

# A Letter and Action Plan

for Racial Justice at

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)

*Where Does CDCR Go From Here?*

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## Mission Statement

*A workforce made up of diverse and unique individuals who contribute to our organizational success. Celebrating diversity, valuing one another, and recognizing that our strength is not in spite of the diverse attributes of our workforce; but because of our diversity.*

## Who Are We?

We are a Coalition of Black Employees (COBE) advocating for racial justice at the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) and statewide. We are Millennials, Generation X'ers, and Baby Boomers, with individual years of experience ranging from 2 years to 30 years.

## Why Are We Speaking Up?

In response to a memorandum from CDCR Secretary, Ralph Diaz, dated May 29, 2020, pertaining to expectations regarding employee's conduct as it related to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. We were disappointed that the Secretary chose this time to enforce The Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. There was an opportunity to reach out to the community of Black employees at CDCR to see how we were impacted by recent events and disparaging comments regarding the murder of Mr. Floyd by fellow colleagues on social media.

We were horrified by news reports depicting correctional officers kneeling on a neck reenacting the murder of George Floyd. The collective trauma of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and protests for racial justice in our streets filled our souls with anxiety and depression.

This presented an opportunity for CDCR to reset the way racism destroys and operates in our society. During past CDCR Secretary, Scott Kenan's; tenure while interviewed by Oprah he commented *"To begin to facilitate a healing, you know? And the Healing can start with; you know a basic dignity in how we're treated."*

CDCR leadership has not demonstrated care for Black employees. During the coronavirus pandemic, California is struggling with staggering revenue loss, budget shortfalls and projected \$54 billion deficit. This has resulted in furloughs for state workers, slashed funding for state universities, and courts. Instead of good stewardship of our diminishing public funds for the most essential priorities – public health, public safety and public education – spending decisions are being made to benefit and protect the "good old boys network" retaining non-essential contractors who engage in racist behavior.

Black employees suffer in silence while viewing ongoing public killings of too many Black women, men, and rampant economically wasteful decision of our tax dollars. No longer will we participate in these crimes against our humanity, so we garnered the resolve and join in solidarity with our colleagues at California Air Resources Board (CARB) to use our voice to declare "ENOUGH!"

We the people, citizens demand our rights defined in the United States Declaration of Independence for Black "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness." It is not that Black lives matter more than other lives; Black lives are being taken at higher rates. We simply say, "treat the life ending disease of racism affecting those Americans in the largest number with urgency." That group is Black Americans! On-going deleterious acts are choking out the financial, mental and

physical well-being of our community. Most repugnant, our tax dollar finance these systems annihilating our community.

CDCR and other government agencies are increasingly using terms like “equity”, “diversity”, and “racial justice” without recognizing the importance of having a workforce that reflects these principles. We are speaking up because we believe that Black employees must play a critical role, if these agencies truly believe in the pursuit of equity, diversity, and racial justice.

Now is the moment of accountability! CDCR must commit to create a “workforce made up of diverse and unique individual who contribute to our organizational success. Celebrating diversity, valuing one another, and recognizing that our strength is not in spite of the diverse attributes of our workforce; but because of our diversity.”

The time and moment is here to define and effect revolutionary culture change for inclusion, promotional opportunities, and equity across the board for CDCR and all State agencies.

This letter and Action Plan strikes at the heart of racism and in solidarity with CARB is our contribution to actively participate in solutions and achieve sustainable change. Our intention is to highlight systemic racism and implicit bias through our shared stories and lived experiences. We have also included an Action Plan, as we need a bold overhaul of our policies and systems to support and heal the wounds of Black employees. In many instances, we may indicate “white”, but Black employees also experience discrimination from other non-Black people of color (POC). Our goal is not to shame, belittle CDCR, the State, or assign blame. However, it is important to bring these issues into the light, so we can spread awareness, address harmful behaviors, structures, and practices.

We hope our words will encourage deep reflection, growth, and meaningful transformation concerning the culture of white privilege in our workplace and our country.

## Being Black at CDCR – Current Reality

We take this opportunity to share how we feel, our lived experiences, and current reality as Black employees at CDCR. These stories are first person accounts of experiences. We believe that most apply (or have applied) to all Black employees at some point during their tenure at CDCR. Before beginning, we would like to acknowledge and emphasize the other non-Black POC who also experience systemic racism and oppression because of white privilege in the workplace. Although Black employees also experience discrimination from non-Black POC, we acknowledge their suffering and the stories they have to share. However, the stories shared here will be Black lived experiences.

