CEA ACTION PROPOSAL

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date: 2025-01-16

2. Department: California Department of Public Health

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Director's Office

4. CEA Position Title

Strategic Advisor

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (*2-3 sentences)*

The proposed Career Executive Assignment (CEA) A will be the designated, full-time, Strategic Advisor, responsible for developing, implementing, and managing comprehensive DEI programs, initiatives, and culture change within the department. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has identified health equity as one of four strategic priorities. This position will serve as the primary strategic advisor to the Directorate, serve as the main contact to provide information and advice, and make recommendations and monitor the ongoing progress of DEI policies and culture change within CDPH and its Centers/ Divisions/Offices (CDOs).

6. Reports to: (*Class Title/Level*)

Exempt/Chief Deputy Director, Health Quality and Emergency Response

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one)*

☑ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.

☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*):

8. Organizational Level *(Select one)*

☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☑ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The CEA A is responsible for creating systemic transformation for CDPH to be an inclusive, culture-centric department by managing and directing the activities of DEI initiatives within the department. This position will develop a department wide action-based plan designed to create a culture of inclusion in the workplace. The plan will outline goals and objectives for increasing diversity within the organization and building an environment where everyone in CDPH can thrive. The CEA serves as a member of the CDPH Senior Leadership Team and serves as an advisor to the Director (State Public Health Officer)/ Assistant Director (Assistant Public Health Officer)/ Chief Deputy Directors. The CEA position will report to the Chief Deputy Director, Health Quality and Emergency Response.

This position will serve as the primary DEI liaison to the Directorate, serve as the main contact to provide information and advice, and make recommendations and monitor the ongoing progress of DEI change within CDPH, its CDOs, and programs. This position will build ongoing relationships with internal stakeholders, provide leadership, coordination, project management, and lead the department-wide Health Equity Liaisons (HELs), coordinate the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to achieve equitable access for all CDPH employees. The CEA will provide strategic direction to HELs to implement CDO DEI goals and objectives and align their efforts with the Department goals, strategic initiatives, and values. The CEA will design, coordinate, and implement policies to address inequities such as the DEI Road-map and will set meaningful, measurable, achievable goals that align with the Department's core values.

The CEA will be a strategic partner providing expert technical and administrative consultation and guidance to internal work, including policy, processes, and practice improvement. This position will also examine organizational practices and policies and provide opportunities for HELs to improve upon existing communication, coordination, guidance, and recommendations to ensure race, gender, and other equity-related considerations are included in all aspects of the CDPH workplace.

The CEA develops relationships and collaborates with the Operational partners to infuse DEI concepts into policy, practice, and procedure for resource allocation, hiring and recruitment practices, budgeting, operational practices, as well as programs and decision-making. This position will also evaluate, identify, analyze, and develop preventative measures and resolutions to the most complex, controversial, and/ or sensitive issues. The CEA will collaborate with the Office of Health Equity (OHE) who seeks to link statewide efforts with local efforts to leverage activities and strategies addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion within communities to ensure gaps are identified and strategies are implemented to build a respectful workplace for everyone.

Responsibilities will include:
• Develop and implement internal policies, practices, and programs to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
• Design, execute, and manage department-wide DEI initiatives to strengthen the departments approach in the development of an inclusive department culture that empowers people, fosters innovative thinking, and creates successful outcomes.
• Collaborate with the Directorate, senior leadership, OHE, HR, HELs and other key stakeholders to integrate DEI principles into all aspects of the organization's operations and culture. Research, develop, recommend, and execute creative strategies to develop and implement the Department's internal equity goals.
• Review current practices, and policies, assessing and analyzing the extent to which they support or hinder the organization's equity goals.
• Design presentations, generate reports and present to leadership and staff on DEI matters, discuss opportunities for improvement and make recommendations for internal equity work.
• Identify areas of strength and uncover opportunities for even greater impact, integrating them into key initiatives such as a DEI road-map, goals, and multi-year priorities.
• Work with HELs to develop and implement internal strategies that correspond to DEI road-maps/blueprints which align with the Department's mission and values.
• Build training programs and events to advance the internal equity goals of the DEI Road-map.
• Provide guidance to support employee resource groups and affinity groups, fostering their growth, impact, and alignment with department goals.
• Collaborate with HR teams on diversity in recruitment, hiring, and retention initiatives that promote a diverse and inclusive workforce.
• Establish metrics and regularly measure and report on effectiveness of DEI initiatives, identify areas for improvement and implement strategies for change.
• Build relationships with external partners, organizations, and communities focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to leverage insights, resources, and collaboration opportunities to improve internal diversity, equity and inclusion.
• Act as a trusted advisor, Ombudsman, and resource for employees, providing guidance and support on DEI-related matters, fostering an environment where everyone belongs and feels valued, respected, and heard.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☑ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description:

CDPH's mission is to advance the health and well-being of California's diverse people and communities. CDPH works continuously to reduce health and mental health disparities among vulnerable and under-served communities to achieve health equity throughout California. To successfully carry out this work, CDPH believes that having a diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve will enhance our understanding of the needs of our diverse population and help identify the most effective interventions.

