Subject:	**SGC Racial Equity Action Plan Annual Update**
Reporting Period:	October 2022 – December 2023
Staff Lead:	Michael Jimenez, Health and Equity Program Analyst, SGC

Summary

The California Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) commits SGC to taking bold steps to advance racial equity so that all Californians live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race. In support of this goal, SGC implements actions within the REAP and provides annual updates to the Council on progress. All facets of SGC, including its climate and community investment programs, interagency policy initiatives, and organizational and administrative operations prioritize actions that seek to advance racial equity. SGC strives for its programs to achieve racially equitable outcomes, and to amplify the voices of Black, Native American, and communities of color, referenced in the REAP and this staff report as "Priority Communities." In this report, SGC provides racial equity implementation highlights from 2022 to 2023 and outlines high-level racial equity commitments for 2024.

Background

SGC's Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Timeline

In April 2019, the SGC approved its inaugural 2019 – 2022 REAP, making SGC the first multi-agency State body in the United States to adopt a plan outlining concrete actions to advance racial equity across five organizational categories: 1) Leadership, 2) Operations, 3) Grant Programs, 4) Technical Assistance and Capacity Building, and 5) Interagency Collaboration. Many milestones have been achieved in the process of advancing racial equity at SGC, including:

- Spring 2018: SGC partners with the Public Health Institute (PHI) and Race Forward to launch the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Capitol Cohort Pilot (now the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity, or CCORE), which builds the capacity of California's State Government agencies and departments to advance racial equity.
- April 2019: SGC approves and publishes the 2019 – 2022 REAP.
- April 2020: SGC establishes a Health and Equity Program to track and measure implementation progress of the REAP.
- August 2020: SGC approves a landmark 2020 Racial Equity Resolution, further embedding racial equity as a priority of each Council agency.
- October 2020: SGC establishes an interagency Racial Equity Working Group (REWG) with representatives from each Council agency with a focus on strategizing and sharing best practices for advancing racial equity.

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- April 2021: Councilmembers provide the first written SGC Racial Equity Resolution Report documenting their progress.
- October 2021: The 2020-2021 CCORE Learning Cohort commences under the facilitation of PHI, comprising of fifteen staff from SGC and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.
- April 2022: SGC launches the Racial Equity Resource Hub in alignment with the updated 2021 Racial Equity Resolution and Council Priority 1, to provide a public resource for State and local entities to access information about racial equity initiatives being led by diverse governmental agencies.
- October 2022: SGC finalizes the 2019-2022 REAP and reports on progress and next steps at the October 27, 2022, Strategic Growth Council Meeting.
- Early 2023: SGC publishes an updated REAP with goals for implementation from 2023 to 2025.
- August 2023: SGC publishes its updated 2023 – 2025 REAP.

The following progress report reflects accomplishments in each SGC policy area for 2022 to 2023, the first implementation year of the 2023 – 2025 REAP.

2022 – 2023 REAP Implementation Progress

SGC Leadership, Operations, and Communications/External Affairs
Council Meetings and Priorities

In 2023, the Strategic Growth Council continued to build on the Council's leadership on racial equity through diverse avenues including public meetings, key priorities, policy initiatives, and digital communication strategies.

During the August 2023 Council Meeting, Council agencies provided an annual update on their progress advancing racial equity through its programs and initiatives. Council Members also shared how they are responding to Executive Order N-16-22's call to explicitly consider equity and adopt inclusive practices when developing strategic plans through their agencies and departments. Key themes across Council Agencies include new grant programs, policy initiatives, and technical assistance that center racial equity and new positions, teams, and internal efforts to further embed racial equity. This interagency discussion was supported by a panel of racial equity practitioners from the California Air Resources Board, Department of Cannabis Control, and the California State Water Resources Control Board who shared various strategies to embed racial equity in their organization's internal operations, to effectively advance racial equity through their public facing work.

In addition to the Council Meeting discussions, Council Members wrote blog posts to personally share their agency's racial equity work and approach. California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross,

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and Public Member Frank Cardenas each shared the importance of addressing racial equity and climate change, hand in hand.

In the past year, the SGC Health and Equity Program (HEP) has included a variety of new resources on the Racial Equity Resource Hub. Council Priority 1: The Racial Equity Resource Hub (Resource Hub) was developed during the November 2021 Council Meeting as an amendment to the SGC Racial Equity Resolution. The Resource Hub aims to consolidate and promote resources to support State government and other entities in advancing racial equity. Additionally, the Resource Hub also featured important racial equity updates from the California Health and Human Services Agency, California State Transportation Agency, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, California Natural Resources Agency, and SGC Councilmember Frank Cardenas, SGC, among others.

