



News from: **City of Oakland**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland launches new Department of Race & Equity; national expert to assist with start-up

Oakland, CA – To achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities in Oakland, the City of Oakland is launching a new Department of Race and Equity, as approved by the Oakland City Council on June 30, 2015. To create this new department, the City of Oakland and the City of Portland, Oregon have entered into an agreement to have Portland’s Equity Director—Mr. Dante J. James—temporarily loaned to Oakland. Mr. James, the current Executive Director for Portland’s Office of Equity and Human Rights, was Portland’s first director and operationalized Portland’s new office in 2012.

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"Oakland has a long, proud history of being a diverse and inclusive community," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "Bringing expert support to Oakland as we build a Department of Race and Equity will help ensure that Oakland continues to grow as a thriving, equitable city. This is in keeping with our city's rich tradition and my goals as mayor."

The new Department of Race & Equity is charged with integrating the principal of “fair and just” in the delivery of city services. For up to a three-month period, Mr. James will provide technical assistance to the City of Oakland in establishing a foundation for the new Department of Race and Equity. The department will be staffed with two positions including the director and a program analyst.

Mr. James has more than 25 years of experience within the national, state, and local government, performing work in the areas of social justice and civil rights. He holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Denver, College of Law, and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Central Arkansas. He has been an attorney in private practice, a public defender, and an administrative hearing officer, as well as an executive director of two non-profit organizations focused on social justice. Mr. James has extensive experience as a trainer, facilitator and teacher.

In Portland, Mr. James oversaw the development of training curricula, provided technical assistance and developed an equity lens tools for budgeting, program and policy implementation. He also oversaw the implementation of the National League of Cities’ Black Male Achievement Initiative.

Portland’s Office of Equity and Human Rights’ working definition of equity is, “Equity is achieved when one’s identity cannot predict the outcome.” The City of Oakland will benefit substantially having Mr. James’ assistance in establishing a strong foundation for the city’s Department of Race and Equity.

The City has hired The Hawkins Company to complete the executive recruitment for a permanent Director of Race and Equity. The job announcement will be released early next week.

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