*“We can’t breathe” systemic racism is on my neck. We are heartbroken, heavy-laden with worry, and emotionally distraught. Even when we rise to be excellent in our careers, opportunities are continually repressed.*

## 1. Hiring Practices

- While applying for multiple positions at other agencies during the pandemic, all interviews were facilitated online. Many did not require video conference. This made me feel very comfortable because I always fear judgment during interviews because I am Black. The visual anonymity of the virtual interview process, allowed me to feel that my experience

would be evaluated without bias. I was invited to interview for a CDCR position. I was shocked when they asked that I come into the office to interview. I asked if a face-to-face interview was a requirement to be interviewed. I was told, yes, it was a requirement. I accepted the face-to-face interview; automatically my reoccurring fear of judgement encompassed me. I was called for another interview by CDCR for a different unit. They asked that I come into the office to interview. I declined the interview.

- **Message:** Black employees are in constant fear of being negatively judged based on our Black skin versus professional accomplishment, experience and intelligence.
- Since 2018 there have been **zero (0)**, no Black, employees hired.
  - **Message:** Black excellence is not recruited. CDCR is not investing in increasing Black representation within the agency with qualified Black employees.
- I am consistently passed over for promotion though I have the qualifications. A white Staff Service Manager I and a white Analyst both, new hires on probation, while driving a state procured rental car on state business were pulled over for drunk driving. The manager who was the driver was cited and arrested for DUI. The analyst was not cited. At the time of the manager's arrest, he had only been on the job six (6) months. He was allowed to successfully complete probation and has since been promoted to Staff Services Manager II. The analyst has also promoted to Staff Services Manager I.
  - **Message:** White privilege is clearly established within CDCR and **all** the protections afforded this status.
- An analyst position was created for the live-in boyfriend of the Human Resources Manager III at CDCR. He has been the subject of several disciplinary and harassment investigations each time he has been moved to a new position. He has held four (4) different positions as a way to mitigate his conduct and job performance.
  - **Message:** White privilege is clearly established within CDCR and **all** the protections afforded this status.

## 2. Micro-Aggressions

- After a meeting, a white manager told me how well spoken, eloquently, and intelligently I communicated during the meeting. When I shared with the manager that I was insulted because the statement reinforces a stereotype about Black people. The manager became defensive and deflected by saying; he felt I was angry and going to punch him in the face.
  - **Member:** Black people are less intelligent and any good traits we embody are inherently white. Black people are violent.
- While at a staff meeting, my supervisor requested that I take on a project but provided limited information. I asked for more details but my supervisor did not provide any. When I tried to ask questions, my supervisor continually interrupted me and changed the topic. I felt disrespected. I requested additional information and was ignored. After the meeting, my supervisor asked that we meet. During our meeting, I was admonished, told that my response was aggressive and disrespectful. I was shocked and very confused.
  - **Message:** Black men are characterized as aggressive or intense when communicating a different perspective to non-Black women who are in a supervisory role. I am expected not to speak up and watch how I respond because I will be labeled as aggressive and others will quickly believe it. If a white man/woman or POC expresses disapproval, they are seen as thinking outside the box and their recommendation are considered.

- I have been subjected to racial profiling; an outside contractor and friend of a management staffer asked how I could afford a Porsche?
  - **Message:** Black people should not be able to afford luxury cars. The only way Black people can afford luxury cars is through illicit activity.”
- During a meeting with leadership and an outside contractor, I brought forth concerns of unprofessional behavior and contract compliance deficiencies. In response to the communicated performance issues, the contractor deflected and engaged in vilification of my comportment. Weaponized words reflecting a “Karen” agenda by engaging inflammatory and signaling speech using word to describe me and my communication style as “angry, mad, that she is always walking on egg shells while around me”, and that I stated “you will catch holy hell”. When I communicated to leadership that the contractor was attempting to deflect their misconduct and to depict me as the “angry black woman stereotype”, leadership expressed displeasure with me using the words “angry black woman stereotype”. Leadership never questioned the contractor’s performance issues, bias, and unprofessional behavior.
  - **Message:** Black women are vilified to fit an angry black woman stereotype. Black employees suffer retribution when bringing forth scenarios of bias, disparate treatment, and microaggressions in the work place.

