

EXPO 2026



2026 EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT EXPO

Advancing Equity Through Action, Access, and Opportunity

Expo Program

April 29, 2026

Caltrans District 4, Auditorium





2026 Equity Expo – Caltrans District 4 | Opening Ceremony Agenda

Event Location: Caltrans District 4, Auditorium

| Program Schedule | Program Lineup |
|---|---|
| <p>10:00 AM – 10:30 AM Opening Ceremony:</p> | <p>Master of Ceremony: Nicholas Fowlks, Equity Relations Officer, Caltrans, District 4</p> <p>An engaging lineup designed to set the tone, foster inspiration, and catalyze meaningful action.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Acknowledgement: Manny Lieras, American Indian Child Resource Center, Youth Services Director • Caltrans District 4 Welcome Address: Doanh Nguyen, Acting District 4 Chief Deputy District Director • City of Oakland Leadership Remarks: Barbara Lee, City of Oakland • Statewide Leadership Address: Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency • Equity Expo Video Montage: A powerful journey highlighting the woman behind the vision and how the expo came to life, from initial inspiration and planning to execution and lasting community impact • Vision for Impact: Andrea Pugh, Equity Program & Strategy Manager, Caltrans District 4 |
| <p>10:30 AM – 10:37 AM Advancing Civil Rights Through Action</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alee Gonzalez: Outreach Specialist, California Civil Rights Department |

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| | <p>Focus: Championing justice, protecting rights, and expanding equitable access to opportunity across California</p> |
| <p>10:38 AM – 10:45 AM Financial Empowerment & Economic Mobility</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorick Gaines: Certified Financial Educator, Wealth Wave <p>Focus: Transforming financial futures through education, ownership, and wealth-building strategies</p> |
| <p>10:46 AM – 10:53 AM The I-580 Truck Ban & Community Impact</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelsey Rodriguez: Senior Transportation Planner, Caltrans District 4 <p>Focus: Creating transportation networks that prioritize community health, safety, and connectivity along I-580</p> |
| <p>10:54 AM – 11:03 AM Community Power in Action</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindsay Barenz: Director of Community Engagement, Oakland Roots and Soul SC <p>Focus: Harnessing the power of sports and community engagement to build connection and drive social impact.</p> |
| <p>10:56 AM – 11:03 AM Advancing Health Equity & Access for All Communities</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanci Bocanegra: Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, UCSF Medical Center <p>Focus: Advancing health equity through inclusive care, research, and community-centered approaches that improve outcomes for all populations.</p> |
| <p>11:04 AM – 11:10 AM The Power of Second Chances</p> | <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaShante Boyd: Community Outreach Worker, Alameda County Probation Department <p>Focus: Sharing a personal journey of resilience and transformation through second chances, highlighting growth, opportunity, and rebuilding after setbacks.</p> |
| <p>11:10 AM – 11:15 AM Closing Remarks</p> | <p>Caltrans District 4 Equity Team, TBD</p> |



2026 Equity Expo Volunteers

Division of Administration

- Abdul Qayum
- Allison Irvin
- Chris Tamondong
- Dominic Vadra-Edwards
- Kendra Knapp
- Ruben Delgado
- Walter Garcia
- Wilson Saw

Division of Construction

- Joel North

Division of External Affairs

- Angela Mitchell
- Briana Dixon
- Cheryl Chambers
- Chinchilla Hector
- Debra Nelson
- Deneen Ogbeide
- Denise Harding
- Dennis Parecadan
- Gia Whiteside
- Haldun Morgan

- Huy Nyugen
- John Huseby
- Julia Kocs
- Kiron Kirsch-Posner
- Marrissa Perez-Mijares
- Mary Nuega
- Maya Ochoa
- Michael Beckwith
- Michael Nelson
- Nawel Tahraoui
- Pedro Quintana
- Philip Anderson
- Regina Hunter
- Sean McClure

District 4 Information Technology

- Asnake Yifru
- Bryant Chan
- Tam Pham
- Thomas To
- Tuong Nhieu

Division of Maintenance

- Karen Deal
- Meca Youngblood

Division of Right of Way

- Brian Davis
- Jason Keblesh
- Katelyn Melkonians
- Patrick Espanol

Division of Transportation Planning & Local Assistance

- Diana Crumedy
- Leila Boroomand
- Melissa Hernandez
- Stephen Conteh
- Thailiya Thomas
- To Lan Phin

Caltrans Human Resources

- Charlene Martin

With thanks to our 2026 Equity Expo volunteers, your hard work and dedication made all the difference.

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Meet Our Equity Expo Speakers

Andrea Pugh



Andrea Pugh is a leader in advancing transportation equity, access, and community-centered public service within Caltrans District 4, serving nine Bay Area counties, our tribal communities, internal staff, and through statewide collaborations. She is the visionary behind the Equity Expo, a growing annual initiative that connects all communities with vital resources supporting health, financial stability, education, and self-sufficiency, while bridging gaps in access to transportation-related opportunities and services.