[Council Priority 2: Advancing Capacity Building as a Key Equity Strategy](#) recognizes technical assistance (TA) and capacity building as a critical tool to advance social and racial equity by increasing access to State resources for California's historically under-resourced communities. In the past year, SGC launched various programmatic and policy initiatives to advance Council Priority 2 including the release of the updated Technical Assistance Toolkit; refer to the Community Assistance for Climate Equity section for more information. The Toolkit provides a roadmap of effective and equitable TA and capacity building activities to build the capacity of State agencies and other funders to advance California's equity goals.

Notably, SGC hosted the October Council Meeting in Barrio Logan, San Diego at the Chicano Park Museum & Cultural Center. SGC facilitated two events complimentary to the Council Meeting focused on [Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, and Equity](#). These events convened Council agencies and departments, local and regional government, and local community-based organizations to learn about Barrio Logan's rich history and their community-led plans to advance equity through integrated housing and climate resilience planning.

Leadership, Human Resources, and Operations

In June 2023, SGC adopted its Fiscal Year 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan. This plan includes numerous goals and strategies to advance SGC's mission of building healthy, thriving, and resilient communities, but notably prioritizes SGC's commitment to advancing racial and health equity in each goal. Goal 3: Ideate, Incubate, and Scale Transformative Approaches to Climate Equity displays SGC's commitment to center historically under-resourced communities throughout its policy and grant programs, and share models and best practices to do so across other funders and policymakers. Additionally, Goal 5: Center Equity in Achieving Healthy, Thriving, and Resilient Communities for All exemplifies SGC's commitment to advance racial equity within our organization, with our State government partners, and with the tribal governments, local governments, and communities we impact, including Black, Native American, and communities of color.

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In February 2023, SGC hosted the inaugural Catalyst Conference, in partnership with the Milken Institute. The Catalyst Conference convened nearly 300 leaders across the country to build partnerships and identify solutions to implement the federal Justice40 goal in California and beyond. Leaders discussed opportunities, challenges, and proven solutions to build readiness and catalyze implementation within under-resourced communities. Through a partnership with The California Endowment, SGC was able to provide travel honorariums to 52 attendees from tribal entities and under-resourced communities across the State.

To further improve our relationships with communities and local governments in under-resourced communities, SGC has prioritized physically meeting communities where they are by attending site-visits, roundtables, and other events across the state. SGC Leadership and staff attended events from Klamath in the North State, to Guadalupe in the Central Coast, and Palm Desert in the Inland Empire. This led to both increased in-person collaboration across teams and greater knowledge of the opportunities and challenges these specific communities face.
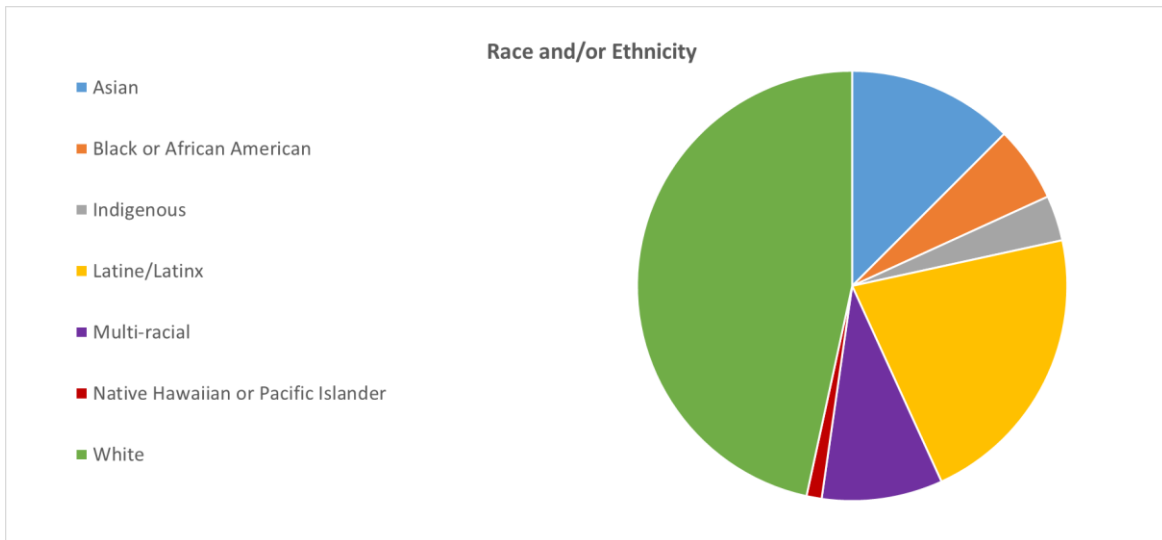
In March 2023, SGC hosted its first in-person staff retreat since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two-day event was an opportunity for staff to re-connect, reflect on the past year, develop the Strategic Plan, and created a deeper sense of belonging within the organization.

