

Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group Bylaws

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) resolution adopted on November 10, 2020, declared racism a public health crisis and pledged to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in housing, employment, economic development, health care, and public safety in the County of Ventura. The resolution adoption and subsequent implementation is integral to the County becoming a “more racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to our community.” The BOS directed the CEO to establish an advisory group to help foster meaningful discussions and to identify concerns related to policing policies and procedures regarding matters such as hiring, training, and misconduct. The BOS envisioned an independent advisory group consisting of both public safety and community leaders, all of whom would collaborate to create greater understanding and identify strategies and proposals to improve institutional law enforcement practices.

Name:

The advisory group shall be called the *Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group*, also referred to in this document as PSREAG or Advisory Group.

Purpose:

The purpose of the PSREAG is to provide a forum where public safety and community stakeholders collaborate to improve communications and understanding amongst the parties and the greater public. The PSREAG will work to identify potential solutions to improving law enforcement policies and procedures and community engagement. The PSREAG will provide valuable input on issues surrounding public safety, equity, and justice-oriented best practices to enhance policies, procedures, and community interactions, while increasing access, transparency and fostering a mutual understanding.

Goals:

1. **Improve Communications:** Working together in a two-way dialogue between public safety agencies and community organizations that share an interest in advancing an equitable justice system and creating a community forum by which information, education and ideas are encouraged and exchanged.
2. **Improve Policies and Procedures:** This forum will help increase public understanding of public safety policies and procedures, as well as identifying areas of concern and offering potential solutions or strategies for enhancements. Findings, proposals, updates, or recommendations may be submitted in a report to the County CEO for placement on a Board of Supervisors meeting agenda on an annual basis, or as needed, and will be distributed throughout the community.

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Membership:

PSREAG will be composed of five (5) Agency Members representing County of Ventura government and public safety agencies, and ten (10) Community Group Members from across the County of Ventura, each of whom possess one (1) vote when votes need to be taken and recorded.

Agency Members / County of Ventura and Public Safety Representatives:

Sheriff

Municipal Law Enforcement Agency Head (Chief of Police)

District Attorney

Public Defender

Probation

Each Member Agency or Community Group will appoint an individual representative (or Advisory Member) for the Advisory Group as well as an alternate. Within three years of adopting these bylaws, term limits will be considered as a possible amendment to the bylaws.

If the appointed Advisory Member leaves their agency or community group or is otherwise no longer part of the organization group they represent, that individual will no longer qualify as an Advisory Member with a vote. In their place a new member from the same organization will be identified by that organization, nominated and submitted to the Co-chairs for placement on the next upcoming meeting agenda and ratified by current PSREAG members.

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Meetings

Date, Time and Location: Meetings will be held monthly on the first Thursday of the month convening at 5:30 p.m. with an expectation of a two-hour time limit at the location stated on the meeting agenda. Meeting dates conflicting with a holiday can be rescheduled to a date and time determined in advance by the PSREAG Co-chairs.

Public Access: PSREAG welcomes our diverse communities regardless of race, ethnicity, and national origin, age, range of abilities, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, financial means, and education. Meetings will be open to the public and held either virtually or in a facility accessible to the general public.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees: Ad hoc subcommittees can be formed during regular meetings in alignment with the purpose, goals and functions outlined in these bylaws. Ad hoc subcommittees may meet as needed outside of regular meetings. Ad hoc subcommittees will report back to the PSREAG when subcommittee members have identified information to report. See Addendum A for ad hoc guidelines.

Agendas: The Co-chairs will prepare the meeting agenda for each meeting and distribute to each Advisory Group member and interested parties. Meeting agendas will be provided at least 72-hours before each meeting.

Special Meeting: Special meetings may be called and scheduled by the Co-Chairs or by regular motion and majority vote of the PSREAG at any time during a meeting. Special Meeting agendas will be provided at least 24-hours before each meeting.

Rules of Order

The Advisory Group will be governed by the Ralph M. Brown Act California Government Code Section 54950, et. seq. (the "Brown Act").

Quorum: Attendance of at least 50% + 1 of current members constitutes a quorum. A quorum may be established through "in person" attendance, "virtual" attendance (such as via an online meeting), telephonic participation, or a combination thereof as long as the Member's attendance is in compliance with the Brown Act. In the absence of a voting member, a designated alternate who is serving as proxy for a particular meeting may count as a member for the purposes of reaching a quorum.

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Duties of Presiding Officers: The Advisory Group will select two (2) Co-chairs, consisting of one Agency Member Co-chair and one community group Co-chair, to alternate the leading of meetings. A secretary shall also be selected to either author meeting minutes or appoint another to author the minutes and record member voting. The secretary must also review and approve the minutes prior to placing the minutes on the agenda for approval by the PSREAG.

The above stated officers shall serve terms of one (1) year at a time. Each year and on a rotating basis, the Advisory Group will select two co-chairs and a secretary. Officers should not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

The Role Co-Chairs: The Co-chairs will set the agenda and chair the meetings. Co-chairs will alternate chairing the meetings and will stand in as chair when the other co-chair is not available. The presiding co-chair will conduct the meeting in compliance with the Brown Act. The presiding co-chair provides leadership and ensures the work of PSREAG progresses effectively. In most cases, the presiding co-chair would refrain from speaking during discussion or debate until all others have spoken and should not make or second a motion unless the presiding co-chair is convinced no other member of the body will do so at that point in time.