Through strong partnerships with grassroots, cultural, and advocacy organizations, Andrea has built a trusted platform that expands access and brings services directly to communities facing systemic barriers. Notably, she has achieved this impact without a dedicated budget; mobilizing collaboration, generosity, and shared purpose across sectors.

Her work reflects a deep commitment to building trust and ensuring transportation systems and public resources serve all communities equitably.

Alee Gonzalez



**Civil Rights
Department**
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Alee Gonzalez is an agent with the California Civil Rights Department, where she supports programs that advance equity, access, and civil rights protections across California. In her role, she contributes to policy implementation, program coordination, and community outreach efforts that promote fair treatment and

opportunity for all communities.

Alee's work includes engaging with the public through education and outreach initiatives, helping to connect individuals, particularly those from historically underserved and impacted communities, with resources, protections, and pathways to stability. Her experience reflects a strong commitment to public service, accountability, and building trust between government and the communities it serves.

Through her work, Alee continues to support California's mission to eliminate discrimination and expand equitable access to opportunity statewide.

Mayor Barbara Lee



Barbara Lee serves as Mayor of Oakland, bringing more than three decades of public service at the federal and state levels. Throughout her career in Congress and the California State Legislature, she has been a steadfast advocate for justice, equity, and opportunity, centering the needs of historically underserved communities.

Rooted in Oakland, Mayor Lee leads with a deep understanding of the city's challenges and strengths. Her work focuses on advancing solutions to homelessness, public safety,

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and economic opportunity by leveraging strong partnerships across federal, state, and local levels.

She believes meaningful progress comes through collaboration, working alongside community leaders, organizations, businesses, and residents to build a more inclusive, resilient Oakland where all people have the opportunity to thrive.

Cheryl Chambers



Cheryl Chambers serves as District Deputy Director of External Affairs, bringing nearly three decades of experience in community relations, strategic planning, and public engagement. Since joining state service in 2019, she has overseen a broad portfolio including public information, legislative affairs, social media, customer service, and community outreach initiatives.

A San Francisco native, Cheryl holds degrees from UC Berkeley and JFK University. Her career includes executive roles at AT&T and Comcast, where she developed deep expertise in telecommunications infrastructure, regulatory affairs, and stakeholder collaboration.

Cheryl is recognized for her leadership in advancing diversity and inclusion, having served as president of the San Francisco chapter of NAMIC and as Diversity Officer at JFK University. In addition to her professional work, she is an author, educator, and creative storyteller with a passion for writing, film production, and community impact.

Doanh Nguyen



Doanh Nguyen serves as Acting Chief Deputy District Director for Caltrans District 4, where he provides executive leadership overseeing program and project delivery across the Bay Area. With decades of experience in transportation engineering and project management, he plays a critical role in advancing infrastructure that supports safe, efficient, and equitable mobility for all communities.

Doanh began his career with Caltrans after graduating from the University of California, Davis, building expertise across project development, hydraulics, construction, and structures. He has led major capital projects and served as Principal Transportation Engineer and District Division Chief, delivering improvements across multiple counties.

Known for his collaborative and results-driven approach, Doanh is committed to strong partnerships, effective communication, and delivering projects that enhance community access, safety, and long-term regional connectivity.

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Jorick Gaines Sr



Jorick Gaines Sr. is a Certified Financial Educator (CFEd®) with more than 30 years of experience supporting individuals, families, and communities in building financial knowledge and stability. Based in California, his work centers on advancing financial literacy and expanding access to tools that help people make informed decisions aligned with their goals.

Through his work with WealthWave and affiliated organizations, Jorick has helped hundreds of thousands of people across North America navigate financial systems that are often complex and inaccessible. His background in insurance, real estate, and client services informs a holistic approach grounded in education, empowerment, and practical strategies.

He is committed to creating pathways toward financial clarity, confidence, and long-term opportunity for communities historically underserved in financial education.

Lindsay Barenz



Lindsay Barenz is a sports executive and attorney known for her purpose-driven leadership in professional soccer. She serves as President of Oakland Roots SC, bringing experience across both men's and women's leagues. Previously, she was President of Business Operations for the Washington Spirit in the NWSL, where she led major broadcast and partnership deals. Barenz has also held leadership roles with Real Salt Lake and Utah Royals FC and served on Major League Soccer's Board of Governors.

Beyond sports, her background includes work in law, union organizing, and public service, including time in the Obama Administration. A Yale Law School graduate, she is also an entrepreneur and nonprofit board member, with a strong commitment to community impact and equity in sports.

LaShante Boyd



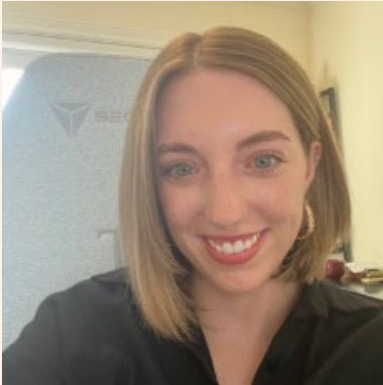
Born and raised in Oakland, LaShante Boyd is a dedicated Community Outreach Worker and Fund Developer who believes that fairness isn't something to wait for, it is something you must create. With a professional background spanning high-level finance, grant management, and executive administration, LaShante brings a unique inside-out perspective to community advocacy.