### 3. Black Representation

- There were many CEA positions available in CDCR. I found out that a black employee was applying for a CEA position. I overheard non-black managers say that the Black employee was not skilled enough for the position. The Black employee had more experience and skills than the managers who were engaging in disparaging talk about the Black employee.
  - **Message:** Black employees have to constantly prove or validate their abilities more than any other race.
- I have been told that because of the way I speak and carry myself, I am not like other Black Americans they have seen. I am more polished.
  - **Message:** Being Black has a stereotype. If I do not fit that stereotype, I am more polished.
- I have more management and supervisory experience than my manager. I have an advanced degree, Master. My manager does not have an advanced degree. I am not included in project updates and changes. My role is diminished as my supervisor refused to assign any work or invited me to meetings though I am the subject matter expert. I am not apprised of departmental operations and therefore at risk of not effectively executing my responsibilities as a staff manager. I have asked and made myself available to take on additional responsibilities. All of my requests for additional responsibility have gone unanswered.
  - **Message:** Black employees who have experience and higher education are marginalized and underutilized. Black excellence and intelligence is not valued or welcomed. CDCR does not value Black advancement.
- I do not see enough of my faces, hear my voices nor my experiences represented in the highest levels of leadership within CDCR. Since 2010, there is an absence of racial diversity in the Executive Offices mirroring the demographic profile of the population

served. CDCR's executive suite resembles a plantation: heavily white at the top and Black labor struggling to move up. Change has to come from the top, there has to be a willingness to "just look at the leadership team," challenge a process, a system, a custom that does not mirror inclusion and diversity.

- **Messages:** Black people can be hired to serve as assistants, office technicians, and analysts but will not be hired or promoted as chiefs and executives.

To reinforce our current reality, we have included a table below with recent data from CalHR Departmental Demographic Reports showing Black representation at CDCR. We are not able to show historical data on Black representation because we do not have access to demographic data prior to 2017. As of June 2020, Black employees make up only 6001 of the workforce at CDCR, and the vast majority of those employees are in lower classifications within the agency.

Table 1. Black Representation at CDCR in 2020 <sup>1,2,3</sup>

Year	CDCR Employees	Number of Black Employees at CDCR			
		Total	Executive	Management	AGPA/SSA
2020	59,223	6001	14	56	170
Grand Total of Employees in Position at CDCR					
			Executive	Management	AGPA/SSA
2020	59,223		157	546	1817

1. The data in this table comes from the biannual 5102 Departmental Report - Demographic Data of State Employees by Occupational Group and Classification dated June 30, 2020.

2. Executive: Chief Executive Associates (14)

Management includes the following classifications: Staff Service Manager III (1), Staff Services Manager II (13) and Staff Services Manager I (42).

3. Analyst: AGPA (134), Staff Services Analyst (35).

*In the absence of the lived experience of racial oppression how can you make decision leading to a more inclusive and just environment?*

## 4. Lack of Support for Black Employees

- October 27, 2020, I received an adverse action for an occurrence in July 2019. The day the incident occurred in July 2019, I notified my supervisor and explained what happened. My supervisor took no action and now October 27, 2020, I received the adverse action for the July 2019 incident. I am being asked to take a 5% pay decrease for 36 months starting December 2020. We are already taking a 10% pay reduction. I have four (4) children to support.
  - **Message:** Black employees suffer disparate treatment and abuse of power. Black words are not believed nor respected.
- I have been employed with CDCR for two and half years. Within those years, I have witnessed discrimination against countless Black employees. The division shows favoritism towards White and POC employees, but discriminates against Black employees. I have witnessed at least three (3) new white employees promoted to Staff Services Analysts and Staff Services Manager I positions. While the few Black employees



who have tried to promote, remain in their Office Technician and Associate Government Program Analyst (AGPA) positions.

