

# Summary Report & Recommendations

LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY VISIONING FORUM

PLANNING COMMITTEE

**JUNE 2024** 

On February 23, 2021, the Lake County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a Proclamation promoting "Tolerance, Respect, Equity and Inclusion in Lake County (Appendix I). By March 2, 2021, the Lake County Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee (Committee) was formed and set to work learning more about the experiences of Lake County residents.

The Committee included valued participants from the cities of Lakeport and Clearlake and the Tribal Nations of Robinson Rancheria and Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians. In March 2022, the County engaged Nicole Anderson and Associates, LLC, as facilitator for both planning efforts and what would become the "Honoring ALL Voices" public forum series. The Cities of Lakeport and Clearlake generously committed to contribute to facilitation services costs.

By the end of June 2023, three forums were complete. Committee members learned a great deal about the range of lived experiences in Lake County and developed a broad understanding of equity and inclusion issues and the means by which their effects can be addressed.

This report is a summary of the Committee's activities and recommendations to date and serves as the culminating work of the Lake County Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee.

# Contents

Sacred Acknowledgment	3
History	4
Committee Members	5
Staff	6
Consultants	6
Community Members	6
Committee Purpose	7
Guiding Principles	7
Timeline	8
Honoring All Voices – Community Forums	10
Attendance	11
Social Media Analytics	12
Themes	14
Glows and Grows	16
Recommendations	16
The Six Conditions of Systems Change	17
Summation	18
Appendix I – Proclamation Promoting Tolerance, Respect, Equity and Inclusion in Lake County	19
Appendix II – Indigenous Data Framework as presented by Abigail Echo-Hawk, Chief Research Office for Seattle Indian Health Board	

#### Sacred Acknowledgment

Each of us may experience a deep sense of belonging and connection to Lake County land and culture. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the importance of everyone being able to see themselves in this community and including all in our circle of care and concern.

With this in mind, the Committee wishes to specifically acknowledge and offer deep respect to the original caretakers of this land and the seven Tribal Nations now known as The Elem Indian Colony; the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake; the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians; the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians; Robinson Rancheria; the Koi Nation of Northern California; and the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians. We acknowledge the work of this committee happens on their unceded ancestral lands.

We also wish to acknowledge the economic progress and development of Lake County, California, and all of the United States, resulted in part from the unpaid labor and forced servitude of many Peoples of Color. Despite having been interned, sexually abused, caged, captured and killed, these individuals contributed to the prosperity and power that exists in our country today. Their collective traumas cannot be ignored, forgotten or dismissed as ancient history. Instead, we are informed and inspired by their struggles spanning multiple generations.

While we recognize those living here today were not the original perpetrators of harm, we do recognize some present today do perpetuate harm. The Committee is specifically concerned with working to find places of repair and healing from these past and present harms.

"OUR ECONOMY WAS NOT ABOUT WHO WAS RICH OR WHO HAD WHAT, IT WAS ABOUT HOW WE KEPT THE LAND."

Chairman Beniakem Cromwell, Robinson Rancheria

#### History

2020 was a year of change for every American. The COVID-19 pandemic rocked many long-held assumptions and the way we interact. The untimely and tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd were cultural flashpoints that brought a renewed sense of urgency surrounding the policies and conduct of every public-facing organization. In nearly every major American city, people were protesting: no more could we allow immutable characteristics, like the color of one's skin or their cultural background, to predict success and failure in the world's most prosperous nation; no more could we allow unconscious biases to affect our behavior in ways that caused real harm. We had a responsibility to act.

Inspired by a June 2020 sermon from a Kelseyville faith leader, Clovice Lewis, a self-organized Lake County group began to grapple with what could be done here, at the local level:

"We had many friends we knew felt the same, so we started a grassroots effort called A Community Call to Action: A loving response to systemic racism in America," recalled JoAnn Saccato. "Loving', because we knew that 'hatred never ceases by hatred' and 'an eye for an eye will make everyone blind.' We found a dedicated group and learned there was interest in engaging in four areas--social services, policing, cultural education, and a county proclamation condemning these harmful actions."

