



## **CAB Equity Policy Statement**

The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.'s (CAB) mission, vision and values are centered around a strong commitment to Equity. CAB acknowledges that we are living and working on the unceded territory of the Popeloutchom, Amah Mutsun, and Awaswas Peoples, represented today by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

CAB views equity as the removal of systemic barriers that impede our values of inclusion, dignity, diversity, and commitment to reflecting the community we serve. This means all voices must be elevated, differences must be respected, and bridges must be built to guarantee resources and opportunities so all can thrive, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, or other elements of one's identity.

There is a long history in the United States and around the world of exclusion, oppression, and exploitation of people based on elements of identity. CAB recognizes that this history of oppression and exclusion has long-lasting negative consequences that continue to affect people in our community generation after generation.

For these reasons, CAB believes we have a moral responsibility to address the continued existence and long-term effects of racial inequity and systemic racism in ourselves, our organizations, institutions, and communities. The continued existence of inequity is systemic and rooted in systems that privilege some while exploiting others. Therefore, a commitment to equity requires going beyond services that alleviate the symptoms of poverty and injustice and includes the courage to advocate and take action to address root causes.

**WE THEREFORE AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING:**

- ❖ CAB strongly opposes the discrimination, exclusion, exploitation, stigmatization, harassment, and criminalization of people based on their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, language, immigration status, or other elements of identity.
- ❖ CAB supports and celebrates the inclusion and uplifting of voices from vulnerable demographics and life experiences. This includes respecting and honoring the deep knowledge, varied experiences, and inherent dignity of those who have lived in poverty, experienced trauma, or lived a less privileged life due to elements of identity. This also includes acknowledging intersectionality, or how different conditions or elements of identity may overlap to create unique perspectives, vulnerabilities, and strengths.
- ❖ CAB supports continuous learning and self-reflection on how to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive for itself and in support of the community.
- ❖ CAB supports efforts that target the root causes of inequality and injustice. This requires asking critical questions about where and why injustice exists, and how to effectively address it with strategies such as advocacy, action, services, and structural changes.
- ❖ CAB supports the right to civic engagement for all people. Regardless of immigration status, past convictions, health conditions, or any other elements of identity—everyone deserves the opportunity to participate in activities that improve quality of life for themselves and those around them.
- ❖ CAB supports equitable access to high-quality healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, education, employment/income, housing, food, legal assistance, and technology/ telecommunications, regardless of immigration status, language spoken, literacy level, or other element of one's identity.

- ❖ CAB supports and values the rights of people struggling with mental health and addiction. Equitable, high-quality healthcare includes supporting mental health as well as physical health.
- ❖ CAB supports equitable access to services for those with criminal justice system involvement.
- ❖ CAB supports the rights of workers to a living wage, safe work environment, and other benefits.
- ❖ CAB opposes the widening of gaps in wealth, wages, education, healthcare and other opportunities. CAB supports programs such as Guaranteed Income, stimulus programs, and other supports and strategies that contribute to increased equity.
- ❖ CAB supports efforts to hold those in power accountable to advancing equity in line with community needs.