- **Message:** Black employees are not extended the same opportunities as non-Black employees. CDCR is not invested in promoting diversity and uplifting Black careers and Black minds.
- I have been the victim of discrimination, filed an EEO claim with no redress from CDCR Civil Rights unit. I have been subjected to disparity treatment. There is no fairness or accountability enforcing the EEO zero tolerance policy within CDCR.
  - **Message:** Black mental health are not valid or worthy of consideration as the effects of on-going discrimination is extremely stressful.
- Black employees coming from private industry with 21-century experience and knowledge are exploited, denied opportunities for training, and promotion. While lesser experiences and less knowledgeable white colleges are credited with, my work and promoted. While I am denied career advancement opportunities.
  - **Message:** Black excellence is exploited and white colleague will be promote and receive the spoils of your work. Black minds, Black work, and Black contributions are coveted but not valued.
- While performing my job duties as contract administrator, I advised a contractor that using video content depicting racial stereotypes violated the EEO zero tolerance policy. I directed the contractor to remove the video immediately from their training content. Presented with credible evidence of the contractor's misconduct leadership refused to acknowledge the contractor violated policy and management removed me as the contract administrator.
  - **Message:** White racist behavior and conduct is condoned. Black professionalism and intelligence should be silenced/suppressed. Black employees cannot provide oversight to white contractors. White privilege is clearly established within CDCR and **all** the protections afforded this status.
- I reported bias and a hostile work environment to leadership, leadership responded by reducing my workload by 60%. Five (5) of the nine (9) projects I managed for about two years were reassigned to other employees. My projects were reassigned to other non-black project managers.
  - **Message:** Black employees, who come forward and report misconduct risk adverse employment actions, transfer to another department, and hostile work environment. Black employees who challenge or report misconduct can **expect** retaliation.

*Some traumas must be experienced in order to appreciate the intent and affect. Diversifying the workforce, diversifying upper management, and diversifying contractors will provide that value-added perspective.*

## Where Does CDCR Go From Here – An Action Plan for Black Lives at CDCR

We have put together a list of actions that we believe will help shift the culture at CDCR from one of white privilege to an actively anti-racist and more inclusive culture that values and affirms Black lives. This list is not exhaustive but it provides a foundation and a beginning for the conversations and hard work to come. Again, we want to acknowledge non-Black POC and point out, although



this Action Plan focuses on Black employees, all of these items can, and should, be applied to all non-Black POC at CDCR.

## 1. Pay Attention

Since the murder of George Floyd, we have heard white people recite an exhausting and infuriating refrain of absolute privilege -- “we did not know.” The merciless oppression of Black people occurs day in and day out, through countless micro-aggressions and other more blatant instances of racism and discrimination. White people did not know because they did not have to know. They were either insulated from the truths faced by Black bodies in every facet of life; or able to ignore what was happening around them because there was no threat to their mental or physical wellbeing. We cannot change past ignorance, but we have documented our stories here so that people at CDCR can no longer say that they did not know, or that racism does not take place at our agency. Be cognizant of implicit bias towards Black employees. These biases embedded in leadership, treatment of staff, promotion, hiring, task or duty assignment, and favoritism. Leadership accountability of unconscious bias that limits vision and ability to prevent blinds spots results in impaired decision-making.

## 2. Create a Culture of Allyship

It is not enough to discuss and educate ourselves. We need to identify actions that will lead to a more inclusive environment. World famous educator, lecturer, and author, Brene Brown; recently said on social media, “The most important anti-racism work I’ve done over the past 20 years and that I’m still doing is taught and led by people with the lived experience of racial oppression- NOT white people”.

### Call to Action:

- Creating a culture of allyship starts with listening to Black people and Black stories.
- Believe Black people.
- CDCR white and non-Black POC employees need to take responsibility for educating themselves and their peers instead of relying on Black employees to figure out what allyship looks like for them. It is not the responsibility of the oppressed to prove their oppression.
- Employees should ask questions when needed and commit to listening to responses with compassion and an open mind, even if it is not what they want to hear or it contradicts their beliefs or what they were taught.
- Be mindful of how Black colleagues are treated in the workplace and speak up when you witness micro-aggressions or blatant instances of racism.
- Reflect on individual implicit biases and contributions to the culture of white and non-Black POC privilege at CDCR. Here are some questions to consider while exploring self-awareness of Black struggles and becoming an ally in the workplace:
  - How do I enable or benefit from racist ideologies and institutions?
  - Am I contributing to racist stereotypes or ideologies that hurt Black people?
  - Do I speak up when I hear others perpetuating these harmful stereotypes?
  - Are Black voices being heard/acknowledged or are white voices trying to speak over or silence them?
  - Are Black ideas being valued or are they being used as stepping-stones for the success of others?

- Are Black employees being encouraged and supported like their white or non-Black POC counterparts or are they being passed over for positions or assignments they are qualified to perform?

### 3. Be Actively Anti-Racist

Here is the opportunity for CDCR to reset the way racism destroys and operates in our society and put into action the words articulated by past CDCR Secretary, Scott Kenan while being interviewed by Oprah. Mr. Kenan said “To begin to facilitate a healing, you know? And the Healing can start with; you know a basic dignity in how we’re treated.”