This community-driven group engaged in robust dialogue, goal setting, and relationship building. From the stories shared in this process, it was evident there would be value in creating a container for broader community conversation:

"Our group met numerous times with special guest speakers and eventually the individual topic areas spun off to do their important work, some of which you may have heard of, particularly through the Middletown Art Center and their Sounds of Liberation project," continued Saccato. "Anna Rose Ravenwoode and I worked on the proclamation with the group and eventually engaged with Bruno Sabatier and Carol Huchingson, [then County Administrative Officer], to finalize what the Board of Supervisors might possibly be interested in adopting."

Many people in Lake County's diverse communities watched February 23, 2021, as all five Board members read a portion of the Proclamation, and the Board collectively resolved to host public forums to discover community priorities in the following categories:

- Meaningful actions and activities that will build bridges where there may be walls;
- Fostering tolerance, respect, understanding, equity and inclusion;
- Promoting non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution;
- Focusing resources on underlying causes and conditions that lead to inequitable resource and justice distribution; and
- Relevant solutions for any social injustices, as they may come to light.

Since June 15, 2021, community members and leaders from the Cities of Lakeport and Clearlake, County of Lake and Tribal governments that resonated with the Board's Proclamation met as the "Lake County Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee." (*The Committee*)



Committee consultant, participants, and community members at an Honoring All Voices: Exploring respect, fairness and inclusion in Lake County forum. April 24, 2023.

## Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee Participants

#### Committee Members

- Angela Cuellar-Marroquin, Lake County Office of Education
- Beniakem Cromwell, Chair, Robinson Rancheria
- Bethany Childers (Moss), City of Lakeport Chief Building Official
- Carol Huchingson, County Administrative Officer
- Dale Stoebe, Lakeport Police Department
- Delores Farrell, Lake County Continuum of Care
- Dirk Slooten, City of Clearlake Councilmember
- Eddie Crandell, Lake County Board of Supervisors
- Georgina Marie Guardado, Lake County Poet Laureate, Lake County Adult Literacy Program
- India Akua Mendonça, Community Member
- JoAnn Saccato, California Health Collaborative, NorCal 4 Health
- Michael Green, Lake County Board of Supervisors
- Mireya Turner, City of Lakeport
- Sally Peterson, Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians
- Sue Williams, Community Member
- Tina Scott, Lake County Board of Supervisors

#### Staff

- Matthew Rothstein, Chief Deputy County Administrative Officer
- Sam Euston, Videographer
- Leila Romero, Health Programs Coordinator, Health Equity

#### Consultants

- Nicole Anderson, Nicole Anderson and Associates, LLC.
- Dr. Shelly Jones-Holt, Nicole Anderson and Associates, LLC.

#### Community Members

• Throughout the life of the project, nearly 100 people across diverse backgrounds (including geographic locations, ages, vocations, and more) have connected to this work through the Committee's email list, many of whom participated in meetings and forums and made valuable contributions to this work.

#### Committee Purpose

On August 10, 2021, the Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee adopted the following Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles:

To plan [at least one] Community Visioning Forum, with the intent of developing recommendations for meaningful actions and activities that:

- Identify and eliminate barriers, promoting local governance that hears and honors ALL voices;
- Build bridges where there may be walls;
- Foster tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion beginning with education, culminating in action;
- Promote non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution;
- Focus resources on underlying causes and conditions that lead to inequitable resource and justice distribution
  - o Fund enhanced resources and/or services for those in the greatest need;
  - Foster constructive relationships between law enforcement officials and our communities;
  - o Advocate for disempowered groups; and
  - Ensure those who have experienced barriers have a voice in developing solutions.
- Bring relevant solutions for any social injustices, as they come to light,
  - Healthcare services and health outcomes;
  - Environmental considerations:
  - Access to economic opportunity; and
  - Governmental processes.
- Celebrate Lake County's diversity, including holidays and historically important dates in our communities

# **Guiding Principles**

In pursuit of truth, healing, justice and reconciliation, we will:

- Commit to developing cultural competency and proficiency Education is paramount, and it starts with us;
- Recognize the numerous ways we are all affected when discrimination and violence are permitted, and seek to understand the ways personal contexts and biases inform our own views;
- Celebrate diversity and our interconnectedness, appreciating our rich history, and that holidays and historical dates of importance to even/any one community are matters of Countywide significance;