In the absence or unavailability of both co-chairs, at the beginning of the meeting, the Advisory Group will vote to appoint a Chair Pro-Tempore for that meeting.

Rules of Discussion and Debate: Advisory Members should know and understand the rules of parliamentary procedure.

Every Advisory Member who wishes to will have an opportunity to speak and address the Advisory Group to the question or topic under consideration/debate. The Advisory Member speaking will not be interrupted unless called to order by the presiding Co-Chair. The presiding Co-chair determines all points of order except that Advisory Members may request that a point of order be determined by majority vote. Advisory Members of the public shall not engage in debate with other Advisory Members, or members of the public.

Public Participation/Comments: At each meeting, PSREAG will set aside time for public comment and input related to matters of PSREAG's purpose and agenda items. The Chair will determine a reasonable time allotment for each speaker on an agenda item up to three (3) minutes or up to six (6) minutes if interpretation is being utilized.

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In compliance with the Americans with Disability Act, persons who require accommodation for any audio or visual disability in order to participate in a community meeting, or require language interpretation services, may request assistance by contacting the Ventura County at CountyDEI@ventura.org or 805-654-2876. If interpretation is required, please provide as much notice as possible and every effort will be made to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

Any person that makes threatening or abusive language, or engages in any disorderly conduct which disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the PSREAG meetings, at the discretion of the chair, will be barred from further audience before the advisory during the meeting.

Voting: The Advisory Group will strive for consensus on all decisions and motions. Motions will be carried by a majority vote of PSREAG members present as long as a quorum has been reached. Voting will be confined to PSREAG governance, as defined in the bylaws purpose and goals. The Secretary will record motions and results of votes of each Advisory Member present at the meeting. There will be only one vote allowed per member agency/organization. In the absence of the appointed representative, each agency/organization's designated alternate may vote as a proxy in the absence of the appointed representative. Appointed representatives should notify the chair ahead of the meeting when a proxy will be voting in their absence.

Minutes: Minutes recording the motions and actions at each meeting will be approved by the secretary and placed on a following meeting agenda for approval by the PSREAG.

Advisory Member Code of Conduct

PSREAG is committed to showing respect for our members and the communities we serve. We affirmatively acknowledge that each member individually and as a group, is responsible for our decisions and their consequences.

We are committed to:

- Acting honestly, truthfully and with integrity in all our transactions and dealings;
- Avoiding conflicts of interest;
- Appropriately handling actual or apparent conflicts of interest in our relationships;
- Treating every individual with dignity, respect, fairness and good faith;
- Complying with both the spirit and the letter of the law;

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- Acting responsibly and demonstrating a high degree of cultural competency toward the communities in which we work and for the benefit of the communities that we serve;
- Not using threatening or abusive language, or engaging in any disorderly conduct which disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting;
- Speaking only when recognized by the Chair and will refrain from speaking over others;
- Being responsible, transparent and accountable for all our actions; and
- Improving the accountability, transparency, ethical conduct and effectiveness in the area

Meeting Agreements

- Strive to reach agreements by consensus
- Own your own intentions and impacts
- Move back
- Listen actively
- Challenge with care
- Recognize each other as representatives of different communities
- Respect each other equally
- No subgroups or discussions of meeting outside the meeting; bring conversations into the room
- No PSREAG member shall purport to represent the PSREAG or that they are acting on behalf of the PSREAG when they contacting or communicating with any member of the public, media or elected official regarding PSREAG related topics, without prior direction from the full PSREAG to do during a regular or special meeting.

Removal of Members

The Advisory Members may declare vacant the position of a Community Organization Membership on the occurrence of any of the following events:

- The organization's designated representative has not attended three consecutive meetings and the organization has not nominated a replacement member.
- The organization has failed to nominate a new representative upon notification that its current designated representative has:
 - violated the PSREAG's bylaws;
 - been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court;
- Been convicted of a felony while serving on the Advisory Group; or been found guilty for a crime that goes against the purpose of PSREAG by a court of law.
- The organization dissolves or otherwise ceases to exist.

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Selection of New Members

Upon a Community Organization Membership vacancy on PSREAG, the Advisory Group shall publicly notify Ventura County community-based organizations of the vacancy to solicit letters of interest. The Advisory Group shall rank the applications and vote on the top two ranked organization applications. The applicant who receives a majority of the votes will be invited to nominate a member to serve on the Advisory Group for the remaining term of the vacancy.

Bylaw Amendments

Proposed amendments to these bylaws will be submitted for review to the PSREAG no less than ten (10) working days prior to consideration at a scheduled meeting. Amendments to these bylaws will be effective upon a majority vote of Advisory Members. The date of the approval will be included in this document and subsequent amendments will be dated accordingly.

Revisions

First charter on 10-07-2021

Formally approved on 02-03-2022

Revisions approved on 01-05-2023

Revisions approved on 03-02-2023