This position directly aligns with this mission and vision for CDPH. The CEA would be responsible for promoting DEI in department policies, programs and practices. The role will concentrate on integrating equity into all CDPH initiatives by providing staff training and developing tools and templates to ensure that every CDO is equipped to address equity in its implementation of programs. Placing this position as a member of the Directorate will elevate the issues and demonstrate CDPH's commitment to equity with staff and internal stakeholders.

Current DEI efforts are decentralized across the department. This position will be responsible for identifying objectives and establishing clear goals in collaboration with HELs to ensure that CDPH's 200+ programs are aligned in building an inclusive workforce and culture. OHE focuses on analyzing data and preparing reports for management, which are used to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity, equity, and cross-cultural resources; identify disparities; and make recommendations for goals and objectives. The CEA will work closely with OHE, leveraging their expertise for assessments and consultations on addressing bias and recommending policies and procedures to enhance internal diversity and inclusion within CDPH.

The Governor of California issued Executive Order N-16-22, directing state agencies to take action in addressing existing disparities, a mandate that aligns with CDPH’s strategic priorities. By fostering an inclusive culture, CDPH aims to build trust with its staff, promote equity in career advancement, enhance inclusion and retention, and better represent the communities it serves. This effort will also strengthen CDPH’s ability to integrate cross-cultural education into public health training, identify sources of disparities, and implement promising interventions, positioning CDPH for success in the future of public health and emergency response.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

California has a long-standing history of championing civil rights and continues to strive toward greater equity. This commitment is reflected in policies that advance health care for all, promote educational equity, foster age-friendly communities, and establish a State Chief Equity Officer to provide statewide leadership on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in areas such as state operations, procurement, information technology, and human resources. Through Executive Order N-16-22, the Governor of California has encouraged the development and implementation of racial equity initiatives, including the creation of a Racial Equity Commission. Departments are urged to incorporate equity analysis into their policies and practices, utilizing data analysis tools to identify gaps in access to services and outcomes from state programs. Additionally, departments are encouraged to review and enhance their community engagement strategies, with a focus on reaching Californians living in historically under-served and marginalized communities.

Establishing a CEA for DEI work within CDPH will strengthen its commitment to achieving equity for staff. The CEA will focus on creating or revising policies and initiatives to foster a positive, inclusive workplace culture, encouraging staff to raise concerns in a trusted environment, rather than resorting to formal complaints through the Office of Compliance (OOC). The OOC ensures the consistent implementation of civil rights, Equal Employment Opportunity, workplace violence and sexual harassment prevention, as well as other internal control systems, while reviewing and investigating matters related to adverse employment actions for CDPH. The OOC's main function is in investigating complaints, but does not provide consultation regarding DEI matters. Providing DEI consultation to CDPH employees would be a function of the proposed CEA. The CEA's responsibilities are distinct from those of the OHE, which concentrate on advising external partners on policies related to administering programs as opposed to developing internal policies, with no overlap in their scopes of work. In collaboration with the State Chief Equity Officer, the CEA will work to address disparities in opportunities and outcomes, promote equity, and address unequal starting points to achieve equal outcomes.

In alignment with Executive Order N-16-22, all agencies and departments are required to develop or update their strategic plans to reflect the use of data analysis and inclusive practices that advance equity within the department workforce. These plans must address disparities by incorporating changes to the organization's mission, vision, goals, data tools, policies, programs, operations, community engagement strategies, Tribal consultation policies, and other actions necessary to serve all Californians. In addition to state orders, CDPH has defined three strategic priorities for the department, including: 1) becoming a learning organization, 2) becoming a healing organization promoting equity, justice, and belonging, and 3) becoming an impactful organization.

The years long coronavirus (COVID) disease pandemic emergency response has informed and impacted CDPH in terms of low staff morale, social isolation, loss of experienced staff, and hiring of inexperienced staff who lack specific training in public health. CDPH is building core public health competencies to consider the gaps identified and aims to build administrative infrastructure to achieve these priorities. COVID response also highlighted disparities across several populations who were at higher risk for exposure to COVID but also to more severe outcomes when infected. A more diverse workforce will equip the CDPH to better identify the challenges and needs of diverse populations. This will enable them to design more effective programs that specifically address the disparities faced by these communities.

The CDPH Directorate conducted several listening sessions with staff and learned of concerns from various populations within CDPH on their treatment and opportunities within the department. Many staff indicated the CDPH workforce, especially at the leadership level, does not reflect the population it represents. Some groups described micro and macro aggressions they face daily and how they feel undervalued by the organization.

Additionally, several CDPH staff have expressed the need for assistance in navigating situations that come up in the workplace outside of the state's employment systems and laws. There is a lack of resources in CDPH for employees to discuss and obtain advice on how to address situations where an employee feels dismissed, excluded, or undervalued due to their race or ethnicity. The CEA would work with peer groups and establish a system for providing such support to individual staff in coordination with the HR and civil rights teams.