#### Call to Action:

- Change the status quo; intentionally avoid having the same people from the same background at the table.
- Create an environment where no one is going to go unchallenged and identify blind spots.
- Accountability and institute a zero-tolerance policy for racism and establish an anonymous pathway to report racist behaviors and actions.
- Immediate protections of complainants – place manager on special assignment while investigations are underway.
- Create a culture of allyship (Action Item 2).
- Being actively anti-racist means promoting real conversations about race, revamping diversity and inclusion programs, and implementing evidence based strategies for successful Black career development at every level of CDCR.
- Being anti-racist is not a destination; it is a way of being that requires self-reflection, awareness of Black issues, vigilance, and strict intolerance of all forms of racism.
- There will be no unanimous voice for Black people so more than one voice in leadership positions is mandatory for diversity.
- Review policies so underperforming, racist, abusive, managers, and employees are removed.
- Promote and enforce accountability ending retribution of Black employees who call out racism.

*To much that is given, supervision of staff, leadership roles, much will be required.*

### 4. Increase Black Representation through Hiring and Promoting Black People

There is a notable lack of Black employees and Black representation in management. Increase the number of hired, qualified Black people at every level of CDCR, especially upper management (e.g., Branch Chiefs, Division Chiefs, and Executives). Qualified Black employees have consistently been passed over for interviews, upward mobility assignments, and promotions.

- Hiring Practices
  - Remove names from all resumes evaluated by hiring managers.
  - Candidates invited for interviews should be chosen based on merit and background only. This removes implicit bias in screening out qualified resumes with Black sounding names during the initial hiring process.
  - If automated processes are used to select candidates, ensure that these processes are truly impartial and not influenced by human implicit biases.

- Create diverse interview panels.
- CDCR often questions how candidates will fit into the existing culture rather than questioning how CDCR can or should evolve to be more inclusive and forward thinking. It is important to hire employees that will mesh well with an organization and work well with others, but it is also essential that CDCR possess the ability to evolve and change.
- Establish clear guidelines for experience requirements on job and exam postings that cannot be stretched to fit the qualifications of desired employees. This has occurred in the past to help white and non-Black POC employees/candidates apply for a position or get on an eligibility list, while Black employees/candidates have not been (and are not) afforded the same opportunities.
- Recruitment
  - Offer internships and/or scholarships to Black people.
  - Attend career fairs displaying diverse talent to attract and create access for qualified candidates in underserved and/or under-represented areas.
  - Create oversight to ensure accountability in recruiting diverse job candidates.
  - Develop a recruitment team with the lens, experience, and network to actively reach out to Black communities and recruit qualified Black candidates.

## 5. Support Black Employees and Encourage Black Excellence

- Historically, Black excellence is something feared by white people.
- This has led to the perpetuation of false stereotypes, discrimination, and implicit bias against Black people to maintain white dominance.
- Encourage Black excellence by ensuring Black employees have equitable access to professional development, reward and recognition systems equal to their white counterparts.
- Cultivate a group of Black mentors to provide support to Black employees in their career goals.
- Provide opportunities for Black employees to give honest feedback on their experiences working at CDCR to help evaluate progress in achieving diversity and inclusion.

## 6. Appoint Black People to the Executive Office and CDCR Board

This is a continuation of Action Item 4 above which talks about increasing Black representation across the entire agency. However, this deserves a standalone action item.

### Executive Office

There is currently an opening for Special Assistant to the CDCR Undersecretary of Administration. A qualified Black person should fill this vacancy.

## 7. Pay Black Employees Equal to Our White Counterparts

- Pay equity (equal access to higher earning potential) and pay equality (all employees have the opportunity to earn the same pay for the same, or very similar, jobs) are critical parts of racial equity in the workplace. Shortcomings in either area hurt Black employees and contribute to generational wealth gaps because Black employees are not afforded the same access and/or opportunities to succeed as their white counterparts (see Hiring and Recruitment examples in Action Item 4).

- Immediately close any pay gaps between Black and white employees within the same classification, who have equal education, experience, and/or degrees.
  - Inconsistencies in pay placement within classifications have led to Black employees having to fight for equal pay upon learning that white employees have been given higher pay for the same experience.
  - An analysis needs to be done to evaluate why this occurs and determine how often Black employees are affected.
  - CDCR will create a transparent process to ensure that everyone hired with same degrees and same experience are paid the same amount.