SGC also continues to utilize diverse networks to share opportunities for internships and full-time roles. In the past year, SGC hired six paid interns, including two interns hosted through partnerships with the Stanford Woods Institute and the Maddy Institute. Through paid internships, SGC has expanded the availability of opportunities for students of all backgrounds across the State.

Workforce Equity Survey and Working Group

SGC's 2019 – 2022 REAP committed the organization to administering a staff demographics survey annually. This survey assesses how reflective SGC is of the State's diversity and the communities we serve. The Demographics and Identities Survey was developed by SGC's Workforce Equity Working Group (Working Group) – a diverse group of staff at various levels across SGC, as well as staff from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) -- in partnership with HEP. The survey was administered from July 26, 2023, to August 18, 2023, to allow staff ample time to complete the survey. The survey response rate was roughly 72% among full-time, permanent staff.

Survey Results: SGC is a diverse organization across several metrics but stands out in its representation of multiple racial and ethnic groups. SGC staff represent at least 30 racial and ethnic groups, reflecting California's broad racial and ethnic diversity. See figure below.

Race and/or Ethnicity

Legend:
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Indigenous
- Latine/Latinx
- Multi-racial
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White

Communications and External Affairs

Over the last several months, the Communications and External Affairs team has worked to communicate with an equity lens and broaden access to SGC's programs across four areas: advancing equity data, community-centered storytelling, language access, and the centering of culturally appropriate language.

Recently, SGC published a blog highlighting the local governments and communities receiving TA and capacity building resources through the BOOST program. The intent of the blog is to showcase the importance of these resources for communities with limited capacity and staffing and actions being taken by rural local governments to make their communities more resilient to the effects of climate change. This blog is a part of SGC's ongoing communications efforts to promote equity at all levels of government and was preceded by a blog written by SGC Councilmember and California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross.

As part of a new grant platform, Submittable, historical and current data from SGC's climate equity investment programs are being organized to show progress and identify opportunities to improve and increase impact of these programs. Once completed, this data project will showcase on an ongoing basis the impact of SGC investments in promoting climate action and reducing racial inequities, for example, by tracking SGC investments in Disadvantaged Unincorporated and Disadvantaged Communities in California.

Last year, SGC piloted a small language access contract which provided programmatic teams with translation and interpretation services for materials and events and workshops. The pilot was a part of Communication and External Affairs' participation in the Statewide Language Access Task Force and led to procurement of the team's first language access contract. This year, Communications and External Affairs is building on the pilot and key learnings by taking several steps, including procuring a language access contract six times larger in value, designating an official language coordinator, and updating SGC's language access policy.

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Lastly, Communications and External Affairs met with external partners as part of the update to its Agencywide Style Guide to understand messaging and language that resonates with the communities that SGC is looking to reach and develop partnerships with. During these conversations, a particular emphasis has been utilizing appropriate and culturally competent language and practices relevant to tribes, removing violent terminology (including terminology that has been standardized and/or in use by the State), and standardizing language for describing disparities and other community characteristics. These efforts intend to build the cultural competency and accuracy of SGC's communications relevant to priority communities, including Black, Native American, and communities of color, and foster transformation in SGC's communications practices that can be modeled by other State government organizations.

California Climate Investment Programs
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)

Between Fall 2022 and Fall 2023 AHSC published Round 7 guidelines, reviewed and awarded Round 7 applicants, and began the Round 8 guidelines update process. Throughout this process, AHSC has continued to advance several racial equity strategies in alignment with the REAP.

AHSC included SGC's racial equity vision in Round 7 guidelines for the first time and included a new racial equity narrative scoring section that is also scored as part of the application. SGC's racial equity vision will also be included in Round 8 guidelines. During the Round 7 interagency narrative review period, AHSC staff continued outreach to participants of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force, SGC Racial Equity Working Group, and Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE), among other racial equity-driven initiatives, to include diverse perspectives and racial equity expertise in the interagency panel review and scoring process. AHSC administered a standardized survey to TA recipients to understand the impact of the technical assistance service, existing barriers potential applicants faced, and feedback on how to improve the program in the future. The responses informed the capacity building activities and timing of outreach so that the TA team could provide more resources and connections to interested applicants. Additionally, AHSC shared information about the Building Initiative for Low-Emissions Development (BUILD) program to all Round 7 applicants to provide further opportunities for funding affordable housing projects that prioritize equity and green-building technology.