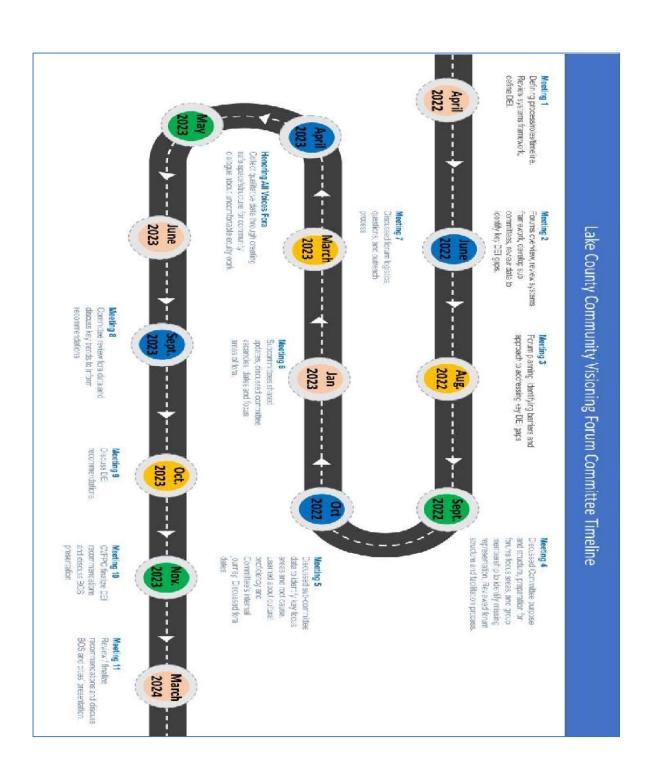
- Work together to achieve the maximum community benefit through this Forum, by seeking first to listen and understand the diverse needs present in Lake County's unique and precious individuals and communities, as represented by the members of this Committee;
- Ensure each potential Forum contributor is treated with equal dignity, worth and value, taking into account each individual's personal autonomy, and embracing the fact we continue to learn together;
- Model and encourage discussion to identify and mitigate any disparities in Lake County's representation and service of our many population groups, including but not limited to persons of color, seniors, persons with limited access to resources, and persons whose voices are less likely to be heard;
- Ensure fairness, impartiality and transparency in all Committee meetings and the design of community events; and
- Formulate recommendations for the Board of Supervisors and/or City Councils based on open-hearted engagement of group discussion and respect for the knowledge and life experiences of each member.

#### Timeline

The Committee met over a period of time first gathering information, selecting a facilitator, learning more about how today's experiences were informed by past harms and traumas, and what communities are doing across the world to co-create a new way of being that honors, respects, and includes all peoples in positions of decision and power.

The significant signposts, as outlined in the following timeline were:

- 1) Selecting a firm to provide facilitation services;
- 2) Gathering existing data and determining which areas were in need of the most attention;
- 3) Engaging community partners in the three key areas of concern health, policing, and education;
- 4) On learning about these entities' ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-focused work, pivoting to designing and facilitating more generally-focused Community Forums (Honoring ALL Voices Exploring Respect, Fairness and Inclusion in Lake County);
- 5) Synthesizing gathered qualitative data; and
- 6) Preparing information for presentation to jurisdictions.



# Honoring All Voices – Community Forums

Three forums were held over a three-month period, one each in the communities of Lakeport (*Lake County Board of Supervisors Chambers*), Nice (*Robinson Rancheria Event Center*), and Clearlake (Clearlake City Hall). Participation was available in person, via Zoom, and live broadcast on both the Lake County's Facebook page and YouTube channel. Additionally, an anonymous online survey was made available for those unable to attend.

A safe space was provided for community members to explore four topics:

- How do you define respect, fairness, and inclusion?
- What gets in the way of you and your family getting your needs met in Lake County?
- What history must be acknowledged to begin community healing?
- What would support all Lake County residents feeling respected, included, and experiencing fair outcomes?



Fliers in English and Spanish from one of the community forums.

Each two-and-a-half hour session was co-facilitated by at least one Committee member and the consultants, and included a learning segment and listening breakout spaces to explore the questions. Snacks, childcare and Spanish and sign language translation were offered by committee and community members. The Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee is deeply grateful for the partnership of Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California (<a href="https://rrrc.com/banquets-and-events">https://rrrc.com/banquets-and-events</a>), Stephanie Griffin and family, Gilbert Rangel and Equilingual (<a href="https://www.equilingual.org/">https://www.equilingual.org/</a>), and Pro Bono ASL (<a href="https://www.probonoasl.com/">https://www.probonoasl.com/</a>) for their collaborative support and engagement.







