

DRAFT

**MINUTES
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EEOAC)**

**August 6, 2025
3:00 P.M.**

**San Joaquin County Administration Building
Video Conference via Microsoft Teams**

I. Call to Order

Chair Dominic Biles called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Chair Biles acknowledged the passing of EEOAC Member Douglas Vigil and recognized his contributions to the committee. He also announced the resignation of Member Pavleen Grewal.

II. Roll Call

EEOAC Members

- Present: Dominic Biles, Michael Sorensen, Christina K. Jones, Allwyn Brown, Elaine Edmond
- Absent: Fritz Buchman

HR/EEO

- Present: Tyler Vernon, David Davis, Constance Bibbs, Rex Furigay, Mikal Mitchell, Rachel Novetzke

III. Approval of Minutes (June 4, 2025)

A motion was made by Dominic Biles to approve June 4, 2025, minutes. The motion was seconded by Michael Sorensen. The motion carried unanimously. The minutes were approved.

IV. Self-Introduction of Visitors in Attendance

Online: Monique Micenheimer (HSA), Annette Rivas (CAO), Richard Lott (HSA), Teresa Harris (Auditor – Controller), Susana Carbajal (Correctional Health Services), Craig Pedrucci (HSA), Leora Pollock (BHS), Teri Booth (DA), Josefina Alcantara (Public Health Services)

In – Person: Maria Lassiter (Recorder – County Clerk), Layetta Finister (Aging - Community Services)

V. Public Comment

No public comment

VI. EEO Program Report Update

Statistical Summary of Active Complaints

David Davis, DEI/EEO Manager, provided a brief statistical summary of the current active EEO complaints received by the EEO Unit.

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Informal vs. Formal Complaint Process

Mr. Davis explained the distinction between informal and formal complaints:

- *Informal complaints* are handled by departmental EEO Coordinators, who work to achieve the desired remedy at the lowest possible level.
- *Formal complaints* are handled directly by the EEO Unit and are assigned to either internal or external investigators.

Annual Reporting to the Committee

Rachel Novetzke announced that the EEO Unit will begin providing an annual statistical report to the EEOAC, similar to the Employment Services presentation at the previous meeting. This report will give a higher-level statistical overview of EEO complaints, supplementing the regular program report provided by the DEI/EEO Manager.

Role of EEOAC Members

Mr. Davis reviewed the mission of the EEOAC, which is to partner with the County to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the community served. He outlined the committee's responsibilities, including:

- Providing input on the bi-annual EEO Plan.
- Reviewing and recommending EEO programs and training activities.
- Assisting in the distribution of EEO information to employees and the community.
- Promoting and participating in outreach and EEO-related activities.
- Assisting with preparation of the bi-annual report to the Board of Supervisors in coordination with the County Administrator and DEI/EEO Manager.

Mr. Davis noted that related information for committee members is available on the County's EEO webpage, but biographies are currently missing. The EEO Unit will contact members to request bio submissions.

Civil Service Rule 20 Updates

Mr. Davis announced that the EEO Unit will begin reviewing and updating Civil Service Rule 20 to ensure ongoing compliance with federal and local laws and to make procedural improvements. Once revisions are complete, they will be presented to labor unions for meet-and-confer, then to the Civil Service Commission and Board of Supervisors for adoption.

Ms. Novetzke added that the proposed revisions will also be shared with the EEOAC for input.

Training Programs

Mr. Davis provided a brief update on upcoming training programs and shared a slide presentation outlining the informal complaint process followed by EEO Coordinators. The EEO Unit plans to resume in-person training sessions in 2026.

Ms. Novetzke suggested that, once the EEO Coordinator training is revised, the EEO Unit could provide the EEOAC with a mock training to preview the content.

Oriana Maghoney noted that EEO Coordinator trainings are typically conducted in person several times a year, with recordings available for later viewing. She added that the EEO Unit will provide the committee with highlights, bullet points, and feedback from coordinators after trainings.

Universal Informal Complaint Form

Christina Jones raised a concern about the need for a universal form for EEO Coordinators to use when processing informal complaints.

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VII. Old Business

Diversity Luncheon Planning

- **Event Overview**

David Davis introduced discussion on the 25th Annual Diversity Luncheon, scheduled for **Thursday, October 23, 2025**, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the San Joaquin County Agricultural Center. He provided an overview of the purpose and format of the luncheon.