As AHSC finalized awards for Round 7 with the adoption of $757 million in funding at the August 2023 SGC Council meeting, staff resumed the process to update Round 8 guidelines with the goal of updating AHSC guidelines on an annual cadence. For Round 8, the team is furthering REAP commitments by targeting outreach efforts and updating guidelines with the intent of increasing access to regions and communities, including communities of color and California tribes, that have been unable to submit multiple applications. Throughout AHSC's capacity building TA, in which the TA providers leverage their knowledge, network, and experience to

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increase project readiness and program awareness, we focused on strategies to diversify applicants, such as: public agency outreach in key regions; providing TA tailored by type of applicant; and outreach to underrepresented developers to review their pipelines and identify good-fit AHSC projects. AHSC's TA providers have connected with over 20 stakeholders who do not typically apply for AHSC funding, including local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and developers. SGC also has leveraged existing outreach efforts to tribes, through actions like presenting at the [California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Tribal Financing Workshop](#). These efforts will collectively reduce barriers and enhance outreach and capacity building efforts to improve access to AHSC resources for priority communities across California.

Round 8 guidelines will continue to link to SGC's REAP and score applications in alignment with racial equity priority topics, including applicant narrative responses on how proposals will reduce inequities in communities. Recognizing the effort it takes to prepare AHSC projects and stakeholder feedback, AHSC kept scoring items consistent and focused on guidelines changes that reduce workload and improve clarity for both applicants and reviewers alike. Consistency, stability, and predictability in guidelines and funding schedule is an additional way to increase access for under-resourced applicants and will facilitate the application process for those who are reapplying or those who have already started scoping their projects. Additionally, AHSC continues to reach out to key stakeholders to discuss long-term areas of improvements.

AHSC will continue to facilitate TA, focusing on both capacity building and direct application TA. TA will prioritize underrepresented developers and under-resourced communities; AHSC will continue to hold spaces to provide TA to affordable homeownership (HO) projects and tribal project applicants. At a high level, AHSC aims to remove barriers that also help streamline application processes, especially for tribes and under-resourced communities. During the application review process, the team will continue outreach to teams leading racial equity-driven initiatives to continue to incorporate this lens in scoring and diversify perspectives present in our interagency review panels. AHSC also plans to share additional applicable funding opportunities with awarded and non-awarded applicants, while ensuring consistency, stability, and predictability in guidelines and schedule.

Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

CCR's racial equity vision is to integrate diverse expertise (e.g., lived experience, tribal expertise, or Traditional Ecological Knowledge) into academic research through meaningful engagement, equitable partnership, and the advancement of community solutions. A racial equity lens anchors our Participatory Research to Policy Model (PRP Model) by creating a collaborative partnership approach to research that involves community members, including Native American and communities of color, and researchers in all aspects of the research process. Through capacity building, accountability, and coordination, CCR's work brings historically under-resourced and priority populations to the table to share power, uplift

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community expertise, and co-create research and policy solutions that will catalyze greater action and understanding of climate change.

One such example implementing CCR's PRP Model is Round 2's Electric Power Research Institute, Inc. (EPRI) project which focused on innovative, low-emission space conditioning technologies that prioritize low-to-moderate income households. The project included surveying community members in Modesto, California, to design a financial plan for future A/C units. In addition, the project included technology deployment research in Modesto, Tracy, and Fresno to build a methodology that energy innovators could design for the low-to-moderate income market first. This project ensured these communities were included as the target market for energy innovations from the onset of deployment – not as a product afterthought. As this work has taken shape, others have begun to replicate the CCR model, including an EPRI – New York Power Authority (NYPA) collaboration to create a more resilient power system that prioritizes low-to-moderate income households.

Another example of CCR's REAP goals in practice is the Round 3 Humboldt State University project, Smoke, Air Fire, Energy (SAFE) in Rural California: Energy and Air quality Infrastructure for Climate-Smart Communities. This research prioritized rural and indigenous communities in Northwest California who are particularly vulnerable to fire risk, air pollution, and aging energy infrastructure. The project focused on collaborative solutions for community resilience and uplifting indigenous knowledge. These solutions included the deployment of microgrids, air quality monitoring systems, and implementation of prescribed and cultural fire practices.

As CCR has shifted away from solely funding innovative research projects, its focus has become the widespread adoption of the PRP Model statewide through partnerships with the University of California, Davis Center for Regional Change (CRC), California State University Water Advocacy Towards Education and Research (CSU-WATER), and University of California Office of the President (UCOP). By investing in these partnerships that span across the State, key resources will be developed to guide state and academic entities approaching community-based participatory research and integrating the expertise of Native American and communities of color. Lastly, CCR's equity-driven work permeates California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment (Fifth Assessment) by incorporating the PRP Model's core elements of meaningful engagement and outreach through the development of the initiative's regional and topical reports and engagement strategy with priority communities.