Lake County Board of Supervisors Chambers

Forum 1

April 24, 2023







#### Attendance

Total in-person and Zoom participation was approximately 70-75 community and Committee members. The Committee also received a total of 8 anonymous surveys.

#### Social Media Analytics

For each forum, the Committee tracked social media engagement. The location of Forum #1 (*Board of Supervisors Chambers*) enabled robust remote and asynchronous engagement, as depicted in the graphic below. Collectively, gathered data indicate broad reach and positive community response:

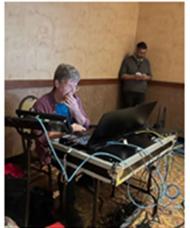


#### "Honoring All Voices" Forum Series-relevant County of Lake Facebook posts:

- April 8, 2023, post announcing Forum #1: Post Impressions 7,971; Post Reach 5,471; 11
   Reactions; 50 Shares
- April 24, 2023, Facebook Live Recording from Forum #1 (English): 660 Views; 8 Reactions; 25
   Comments
- April 25, 2023, post with recorded video from Forum #1 (English): 226 Views; 4 Reactions
- April 28, 2023, post announcing Forum #2: Post Impressions 7,138; Post Reach 4,487; 4
   Reactions; 29 Shares
- May 9, 2023, Board of Supervisors Update regarding Countywide Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee: 36 Views; 1 Reaction
- <u>June 5, 2023</u>, post announcing Forum #3: Post Impressions 8,594; Post Reach 6,199; 7
   Reactions; 30 Shares
- June 6, 2023, post with recorded video from Forum #2 (English): 140 Views; 6 Reactions
- <u>June 26, 2023</u>, Facebook Live Recording from Forum #3 (English): 538 Views; 7 Reactions
- June 30, 2023, Facebook Post Sharing YouTube Links for Forum #3 Vido (English): Post Impressions 175; Post Reach 164







Robinson Rancheria Conference Center

May 15, 2023





Forum 2



## Themes

Several themes emerged over the three community forums through exploring the questions which are compiled here:

How do you define respect, fairness, and inclusion?			
Respect	Fairness	Inclusion	
Valuing others	Everyone has the same	Feeling welcomed and heard	
	chance for success		
Treating others the way you want to be treated	Being treated with equality	Welcoming despite differences	
	Get what they need		
	Equal opportunities		

	What gets in the way of you and your family getting your needs met in Lake	
	County?	
	Lack of services / resources	
Ī	Lack of healthcare / behavioral health	
ĺ	Lack of housing	

What history must be acknowledged to begin community healing?
Harm caused to Lake County's Tribal Nations, including actions of Andrew Kelsey and Charles Stone
Acknowledging there is still disparity within the BIPOC community
Historical trauma

What would support Lake County residents feeling respected, included and
experiencing fair outcomes?
More outreach
Community listening sessions / education
Diversified leadership
Translation services
Support efforts to rename Kelseyville





Forum 3



City of Clearlake Council Chambers

June 26, 2023

#### Glows and Grows

To promote continual improvement, the Committee held debrief sessions after each Forum in the Honoring ALL Voices Series. While discussion in the debriefing sessions was far-ranging, several themes emerged the Committee believes will be helpful for similar future work:

- There is now a repeatable structure and process that can lead to an ongoing powerful foundation and trust for continued conversations.
- Other avenues of gaining trust and information (e.g., one-on-one or small groups) have the potential to lead to greater engagement.
- More Lake County residents have a working understanding of "DEI" principles, and their broader intent.
- Outreach to vulnerable populations is an ongoing need and challenge. Traditional channels for community notifications are not fully effective. Creative community engagement is needed.
- Collaboration with other organizations across sectors would elicit greater and better outcomes.
- Digital / social media can help expand this work.
- County staff and elected officials' commitment to this work helped create and can help maintain community momentum.