## 8. Overhaul “Diversity and Inclusion” Training

World famous educator, lecturer, and author, Brene Brown; recently said on social media, “The most important anti-racism work I’ve done over the past 20 years and that I’m still doing is taught and led by people with the lived experience of racial oppression - NOT white people”.

- Be mindful of trainings being just for show or to check a box – the end goal for whatever is developed is to create real and lasting change; it should be designed accordingly (applies to Action Item 9 as well).
- Training should be mandatory for all employees at least once a year.
- Training should actively highlight racial equity issues instead of tiptoeing around or glossing over them.
  - It is human nature to move from places of discomfort to those of comfort. People will not be motivated to learn or change without being made uncomfortable. Once people are thoroughly uncomfortable, that is when and where the work begins.
- Suggested additions to existing trainings:
  - Spoken word or videos with voices of Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC).
  - Define what racism is – notably explain being a “good person” and being complicit with or benefitting from racism ARE NOT mutually exclusive.
  - Explain racial justice and equity terms (e.g., BIPOC, privilege, tokenism, systemic and institutional racism, micro-aggressions).

## 9. Executive/Task Force/Commission at CDCR

- A team to identify and address challenges Black employees experience in CDCR and authority to execute changes.
  - Audit hiring policy and procedures and develop strategies, how to successfully hire and retain Black employees.
  - Overview of grievances involving Black employees to ensure racial bias do not influence outcomes.
  - Report directly to Secretary on progress, barriers and concerns affecting advancement and growth of a disenfranchised minority.
  - Develop and implement evidence-based practices, processes and procedures to support success of Black employees in the workforce.
  - Data mining and collection to reports and illustrate performance measurements/task force fidelity.
- Start by taking an honest look at the institutional and structural racism at CDCR.
- The Task Force should be driven by/involve BIPOC but should also include white allies to open doors and speak in spaces that may otherwise remain closed for us.

- Discourage tokenism. Do not overwhelm us with committees because you need representation from BIPOC. Be intentional!
- Create oversight authority within the Task Force to ensure it stays true to the original intent/mission, even after CDCR leadership who are supportive of “black lives matter” have moved on from CDCR.
- Ensure that there is no backlash for participating in the Committee/Task Force or for reporting abuses.

## 10. Affirm Black Life

- Black lives can be affirmed through all the items provided in this Action Plan.
- Speak out in support of Black lives.
- Invest in the mental and physical safety and wellbeing of Black employees -- listen to Black employees when they tell you what they need.
- Support flexible schedules that allow time off for Black healing.
- White employees may complain that some of these action items, and others like them, give unfair advantages to Black employees. Black people have spent generations watching white people have unfair advantages. Realize that these actions -- and the entire movement behind racial justice -- is not only about fairness and equality, it is about equity. Equality in business practices will not be effective until true equity is achieved, leveling the playing field for Black employees and affording them the same foundation and opportunities for greatness that are available to white employees.

## Where We Go From Here – Next Steps

Changing the culture of systemic racism and implicit bias at CDCR will only succeed after acknowledging the challenges faced by Black employees, and taking concrete actions to address those challenges. We recognize some of the action items outlined above cannot be changed unilaterally by CDCR and will require collaboration with other agencies (e.g., CalHR for hiring practices, the Governor’s Office for appointing Board members, and Department of Finance for pay equity issues). However, we encourage CDCR leadership to pursue all avenues necessary to identify and remedy racial equity disparities. Be intentional, consistent, and persistent. It will take time to embrace a new culture of racial equity at CDCR but this approach will be imperative to creating sustainable change for Black people at CDCR.

Creating space for these conversations, programs, and groups is important, but it only begins to lay the foundation for the hard work ahead of us. Much work remains to be done to create sustainable, equitable structures for Black people and non-Black POC within CDCR, and in the communities, we serve.

Our intent in sharing this Letter and Action Plan is not to shame, belittle CDCR, or to assign blame. We enjoy the work we do at CDCR, and want to do all we can to improve CDCR for the future, and our future careers with the agency. We hope our words have helped to shine a light on areas where CDCR can improve so that our agency can move forward as part of the solution.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Black Employees at CDCR

## Bibliography

These are the references used for the document:

A Letter and Action Plan for Racial Change at the California Air Resources Board (CARB)

## Resources

Sacramento Bee - Black Employees at California Environmental Agency Allege Systemic Racism at Workplace, October 23, 2020: [amp.sacbee.com](https://amp.sacbee.com)