Looking ahead, we will begin to see the outcomes of our partnerships with CRC, CSU-WATER, UCOP, and the Fifth Assessment. The end results of these collaborations will inform future research processes and approaches to community-based participatory research. Catalyzing change within research and academic institutions is challenging work that is not limited to SGC's annual REAP updates. CCR's work promotes a different approach to the research process and aims to incentivize academic and state researchers to see the value of integrating communities as partners and collaborators in the research process. This paradigm shift is

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decades-long work and advancement metrics are unlike other SGC programs. To institutionalize community-based participatory research across the state in the coming years, we are committed to promoting the PRP Model and working with state partners to incorporate the expertise and perspectives of diverse communities and partners, including Black, Native American, and communities of color, in their projects.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

SALC has advanced racial equity via strategies that increase participation in the program by tribes, priority populations, disadvantaged communities, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and communities of color.

Increased tribal and priority community participation in SALC in Rounds 8 and 9 was the direct result of increased racial equity-focused outreach and TA by the SALC team and SALC-contracted TA providers. In December 2022, SALC awarded 20 capacity grants out of 26 applications received. One grant was awarded to a Tribal non-profit and 10 grants included tribal specific outreach and engagement among their planned activities. Tribal engagement will inform grantees' conservation planning and prioritization, and assist in the development of tribal-focused acquisition projects. To date, capacity grantees have used this funding to develop 18 Round 9 SALC acquisition projects totaling more than $61 million in request to protect approximately 27,000 acres of agricultural lands. Of those 18 applications, 16 are recommended for funding this round.

In addition to workshops and presentations, SALC also provided direct TA to five tribes, four tribal-led land conservancies, two nonprofits whose work supports tribes, and three non-profits supporting beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. TA included numerous one-on-one meetings to discuss potential projects, review of application materials, and other guidance as requested in an effort to increase access to funding.

In Round 8, six projects were awarded that support beginning and/or military Veteran farmers' and ranchers' ownership of agricultural land, eight projects were awarded that support access to or ownership of agricultural land by landowners/lessees that self-identified as living in low-income households or a disadvantaged/low-income community, and two projects were awarded that support a combination of the above. Additionally, five of the projects that support ownership of land by a beginning or Veteran farmer or rancher, or a farmer or rancher that is a resident of a priority population, also provide meaningful benefits to [priority populations as defined by California Air Resources Board and received 100% funding](#). One planning grant was awarded to a California tribe and one capacity grant was awarded to a tribal nonprofit, representing the program's first tribal applicants and awardees.

In Round 9, SALC received its first acquisition applications for tribal-led land back projects. Two acquisition applications were received from California tribes and one was received from a tribal nonprofit. If awarded, these grants will provide 100% funding to these applicants to acquire three properties totaling 1,000 acres in three counties and would result in 6.7% of program

funds dedicated to acquisition projects led by tribes or tribal nonprofits. One of these applications was developed using SALC capacity funding. SALC received three capacity applications and one planning application from tribes, and one capacity application from a tribal nonprofit in Round 9. If awarded, these projects would help tribes build capacity to access and acquire land and would represent 23.3% of awarded capacity dollars and 12.5% of awarded planning dollars for Round 9.

Of the 42 acquisition applications received for Round 9, six projects were awarded that will provide secure land tenure to farmers and ranchers who are military Veteran farmers or residents of priority communities, and two would provide secure land tenure to a beginning farmer or rancher. Six of these were developed using SALC capacity funding awarded in Round 8. Nine projects would also provide meaningful benefits to priority populations as defined by California Air Resources Board, and are eligible to receive 100% funding, including four of those noted above. The program also received 11 capacity applications that propose to provide meaningful benefits to priority populations.

SALC will continue to build on its racial equity-focused work in three main areas. First it will continue to update SALC program guidelines and complementary documents based on stakeholder feedback, including tribal review. Our second area of focus will be developing a series of equity-focused workshops for current grantees and potential applicants. These trainings will be developed and led by our TA providers and other subject matter experts and will provide participants with the foundation and tools to meaningfully engage socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, communities of color, and tribes. A recently performed survey to grantees and applicants will inform the design of the trainings. Finally, we will continue SALC staff's outreach and engagement work and contractor-led TA.

Social and Climate Infrastructure Programs
Community Resilience Centers (CRC)

In its first year, CRC made substantial progress in implementing its REAP commitments, focusing on under-resourced communities, such as disadvantaged communities, Tribal communities, unincorporated communities, and rural areas. These communities have been designated as priority communities for the program, and Round 1 applicants were required to demonstrate how their projects would serve and benefit these communities, aligning with the program's racial equity vision. Additionally, the CRC program designated priority populations for Round 1. Each CRC proposal, regardless of priority community status or geography, must identify, work with, and intentionally serve the needs of priority populations in the proposed neighborhood containing the CRC facility. Priority populations include: individuals with physical, developmental, or intellectual disabilities; individuals with chronic conditions or injuries; individuals with limited English proficiency; older adults, children, and pregnant people; and low-income, unhoused, and/or transportation-disadvantaged or public transit-dependent people. Notably, the program established a Tribal Funding Target, aiming to fund at least five

qualifying proposals from California tribes. During the public comment period for the CRC Round 1 Draft Guidelines, the team hosted a series of public workshops to solicit feedback to strengthen the guidelines and more closely align them with the needs and priorities of these communities throughout the state.