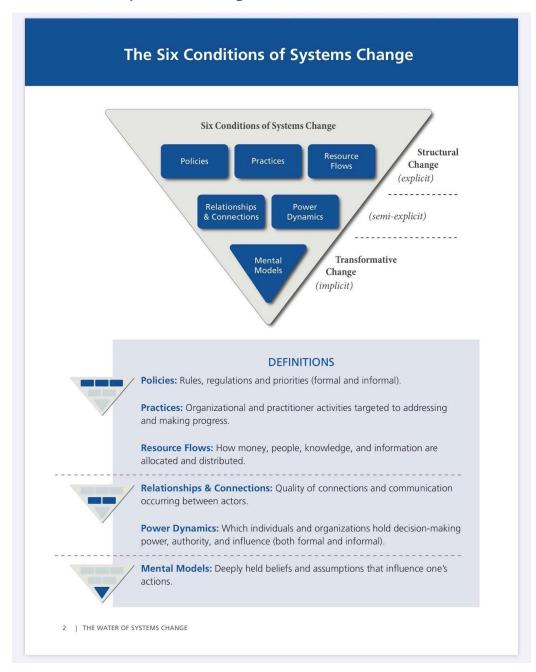


#### Recommendations

Throughout the Committee's term, participants have been gathering thoughts on how this work can move forward. Additionally, the community forums provided rich feedback that leads to the following recommendations as agreed upon by all Committee members.

From the earliest stages of the Committee's work, it has been clear this work *must continue*, both at the jurisdictional and community levels.

The Six Conditions of Systems Change



Three key areas of systems change were the focus for committee recommendations: 1) key structurally explicit actions—those related to policy, practice, and resource flows; 2) key relational semi-explicit actions—those relating to relationships and connections and power dynamics; and 3) key mental model implicit actions—those relating to belief systems and culture. The recommendations include those that could be undertaken by the County and, optionally, the Cities, for staff and contractors (Internal Focused) and those that are more broadly focused for the good of all of Lake County residents (External Focused).

#### Internally-Focused Recommendations (All jurisdictions)

Create an Office of Equity and/or engage an Equity Officer.

Provide ongoing staff DEI training and professional development (including GARE membership).

Develop an internal committee or employee resource group made up of representatives from each department. Can be responsible to ensure alignment of DEI work across departments.

Develop an anonymous reporting system that includes a timely and effective response process.

Recruit, hire, and retain BIPOC staff that represent the diversity of Lake County.

Hold/engage in joint elected official study sessions to educate at the level of policy, systems, and power. Include school boards, tribal nations, etc.

Ensure representation of marginalized community members on all appointed advisory bodies.

Engage with an indigenous data framework, when possible, for collection of additional qualitative data. (See Appendix II)

#### Externally / Community-Focused Recommendations

Board of Supervisors to decide whether to convene an ongoing Ad Hoc committee that would engage topics and community partners to address DEI issues in Lake County or work to create a community-led coalition of which the County is a partner at the table.

Create and maintain pages on the County and Cities' websites raising awareness of DEI work, including resources.

Continue holding community forums and other engagement opportunities, such as small groups, community walks, and one-on-one sessions that capture the experiences and perceptions of historically and currently marginalized community members and reveal specific community member needs.

Develop and conduct a survey that provides anonymous space for marginalized voices to be heard.

Work to deconstruct implicit bias and a new narrative around DEI work through awareness campaign.

Leverage community partnerships, including local advocacy groups, service agencies and ombudsman to advance DEI efforts across the county.

Engage with an indigenous data framework for additional qualitative data gathering. (See Appendix II)

#### Summation

The Committee wishes to thank the Lake County Board of Supervisors and Clearlake and Lakeport City Councils for funding this historic effort. Engagement of residents in the work undertaken thus far demonstrates broad community interest, and a need for ongoing efforts and collaboration to promote the safety, well-being and success of ALL Lake County residents.

