as well.

### **Outcome:**

LAC works to provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for all residents of our community. This is accomplished by 1) recognizing the different perspectives and experiences that add value to all of us and 2) acknowledging the various challenges that the different members of our community face.

### **Strategies:**

- County Council provides long term support for the recommended commission through requiring updates and assessment of commission activities (see Recommendation #1).
- County Council supports the commission with funding and public relations support in order to create and extend broad support within LAC.
- County Council will consider designating a position within the county to act as a coordinator/ facilitator for REI related activities.