The commitment to racial equity extends to the application process, where the program actively identified and removed barriers to grant funding for priority communities. A third-party TA provider was carefully selected, with specific competencies related to engaging, funding, and supporting CRC's priority communities. While some challenges arose in finding contractors with direct experience in tribal community work, the program successfully provided application TA to 50 applicants, prioritizing those from tribal, rural, and unincorporated communities. There were over 150 requests for technical assistance received but due to limited resources, we could only provide this support to those 50 applicants.

To address this gap between TA resources we could offer and the need for assistance that existed, the program hosted a series of virtual "Application Office Hour" sessions during the Round 1 application window to further support low-capacity applicants. These sessions were tailored to both general audiences and those from rural and tribal communities, with participation ranging from 15 to 45 registrants per session. Questions asked by applicants during these sessions and questions sent to the CRC Team Inbox were compiled into a Q&A document and posted on the CRC Webpage for applicants to refer to while they continued to develop their applications.

As another resource for applicants who may be lower capacity, the CRC team developed and posted a compilation of pre-recorded webinars in the Round 1 Application Webinar Series video playlist on the Strategic Growth Council's YouTube channel. This way, applicants would be able to access this information at a time that was best for them. We included timecodes or "chapters" for each video so the applicants could easily move throughout the different sections covered. This series has a total of four videos in it. The first was more of a general overview of the entire program and Notice of Funding Availability, including the application schedule and requirements. The other three videos were focused on each of the three CRC grant types: Planning, Project Development, and Implementation. Having these videos posted together in the same video playlist made them easy to find and identify.

To honor requests received from prospective applicants from our priority communities during our public comment period, we extended the original application due date to provide a longer window to apply. The team provided additional support during the Office Hours hosted in the weeks leading up to the extended application due date. As a result, the program received a total of 189 applications across all three grant types, amounting to $685,330,873.13 in funding requests.

In addition to these accomplishments, the program emphasized feedback and assistance throughout the process, with staff offering individualized feedback to 73 Pre-Proposal

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submissions received by the priority due date. Despite the challenges faced in selecting applicants for technical assistance and managing an influx of requests, the program's commitment to racial equity and community resilience is evident. This progress demonstrates a significant step forward in addressing the needs of under-resourced communities, including Black, Native American, and communities of color, and promoting racial equity within the program's initiatives.

Future rounds of CRC funding have been moved to a proposed Climate Resilience Bond that will be voted on next year (2024). Because there is no guarantee for another round of the program, CRC staff will heavily prioritize engagement, building trust with our priority communities, maintaining relationships with our stakeholders, and fostering new connections throughout the state. CRC will continue to implement initiatives and practices that advance racial equity and align with the 2023-2025 REAP and build on successes from 2022 to 2023.

Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)

TCC's REAP commitments continue to foster the overall TCC Program goals and objectives of addressing racial equity through a climate resilience lens while prioritizing Disadvantaged Communities, as defined by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and disproportionately comprising of Black, Native American, and communities of color. The TCC Program empowers communities most impacted by pollution burdens as it directly funds the community vision and implementation of greenhouse reducing strategies and projects.

TCC has demonstrated successful outcomes in addressing and reducing structural barriers and racial inequities for Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC) and tribes. Advancement strategies have included expanding and dedicating outreach and communication to DUC and tribal communities during the Round 5 TCC funding cycle. Furthermore, Round 5 TCC included application TA provided to all applicants with a specific focus on DUC and tribes or tribal-serving applicants. This tailored approach is significant in reducing barriers to funding access for applicants. During this application cycle, staff hosted office hours and met individually with potential applicants from these communities to further tailor TA and learn about application barriers and community experiences.

Following the execution of TCC Round 4 Grant Agreements, SGC approved the provision of advanced pay as a pilot program. This allowed the TCC team to amend the Round 4 guidelines to allow the provision of advanced pay for awardees. To date, one Planning Grantee, Native American Environmental Protection Coalition, has processed the advanced payment provision. Advanced pay intends to reduce some of the financial barriers confronted by lower capacity grantees and partners and can be integral to supporting successful outcomes in the early stages of grant execution.