- **Keynote Speaker Suggestions**

Chair Dominic Biles suggested Jerrod “Chef Jay” Lakey of Jay’s Gourmet LLC & Game On, The Lakey’s Youth Foundation, as a potential keynote speaker.

It was clarified that the keynote speaker role is a volunteer position; however, the speaker will be provided lunch and the opportunity to educate County employees. Visual and audio equipment will be available for the presentation.

The deadline to submit keynote speaker suggestions is **Wednesday, August 27, 2025**.

- **Diversity Awards**

Mr. Davis outlined the Diversity Awards presented at the luncheon.

Ms. Novetzke explained that nominations are submitted by County departments and employees, and awards are given in the following categories:

- Department or Unit of the Year
- County Employee of the Year
- Departmental EEO Coordinator of the Year

The EEO Unit will distribute the nominations to EEOAC members via email for voting.

Brown Act Training

Mr. Davis announced that the next Brown Act training session will be held on **Friday, August 15, 2025**. This training is a requirement for all EEOAC members and is intended exclusively for committee members.

Requests and Additional Items

- Christina Jones requested that Mr. Davis provide a written report summarizing the items discussed in his EEO Program Update.

- **Subcommittee Guidelines**

Ms. Novetzke reviewed rules for forming subcommittees:

- Subcommittees must be comprised of EEO Coordinators, EEOAC members, and EEO Unit staff.
- The number of EEO Coordinators on a subcommittee must exceed the number of EEOAC members.

Allwyn Brown volunteered to participate in subcommittee planning with Chair Biles.

VIII. New Business

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

- Mikal Mitchell initiated discussion on the Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) referenced in the 2024–2026 EEO Plan.
- Once ERGs are ready for implementation, communication will be sent via email and through departmental EEO Coordinators and department heads to all employees, providing instructions on how to create or join an ERG.
- Christina Jones asked whether ERG activities may be conducted during County work hours.
- Mr. Mitchell responded that ERG activities may occur on County time if the activities are work-appropriate and have the necessary approvals.

Remote Attendance Policy for EEOAC Members

- Mr. Mitchell invited Rachel Novetzke to provide an overview of the remote attendance policy.
- Ms. Novetzke explained that amendments to the Brown Act in 2022 allow committee members to attend up to two (2) meetings per year remotely, provided that a quorum of the body participates from a single public location.

Requirements for Non-Disabled Members Attending Remotely:

- May appear remotely at up to two (2) meetings per calendar year if the majority of the EEOAC body is in person.
- Must have both camera and audio capabilities.
- Must disclose any individuals present in the room and their relationship to the member.
- Must notify the County in advance so that the Chair can announce remote participation at the start of the meeting.
- Must provide a justification for remote attendance (“just cause”).
- In cases of emergency, a member may attend remotely without providing the reason if it relates to a medical condition; the Chair must still announce the remote attendance at the meeting’s start.

Remote Attendance as an ADA Accommodation:

- In 2024, the Attorney General issued guidance affirming that remote participation is a reasonable accommodation under the ADA.
- Members participating remotely under ADA accommodations must still have video and audio capabilities and must disclose any individuals present in the room.
- ADA-accommodated members are not required to disclose their location if a quorum of the body is participating in person from one public location.

Voting Rights While Attending Remotely:

- Michael Sorensen asked whether non-disabled members attending remotely may participate and vote. Ms. Novetzke confirmed that they may, provided a quorum is physically present at the public location.

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- Christina Jones asked for clarification on voting rights for members attending remotely due to emergencies. Ms. Novetzke confirmed that such members maintain voting rights, with the Chair announcing the emergency remote attendance at the start of the meeting.

IX. General Comments from Committee Members

- Michael Sorensen raised concern regarding establishing a budget for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in the upcoming year.
- Rachel Novetzke clarified that as ERGs are developed, the County will create an administrative procedure for departments to assist in determining whether a budget is available for ERG activities and whether such activities can occur during County time.
- The goal is to launch ERGs as soon as possible, with an anticipated start at the beginning of next year, pending resolution of logistical considerations.
- A question was posed about whether a budget could be allocated for committee members to meet and get to know each other outside of EEOAC meetings.
- Ms. Novetzke explained that such gatherings are not permitted under the Brown Act, as the Act requires that all discussions involving a quorum of committee members occur in an open, public session.
- There was discussion regarding the annual formal holiday social, where EEO Coordinators, EEOAC members, and County departments gather to socialize and network.

X. Upcoming Meetings

October 1, December 3 (Final meeting) from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm at the San Joaquin County Administration Building Room 149.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:09.

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