# Appendix I – Proclamation Promoting Tolerance, Respect, Equity and Inclusion in Lake County





#### JUNTA DE SUPERVISORES, CONDADO DE LAKE, ESTADO DE CALIFORNIA

#### Proclamacion

#### Promoviendo Tolerancia, Respeto, Equidad e Inclusión en el Condado de Lake

CONSIDERANDO QUE, la Decimocuarta Enmienda de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos establece que ningún Estado puede negar a ninguna persona dentro de su jurisdicción la protección igualitaria de las leyes y la Constitución de California proporciona sustancialmente las mismas protecciones; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE. la Primera Enmienda de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos establece, en la parte pertinente, que el Congreso no promulgará ninguna ley con respecto al establecimiento de una religión o que prohíba su libre ejercicio y la Constitución de California establece que el libre ejercicio y disfrute de la profesión y el culto religiosos, sin discriminación o preferencia, se permitirá para siempre en este Estado; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, tanto las leyes federales como las de California protegen a las personas de la discriminación por motivos de raza, religión, etnia, origen nacional, género, edad, orientación o preferencia sexual, identidad de género, discapacidad y otras clasificaciones protegidas; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, a pesar de estas leyes que pretenden promover la inclusión, el respeto y la equidad, parece haber una creciente intolerancia en este país que a menudo parece expresarse en prejuicios, fanatismo e ira; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, El condado de Lake es el hogar de las tierras ancestrales de siete naciones tribales indigenas, incluida Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California, Koi Nation of Northern California, Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California y Elem Colony; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, el condado de Lake tiene una rica historia y los residentes del condado de Lake son un grupo diverso de personas, con tierras tribales ancestrales ahora compartidas por muchos grupos étnicos y raciales, géneros, edades, habilidades y orientaciones sexuales; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, como gobierno de su condado, esta Junta tiene la obligación de proteger, respetar y servir a todos por igual; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, su Junta cree que no podemos callarnos ante la intolerancia, el odio, la violencia y las inequidades, que son una amenaza directa a nuestra democracia; y

CONSIDERANDO QUE, en este momento de ajuste de cuentas, estamos llamados a escuchar y hablar, a arrodillarnos y ponernos de pie, a reflexionar y mejorar, a aprender y enseñar, debemos responder a estos llamados juntos como comunidad.

SE ACUERDA ADEMÁS, la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Lake denuncia todas las formas de odio y violencia dirigidas contra cualquier grupo o individuo, condena enérgicamente todos los delitos de odio basados en la raza y extiende nuestro más sentido pésame a las familias y amigos de todas las víctimas de la violencia basada en la raza.

SE ACUERDA ADEMÁS, La Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Lake confirma su mandato continuo de exigir que todos los departamentos del Condado practiquen la tolerancia, el respeto, la equidad y la inclusión y se compromete a promover las políticas y medidas administrativas del Condado en apoyo de este objetivo.



# Appendix II – Indigenous Data Framework as presented by Abigail Echo-Hawk, Chief Research Officer for Seattle Indian Health Board

As the Committee reflected upon and responded to quantitative data revealing community member voices expressed in the forums, they were drawn to the work of Abigail Echo-Hawk, whose work is informed from her cultural heritage. The Committee wants to offer the following thoughts to inform a framework to guide any collection of additional qualitative data (experiences, perceptions). Here are a selection of insightful quotes from Ms. Echo-Hawk, drawn from a <u>Crosscut</u> (Cascade Public Media/PBS of Seattle, Washington) article:

"When we think about data, and how it's been gathered, is that, from marginalized communities, it was never gathered to help or serve us. It was primarily done to show the deficits in our communities, to show where there are gaps...Decolonizing data means that the community itself is the one determining what is the information they want us to gather. Why are we gathering it? Who's interpreting it? And are we interpreting it in a way that truly serves our communities? Decolonizing data is about controlling our own story, and making decisions based on what is best for our people. That hasn't been done in data before, and that's what's shifting and changing...

I always think about the data as story, and each person who contributed to that data as storytellers. What is our responsibility to the story and our responsibility to the storyteller? Those are all indigenous concepts, that we always care for our storytellers, and we always have a responsibility to our stories...

That is the change and the shift that we're doing with this data. We held a community gathering, and we're moving forward [as a community]. Because everybody deserves to tell their story to somebody who will believe them, and somebody who won't judge them. People who won't victim-blame them, or victim-shame them. They deserve to have their stories told, because they're more than a data point...

I know who I'm descended from. I know their stories. And they survived so I could thrive. So I am going to continue that legacy that I am so blessed to follow in footsteps of — the consciousness and the stories that they whispered, in languages they weren't supposed to speak anymore, of cultural practices that they attempted to outlaw. The grandmas whispered them ear to ear, generation to generation, so that I could practice them today, so I could have that dream. And that's what indigenous research is, that continuity."