TCC has continued to uplift stories rooted in its priority communities. One key highlight includes a video published by the Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability (LCJA), a leader and

valuable partner working to address environmental injustices faced by communities of color. The video sheds light on the work conducted by LCJA and the significance of TCC in frontline communities. TCC amplified this video and important first account from LCJA during TCC Roundtable Discussions, SGC Catalyst Conference Roundtables, and subsequent discussions, as well as at other external events.

Looking ahead, TCC expects to continue to integrate racial equity as outlined in TCC's REAP commitments and racial equity vision. Some key commitments currently in progress include analyzing survey results of past applicants to further understand metrics including, but not limited to demographic information, continuing gaps or barriers towards applying to TCC, particularly for priority communities, and more. One major goal that still requires further development is the Advanced Pay Pilot Program. While TCC staff are excited about the launch of the pilot and the subsequent passing of AB156, the team would like to explore the reasons for the low participation rate to date and ways to address any challenges by awardees to access these funds in future rounds.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

CACE's REAP commitments focus on building capacity and advancing TA in under-resourced communities. These commitments have led to the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that promote cross-sectoral partnerships, coordination, community leadership, and peer exchanges so that under-resourced communities, including Black, Native American, and communities of color, can access funding for climate action. The following highlights demonstrate CACE's diverse initiatives, and how each program has taken a racial equity-driven lens to support upstream capacity building, provide TA, and serve priority communities.

In Fall 2023, CACE launched the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program. This pilot program will provide funding and technical assistance to California tribes to build staff capacity to advance tribes' climate-related work. CACE developed the program in response to consistent feedback from tribes that their sovereign status and historical relationship with the State necessitate a dedicated capacity building program. Staff developed the program through nearly a year of robust public outreach, engagement, and research, which included a workshop series, tribal consultations, key informant interviews, in-person and virtual tribal events, input from tribal expert consultants, and a 90-day public comment period.

In August 2023, CACE launched the Technical Assistance Toolkit (formerly the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies), a web-based toolkit for state agencies and other funders to develop TA programs that make a meaningful difference in under-resourced communities. Under-resourced communities in California include Black, Native American, and communities of color that have faced years of disinvestment and systemic discrimination. As a result, they often lack the funding and staff resources needed to access public and private

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funding. Helping funders offer equitable TA and capacity building support gives these communities a fair chance to access investment.

In Summer 2023, CACE completed the second round of the BOOST program, a program dedicated to providing TA to under-resourced local governments to support their climate, resilience, and equity goals. Through the BOOST program, participants secured an additional $25 million in state and federal grants and received 36 staff trainings, which made a meaningful difference in these under-resourced communities, including Black, Native American, and communities of color.

In December 2022, the CACE team selected six awardees for the first round of the Regional Climate Collaboratives program, a program that funds coalitions of community-serving partners to establish partnerships, align projects with funding opportunities, create or update plans and policies, and create a technical assistance network to pursue and implement investment in communities with the greatest need. Two of the collaboratives are tribal-led and all will be serving under-resourced communities.

Interagency and Cross-Programmatic Initiatives
Health and Equity Program (HEP)

HEP convenes the California Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force in partnership with State of Equity (Public Health Institute) and the California Department of Public Health. In 2023, HEP aimed to further embed racial equity in all HiAP convenings and activities. Though HiAP approaches statewide and globally center racial equity, HEP's REAP commitments have enabled capacity to put racial equity first in all Task Force activities, in alignment with feedback received through external engagement processes. In 2022 and 2023, HiAP Task Force members contributed to the development of two action plans that have set forth multi-year strategies that are intentional and measurable and focus on State Grant Programs, Contracts, and Funding Equity and Equity in Data and Access to Information. Notably, barriers to access State resources for priority communities – including grants, contracts, and data and information systems – were identified by external partners and audiences, which led to the development of workgroups focused on these issue areas and prioritizing a racial equity advancement lens.

HiAP Quarterly and Workgroup Convenings have featured at least 20 presentations of health and racial equity initiatives from distinct agencies or departments, covering implementation examples (including agencies' alignment with Executive Order N-16-22), requests for collaboration or engagement, local HiAP initiatives, best practices and use cases for State granting/contracting and data/information systems, and more.

Additionally, HiAP hosted a September 2023 Forum on Outreach and Engagement Best Practices for Grant Programs, with participation of nearly 120 HiAP Task Force members and State government practitioners (with over 175 registrants). The forum highlighted the importance of intentional outreach and engagement of priority communities, including Black,

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Native American and communities of color, across grant cycles (including development and implementation of programs) and with the intention of increasing access to resources, co-creating programs, and advancing racial equity. The forum included a presentation on existing and feasible approaches for racial equity-driven outreach and engagement and an interagency panel featuring staff from the Department of Water Resources, Department of Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Agency, and Strategic Growth Council.

