

BIPOC Interviews Summary

June 16, 2021



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Voices Shaping Our Racial Equity Action Plan

Sacramento Steps Forward



Maurice Harge shared his perspective with Racial Equity Committee Co-Chair Ardy Akhzari.

The [Racial Equity Committee](#) has a vision for a more equitable future for people experiencing homelessness in Sacramento. Building this future starts with listening to and learning from Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC) who have lived experiences of homelessness.

To elevate their voices, this diverse committee has conducted a series of listening sessions with BIPOC with current and past experience of homelessness. This work helps us understand the nature of the barriers they have faced and take definitive steps to eliminate them.



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Process Summary

- REQC members recommended 19 people for interview.
- Based on the ability to connect, 14 people were surveyed.
- Participants were provided with a gift card.
- Field interviews were transcribed by a REQC Co-Chair.
- Themes were identified through a descriptive coding process by Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF) staff.
- The draft summary document was compiled by SSF staff and reviewed by the REQC Chairs.

20 REQC members and 6 SSF staff contributed to the process.

Thank you!



Demographics Summary

14 people interviewed

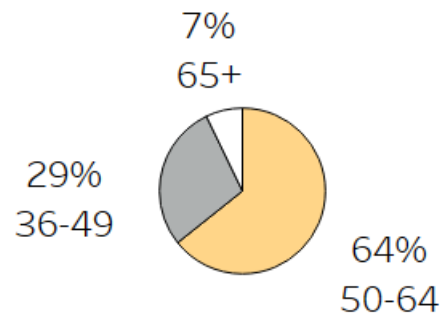
"How do you identify racially and ethnically?"

African American	5
African American/Black	2
Black	1
Native American/Black	1
Native/Black	1
Indigenous/Haitian/ Native American	1
Native American	1
Hispanic/Indian	1
Anglo/Asian/Latin	1

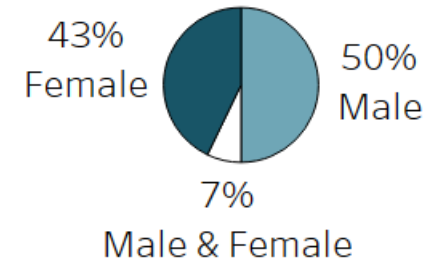
Current homelessness situation

Experiencing/connected to services	6
Experiencing/not connected to services	4
Resolved	4

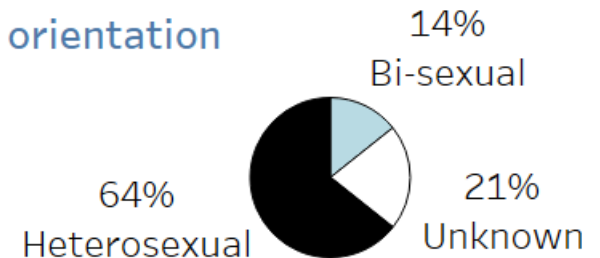
Age group



Gender



Sexual orientation



62% of persons had spent all of their time homeless in Sacramento.

The reported length of time homeless ranged from "about one year" to 30 years



Demographics Summary

“Which of these descriptions best describe you?”

Head of Household: 93%

Living with a Disability: 71%

Domestic Violence Survivor: 29%

Formerly Incarcerated: 29%

Veteran: 14%



Findings from the Interviews

54% thought there was a difference by race in applying for and accessing services

Comments included:

- “Being black puts you at the bottom of the totem pole.”
- Frustrated and upset that his word isn’t taken at face value, he wants to be treated equally when requesting resources.
- “There were different services and groups come out. Groups would have you write down your name and social and were going to call you. White females got calls and spoke highly of them; I couldn’t get a call back. And I was pregnant at the time...people who got the help were white.”
- Not fair that the only time she has access to services is when she is being taken to jail.



Findings from the Interviews

54% thought there was a difference by race in applying for and accessing services

Comments continued:

- Given a “not up to par” feeling by a particular provider who wound up not providing the sought-after service to him, but providing to two others.
- Did not think race was a factor and mentioned that because he used a phone line that may have helped since they “didn’t know what color he was.”
- “It’s a certain look...they’re not hiding it.”
- “Man, I don’t know why they hate us, what did we ever do?...I’m at this stand, grabbing coffee, he’ll just look up and move away like I’m going to do something to him or something, that hurts more than anything.”



Findings from the Interviews

36% said they were delayed or denied services due to labels more readily assigned to BIPOC individuals

Comments included:

- Was called a “lazy son of a bitch” and told “It’s just like you people.”
- Despises the “angry black man” moniker that has been assigned to him in the past.
- Labeled as “service resistant.”
- “I try to keep myself as calm as possible because I know this; I’m a black female and of course seen as aggressive especially coming off of drug addiction, coming off the river all stacked up against me, so I try to be as pleasant as possible.”



Findings from the Interviews

What does a more racially just system look like?

Comments included:

- We should be judged by the content of our character, not the color of our skin.
- Zero tolerance on both sides, both the provider and the participant.
- Leadership needs to set a proper example.
- People who care and listen, show compassion, and understand the system are key
- We should challenge each other on how to better ourselves, society, and the world.
- We just need a break like everybody else.
- It shouldn't matter what race you are but based on the situation you are in and the desire to get out of your situation.

