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****PRESS RELEASE****

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WELCOMES SHAKIRAH SIMLEY AS
DIRECTOR OF NEWLY CREATED OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY**

Shakirah Simley will be responsible for creating action and accountability measures to address San Francisco's growing racial inequity.

San Francisco, CA – Human Rights Commission Executive Director Sheryl Davis today announced the appointment of Shakirah Simley as Director of the Office of Racial Equity for the City and County of San Francisco. In this new role, created by legislation from Supervisors Sandra Lee Fewer and Vallie Brown, Director Simley will be responsible for advancing a citywide racial equity framework to address the history of structural and institutional racism in San Francisco's delivery of services to the public, and in its internal practices and systems. The Office will achieve this goal through policy analysis and development, trainings, data collection, as well as support and stronger accountability measures for City departments. Director Simley's work will be community-driven and data informed.

"I am thrilled to welcome a proven community champion who has consistently centered the needs of the most marginalized and negatively impacted populations in San Francisco," said Director Davis. "Ms. Simley will help close the gaps in existing racial disparities and help guide the work of city departments so that we get to a place when race will no longer determine one's success in San Francisco."

"I am so excited to advance a more inclusive and racially just vision for San Francisco that is rooted in community. Inequities in housing, health, transportation, education, economic advancement and in our criminal justice system cut deeply along racial lines. In San Francisco, we are not living the progressive social values that we espouse; it is time to finally dismantle systems of privilege and oppression that undermine the ability of everyone to thrive," Ms. Simley said. "Supervisors Brown and Fewer, along with Mayor Breed, have given department leaders a very clear mandate to eradicate the racism embedded in City practices. I'm proud to be entrusted to lead this work to center the lives and leadership of communities that are continually being left behind and traumatized by past decisions and present harm."

"I could not be more thrilled that Shakirah Simley will be leading the Office of Racial Equity as its Director, after she was instrumental in the crafting of the legislation," said Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer. "She absolutely would have been my first choice, and this work could not be in better hands."

“I am excited to work with Shakirah Simley in her role as the newly appointed Director of the Office of Racial Equity, “ said District 10 Supervisor Shamann Walton. “Ms. Simley will lead our City with bold and innovative solutions needed to tackle racial inequities, Black outmigration and disparities in our communities of color.”

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY

The Office of Racial Equity (ORE) was created in July 2019 through legislation authored by Supervisors Sandra Lee Fewer and Vallie Brown, as a division of the Human Rights Commission. The ORE will repair harm done by local policy decisions that have created, upheld, or exacerbated racial disparities within San Francisco. The ORE will collaborate with all city departments to create targeted strategies to advance racial equity and will also provide analysis on the racial equity impact of proposed ordinances pending at the Board of Supervisors in key policy areas. Most importantly, ORE will utilize a multi-method approach to facilitate public engagement and restorative justice processes, building trust and accountability in the communities most harmed by policy decisions.

The powers and duties of the Office of Racial Equity includes the following:

- **Development of Citywide Racial Equity Framework and related policy priorities**—a frame and specific recommendations made to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors about changes to the city’s laws, programs, policies, budget and focus areas to address and repair racial disparities;
- **Racial Equity Action Plans for city departments and annual reporting** about both city workers and contracts and grants for service provision, with recommendations for budget reductions should benchmarks not be met;
- An **annual release of data about the City’s workforce by race** including but not limited to compensation, hires, promotions, disciplinary actions, complaints made, (and whether they were investigated) and more;
- **Reporting on data regarding City’s contracting by race;**
- **A Budget Equity Tool** to assess how the City’s budget decisions and priorities benefit and/or burden communities, specifically communities of color.
- **A Racial Equity Policy Analysis Tool for Legislation at the Board of Supervisors** to illuminate the impact of policy on communities of color-- before a public vote on policy.
- **A biennial report card or ‘Racial Equity Index’ on how San Francisco as a whole is faring** within the public and private sector, with regards to indicators by race, including housing, income/wealth, transit, health, education, environment, policing/criminal justice and other factors.

ABOUT SHAKIRAH SIMLEY

Shakirah Simley is a seasoned organizer and community development strategist with over fifteen years of experience working on social justice and equity policy initiatives. Most recently, Ms. Simley served as a Legislative Aide to Supervisor Vallie Brown, representing District 5 of the City and County of San Francisco, where she managed the Supervisor’s policy and legislative priorities regarding equity, gender, community development, housing, and homelessness, and assisted in passing over 30 pieces of legislation. She also served as Supervisor Brown’s lead for the City Budget process, successfully advocating for increased funds for affordable housing production, a local Working Families Earned Income Tax Credit, and universal access to legal aid for low-income communities. Prior to working in City Hall, Ms. Simley was the Acting Executive Director and Community Programs Manager of the Southeast

Community Facility and the SECF Commission in the Bayview Hunters Point for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, where she directed all Center programming, staff, facilities, budget, and community engagement activities. She also served as lead and co-facilitator in the planning, development, and community outreach for the building of a new Southeast Community Facility at 1550 Evans. Ms. Simley was a [2017 recipient of the Exchange Fellowship with Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture](#) and served as the Community Programs Director for [Bi-Rite](#), an independently-owned family of sustainable food businesses in San Francisco. For over five years, Ms. Simley led community outreach and strategy, youth development, and philanthropy programs for Bi-Rite's five businesses, where she directed \$1.3 million dollars' worth of support towards over 2,500 organizations within the San Francisco Bay Area, prioritizing initiatives that support a good, clean, and just food system.

Ms. Simley has always uplifted food equity and social justice issues, particularly for people of color. She has served as a technical assistance provider to [Funders' Collaborative for Youth Organizing](#); working with young people in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans to change their school food systems. Ms. Simley worked with community-based organizations and indigenous groups to organize for effective, culturally competent policy initiatives that addressed social determinants of health through her work with the [Prevention Institute](#), and Robert Wood Johnson-funded national initiative, [Communities Creating Healthier Environments \(CCHE\)](#). Ms. Simley served as one of the first Human Rights Fellows for the City of New York, where she co-developed an employment rights ESOL curriculum for immigrant workers and spearheaded the development of a [NYC Civil Rights Oral History Documentation Project](#).

Ms. Simley was a U.S. Fulbright scholar to Italy for Anthropological study, where she received her master's degree, cum laude. She received her undergraduate degree in Cultural Anthropology and Urban Studies with honors from the [University of Pennsylvania](#), where she successfully advocated for the inclusion of a United States cross-cultural analysis requirement to the College of Arts and Sciences curriculum. As a trained organizer via the [Midwest Academy](#), she successfully led a living wage and unionization campaign for on-campus security guards at Penn and Temple, as the co-founder of Penn Student Labor Action Project, and partner with [Philadelphia Jobs with Justice](#). Through her professional and community building pursuits, Ms. Simley has continued to leverage her extensive community organizing, public speaking, workshop design, and facilitation skills. In 2016, she co-founded an organizing collaborative of people of color working in good food, called [Nourish|Resist](#). Nourish|Resist provided over 225 youth and local community members capacity-building activities and direct action education over delicious, lovingly-made meals, including an [#UnPresidedMeal in a public high school](#) cafeteria, and [#LoveLetterstoLegislators](#) at a community cooking school to support SB54, California's sanctuary law.

The daughter of a social worker and granddaughter of a Black Panther, Ms. Simley was born in the South Bronx and raised in Harlem, New York. She is the oldest of 5 kids, who always keep her grounded and honest. Shakirah has lived in San Francisco for over 12 years, working to change access and opportunity for low-income communities and generations of young people to come.