HEP provides internal TA to SGC programs and interagency partners seeking to advance health and racial equity via their programs and initiatives, but who may be encountering challenges, questions, or barriers. This year, HEP contributed TA to agencies or departments including (but not limited to) the California Transportation Commission, Department of Public Health, Department of Transportation, and Office of Planning and Research, among others. HEP staff have been honored to serve as reviewers in diverse State grant programs including health, housing, transportation, climate change adaptation, and more. Approaching its fourth year of staffing, HEP will continue to play a key role in communicating SGC's transformative models with a health and racial equity lens statewide and globally – such as by participating in the nationwide Government Alliance for Race and Equity and joining the Global Network for HiAP in Tampere, Finland, in September 2023.

Following the successful closeout of the 2019-2022 REAP on October 27, 2022, HEP lead a multi-phase, cross-programmatic process to update the SGC REAP in 2023. SGC eagerly launched its updated 2023-2025 REAP in August 2023, built on feedback from the Council, SGC staff programs, interagency partners, and external audiences. The 2023-2025 REAP was accompanied by a blog post of lessons learned and emerging racial equity initiatives in October 2023.

In the next year, HEP will continue to foster a culture of collaboration and action for government transformation to advance racial equity. Via the HiAP Task Force, HEP plans to build greater visibility of transformative work being led by diverse State agencies and departments to ensure awareness and opportunities for input to inform our work – including but not limited to publications and reporting, presentations, and engagement events. HEP will continue to host Task Force quarterly interagency convenings and monthly workgroup meetings while coordinating progress around forthcoming HiAP Task Force action plans and related initiatives. Within SGC, HEP will continue to foster implementation of organization-wide REAP commitments, while taking a greater role in facilitating the SGC Racial Equity Working Group and developing content for the SGC Racial Equity Resource Hub. Through these collective initiatives, HEP will continue its role in embedding health and racial equity at SGC and in its partnerships, while sharing promising models for racial equity advancement in California, nationally, and beyond.

Technical Assistance and Contract Equity Working Group (Internal to SGC)

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The Technical Assistance and Contract Equity Working Group meets monthly with staff from across SGC programs, as well as select OPR staff who provide or are planning to provide TA through their programs. This working group helps program teams strategize, coordinate, and share best practices to advance TA and contract equity. Throughout the year, the working group developed an internal SGC Technical Assistance Landscape Tool to develop a better understanding of the various TA offerings across programs and support discussions around best practices and lessons learned. The working group has also developed a draft TA evaluation survey to be administered to TA recipients and better assess the impact of SGC's TA offerings, including quality of service and areas of improvement.

Tribal Engagement and Coordination Initiatives Working Group (Internal to SGC)

The SGC Tribal Engagement and Coordination Initiatives Working Group (Working Group) consists of one staff from each SGC program to discuss and improve SGC's tribal-serving initiatives. Improving outreach to and engagement with Native Americans and California tribes has been a key priority for the working group this year. Following the February 2023 SGC Catalyst Conference, staff researched and compiled best practices to increase tribal engagement and representation at SGC-hosted events that are open to the public or dedicated to priority audiences; one emerging opportunity included streamlining outreach efforts across programs for information or resources dedicated to tribes. Among all SGC programs, AHSC, CCR, and SALC have demonstrated an increase in applications received by tribes, often enabled by greater outreach and TA; more information is available in these programs' updates earlier in this staff report.

The working group also explored how SGC's initiatives address and respect tribal and traditional knowledge and sovereign data, and how initiatives such as the interagency HiAP Task Force may be able to promote data sovereignty and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in its Equity in Data and Access to Information Action Plan.

SGC continued to participate in tribal-serving engagement venues, such as the California Department of Water Resources Tribal Water Summit (April 13, 2023, in Sacramento), California Native American Day (September 22, 2023, in Sacramento), and the 2023 Tribal EPA and U.S. EPA Region 9 Conference (October 24 – 26, 2023, in Alpine). Ahead of these events, the working group has discussed how SGC staff will intentionally and competently attend or participate. Staff have also compiled information about the tribal-serving elements and requirements of these programs to share with tribal audiences.

In 2024, the working group will continue to convene and discuss topics related to tribal data sovereignty, outreach to and engagement with tribes, approaches to make State resources more accessible to tribes, trainings (internal and external to State government) that support staff capacity and competency to advance tribal engagement, providing feedback to SGC tribal-serving initiatives, and more.

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Discussion Question

In our Racial Equity Action Plan, we commit to strategies around workforce equity, interagency collaboration, innovations in grantmaking, and incorporating regional approaches in our work. What feedback, guidance, or tools do you have to advance SGC's racial equity work in the coming year?

Attachments

Attachment A: Updated 2023-2025 SGC Racial Equity Action Plan