Establishing a position dedicated to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism will elevate the issues of DEI for both our staff and internal stakeholders and lead to progress in DEI work across our workforce and program implementation. This position will be responsible for developing, revising, and eliminating policies to encourage progress in DEI work; establish relationships with stakeholders representing various populations to better understand how to address their needs and concerns; support HR in efforts to develop policies to attract, hire, and retain a diverse workforce in CDPH; create tools, training and other resources to remove barriers and biases in department operations and practices; and create tools for incorporating equity strategies across the department.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The Directorate is committed to DEI, recognizing its importance in fostering a respectful workplace environment. By promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, CDPH can create a healthier workplace where individuals feel accepted and are willing to collaborate. This approach can reduce unconscious bias; encourage collaboration among people from diverse backgrounds, leading to creative and innovative ideas; improve decision-making; and facilitate growth. The Executive Management team has heard from various internal groups expressing that they feel the representation within CDPH is not relatable. These voices call for transformative changes to address systemic disparities. Some specific policy areas include:

1) Culture Shift -- Developing policies to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging involves not only crafting the policies themselves but also preparing training programs, communication plans, and change management strategies. Additionally, establishing resources for staff—such as peer groups and one-on-one coaching sessions—will help individuals navigate issues with internal staff and managers. The goal of the DEI initiative is to review existing policies and procedures that contribute to inequities in the workplace, revising them to be more inclusive while also creating new policies to address identified gaps. The role will also include actively engaging the workforce to cultivate a culture of success and achievement, empowering individuals at all levels of the organization to promote innovative thinking, behaviors, attitudes, policies, and initiatives that support DEI. A more innovative and representative workforce will ultimately lead to improved recruitment and retention.

2) Collaborate with Operational Partners -- Partner with the Human Resources Division (HRD), Administration, Office of Compliance, IT and other operational areas of CDOs to advance DEI department-wide strategic initiatives to remove barriers and bias in all operational policies, practices and programs. This involves policy review, development and recommendations.

3) Metrics -- Developing a set of metrics to assess progress of DEI efforts and initiatives. This process will include conducting a baseline assessment at various organizational levels and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives. Each metric is expected to be accompanied by strategies and tactics designed to improve outcomes. By identifying and tracking these metrics, CDPH can continuously learn and refine its strategies to better meet the needs of staff, ensuring the most effective use of limited resources. This approach will enable the organization to make informed decisions and drive meaningful progress.

4) Strategies for incorporating Equity throughout all programs and for evaluating the success of these strategies -- The CEA will work with the Deputy Director of OHE to ensure internal efforts are consistent with external/program efforts. Jointly they will be responsible for convening leaders and staff, including HELs, from throughout the department to examine best practices for incorporating equity into CDPH policies, developing equity strategies and a toolkit for use by CDOs, and for ongoing evaluation strategies to continue to refine these tools.

In these strategy areas, the CEA will design, coordinate, and implement policies to address inequities such as the DEI Roadmap and set meaningful, measurable, achievable goals that align with the Department’s core values. The CEA will provide updates on initiatives to the Directorate to ensure goal attainment and outcomes are achieved. The Directorate expects to see a strong commitment to collaboration and a transformed culture throughout the department enabling CDPH to overcome challenges and effectively implement a strong focus on diversity and inclusion to align with the CDPH vision and core values.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The proposed CEA functions with a high degree of independence, working directly with the Directorate. This position will report to the Chief Deputy Director, Health Care Quality and Emergency Response. As a member of the Executive Management Team, the decisions of the CEA will impact staff and programs across the department. The CEA is the Department's expert on internal DEI policy and acts as a consultant for interdepartmental policies. The proposed CEA will serve as the representative in DEI policy matters and regularly update the Director, Assistant Director, Chief Deputy Directors, California Health and Human Services (CalHHS) Agency Secretary and Governor's Office regarding decisions and strategies, and the development and implementation of DEI activities.

The decisions made by the proposed CEA will have a substantial impact on CDPH internally, and by the work of the CDPH workforce impact local health jurisdictions, external stakeholders, and the California population at large.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The proposed CEA would develop and implement new policy; as well as interpret and implement existing policy as part of close coordination with the CDOs.

The CEA will serve in an Ombudsman role designed to support staff who are facing challenges within the workplace. These interactions between the CEA and employees will help define policy areas for review and/or development and help formulate DEI strategic initiatives. The policies will need to be developed in coordination with HRD, the Office of Legal Services, and the Office of Civil Rights team to ensure applicable laws and rules are considered. The CEA will also need to establish policies and procedures to promote DEI across the department, including efforts to address the specific needs of various populations whether based on race/ethnicity, age, gender or gender identify, sexual orientation, level of position in the organization, etc. Policies will need to include areas such as:

• Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Groups across the department. What work will they take on, what will be the accountability and approval for actions and deliverables?
• Develop mentoring programs for leaders across the department. The CEA would develop policies and training materials for mentors and mentees.
• Establish department wide policies and procedures to promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Establish leadership development programs specific to black staff and other priority groups within CDPH – This could include a speaker series, focus on identified needs in terms of specific skills sets, and provide leadership opportunities within the Department.