As a formerly incarcerated Black woman, she leverages her lived experience to serve as a bridge for justice-impacted individuals in Alameda County. She is a fighter who has transitioned from the outside to the inside of the system, working to remove barriers and ensure that equity and excellence are at the forefront of reentry and community health. A CFRE candidate and a graduate of Fundraising and Development at UC San Diego, LaShante is committed to building the coalitions and resources necessary to transform the landscape of her community.

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Kelsey Rodriguez



Kelsey Rodriguez is a Senior Transportation Planner with the Caltrans District 4 Division of Transportation Planning, where she advances equitable, community-informed transportation solutions across the Bay Area. Working within the Office of Multimodal System Planning, she plays a key role in shaping high-impact initiatives that consider environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

Kelsey's work emphasizes addressing historical inequities in transportation systems, ensuring that planning decisions reflect the needs of all communities, especially those disproportionately impacted by past infrastructure policies. Through projects like the Interstate 580 Truck Access Study, she integrates data, community engagement, and cross-agency collaboration to promote more

balanced and just outcomes.

Grounded in public service and inclusive leadership, Kelsey is committed to transparency, community voice, and building systems that better connect and serve all Californians.

LaShante Boyd



Lashante Boyd serves as a Community Outreach Worker with the Alameda County Probation Department, where she supports individuals and families through connection to resources, guidance, and community-based programs. In her role, she builds trust between the department and the communities it serves, promoting positive outcomes and reducing recidivism. Lashante is deeply committed to the belief in second chances, working to empower individuals on their path to rehabilitation and stability. She fosters meaningful relationships and advocates for improved access to services for underserved populations.

Manny Lieras



Manny (Navajo & Comanche) has worked with AICRC for over 20 years. Currently, he is the Title VI Indian Education Coordinator. Manny moved from San Diego, CA, after receiving his BA from San Diego State University to Oakland to work with inner-city/urban American Indian youth at AICRC. Manny has established himself as an influential role model and change agent in the Oakland Intertribal community. Manny has many talents and wears many hats. When he's not working at the American Indian Child Resource Center, you might find him volunteering to teach pow wow drumming and singing or producing a film with Injunuity.

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Nanci Bocanegra



Nanci Bocanegra is a Community Health Educator with the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center Office of Community Engagement, where she works to expand access to cancer education and advance health equity across diverse communities. In her role, she is dedicated to reducing cancer disparities by providing culturally responsive education and resources in the preferred languages of the populations she serves.

Nanci focuses on reaching underserved communities, helping individuals access accurate health information, preventive care, and life-saving resources. Serving a 25-county region, she plays a key role in bridging gaps in healthcare access and empowering communities to make informed health decisions.

With a background in public health, Nanci brings both expertise and compassion to her work, supporting efforts that promote equity, awareness, and improved health outcomes for all.

Nicholas Fowlks



Nicholas Fowlks is an Equity Relations Officer at Caltrans District 4, where he works with internal teams and external partners to integrate equity into planning and programs through data, research, and community insight. His professional experience is rooted in community engagement, public education, and recreation programming, reflecting a strong commitment to connecting people with resources and opportunities. He holds an MA in History with a concentration in the U.S. Civil Rights movement which informs his passion for education, storytelling, and fostering meaningful connections with the public. Nicholas hopes attendees leave the Equity Expo having connected with a valuable resource or gained a deeper understanding of the needs and experiences of others.

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Secretary Toks Omishakin



Secretary Toks Omishakin serves as California's Secretary of Transportation, leading the California State Transportation Agency and overseeing a network of departments, boards, and commissions that shape the state's transportation systems. Appointed in 2022, he advances a vision centered on safety, equity, climate action, and economic opportunity.

Previously, as Director of California Department of Transportation, he guided efforts to build a cleaner, safer, and more connected system through community partnership and inclusive planning. His earlier work in Tennessee and Nashville focused on multimodal access, active transportation, and community-centered design.

Secretary Omishakin brings a lifelong commitment to creating transportation systems that serve all people, expanding access, strengthening communities, and supporting a more sustainable and equitable future.

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Caltrans District 4 Office of Strategic Engagement & Equity

Team



Andrea Pugh

Equity Strategy & Program Manager

“If you wanna fly, you got to give up the things that weigh you down.” -Toni Morrison



Maribel Perez

Equity Admin Liaison - Student Intern

“Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are... to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged.” -John Rawls



Nicholas Fowlks

Equity Relations Officer



Maryam Sharifi

Equity Relations Officer

“We are not separated by borders, but united by our shared humanity.” - Unknown

On behalf of the Equity Team, we thank you for attending, participating, and supporting the Equity Expo.

Your partnership makes this work possible.