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Subject: Racial Equity Updates

Reporting Period: August 2023 – August 2024

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Summary

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is making important strides to eradicate structural racism so that all Californians can live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race. In August 2020, the Council unanimously adopted a nationally recognized [Racial Equity Resolution](#) committing to do more to address racial equity. One commitment within the 2020 Resolution was to bring forward Council discussions on racial equity at least two times a year, highlighting racial equity actions, milestones, and best practices. SGC is proud to have hosted annual updates since the adoption of the Resolution, including around its own organizational and interagency initiatives and partnerships including:

- Supporting the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)
- Convening the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force
- Centering racial equity as a priority within SGC's Strategic Plan
- Implementation and reporting of the SGC Racial Equity Action Plan
- Maintaining the statewide Racial Equity Resource Hub

This staff report comprises updates from SGC as well as each Council agency (Appendix A) on work to further racial equity, including successes, outcomes, and forthcoming initiatives.

Background: Overview of SGC Racial Equity Advancement Initiatives

Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity (CCORE)

SGC partners with the Public Health Institute's (PHI) State of Equity to convene the Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity (CCORE). State of Equity provides racial equity and health consultation, guidance, capacity building, and partnership to government staff to ensure that our institutions are accountable to the people they serve. SGC partners with the Public Health Institute's (PHI) State of Equity to support and convene a variety of racial equity initiatives.

State of Equity's mission is to transform public institutions to advance racial equity and health through capacity building, government accountability, and community partnerships.

State of Equity facilitates CCORE and supports the California HiAP Partnership, HiAP Task Force, and SGC Racial Equity Working Group (REWG) as effective spaces to build capacity and implement action for racial equity across California state government. While State of Equity convenes CCORE, the other groups are convened by dedicated state staff, and State of Equity partners to contribute guidance on fidelity to health and racial equity principles. For example,

State of Equity provides guidance and consultation to the HiAP Partnership, helping to inform agendas for the Partnership and the HiAP Task Force, applying learnings from CCORE and past HiAP work, and supporting effective facilitation for transformational change.

State of Equity actively participates in the SGC's REWG to apply learnings from CCORE and support strategies for multi-agency organizing for racial equity, including accountability mechanisms, opportunities for public reporting, and elevating issues that emerge across state entities enterprise wide that might benefit from the group's wisdom, and more.

CCORE 2023-24 Highlights

CCORE supports California State government to embed racial equity approaches into institutional culture, policies, and practices. CCORE provides: 1) intensive capacity building for State government entities, 2) a community of practice for State employees, and 3) ongoing technical assistance and support to the CCORE community, including staff who previously participated in the cohort. CCORE implements a 2018 commitment by the HiAP Task Force to increase the capacity of State government to advance health and racial equity. CCORE consists of two cohorts, the Learning Cohort and the pilot CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC), the latter which centers Indigenous, Black, and People of Color government workers. 2023-24 highlights from CCORE include:

- CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC): State of Equity's inaugural Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC) ran from August 2023 to March 2024, and was built on support, organizing, and trust. This pilot cohort welcomed 28 Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) racial equity practitioners who either work in California state government or in community-based organizations. The group represented 14 different state departments and four Public Health Institute programs. We are preparing to start recruitment in August for our second cohort to begin in early 2025. To learn more about the pilot cohort you can check out our blog here: <https://stateofequity.phi.org/2024/06/18/reflections-from-tlc-a-bipoc-centered-practitioner-cohort-pilot-2/>
- CCORE Learning Cohort (LC): The current Learning Cohort runs from June to December 2024. This offering has been updated to serve the evolving needs of California state entities, while focusing on key objectives including supporting participants to understand introductory aspects of institutional and structural racism, foundational concepts, terms, and methods related to communicating to advance racial equity, the value of race conscious policy analysis, and leadership skills aligned with racial equity values. Six state entities are participating in the cohort, including: First 5 CA, the Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks & Recreation, Department of Social Services, and the Department of Public Health.

CCORE Next Steps

Looking ahead, State of Equity is committed to continuing to support state entities in their racial equity efforts.

- Through CCORE, TLC will begin recruitment for a 2025 season in August 2024 and there are initial plans in place to offer another season of the Learning Cohort in 2025.
- Complementary to these bodies of work, State of Equity continues to support states across the nation, building on the strong network in California, in partnership with Race Forward and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), and launched the State Government Racial Equity Community of Practice in March 2024. Hundreds of state government leaders representing more than 25 states are enrolled and participate regularly in the monthly convenings, almost half of whom are California practitioners.
- State of Equity is also supporting the facilitation and convening of a Sacramento Area Racial Equity Practitioner Network to serve as a space for local racial equity practitioners in government roles to network, be in community with each other, and participate in skill building and knowledge sharing.
- State of Equity is partnering with the Racial Equity Commission's (REC) Executive Director and University of California, Berkeley's Possibility Lab to implement a survey and key informant interviews that will collect information about the landscape of racial equity practices in state government currently, including resources, support needs, and success stories.

Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force

The Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force is facilitated by SGC's Health & Equity Program (HEP) in partnership with State of Equity and the California Department of Public Health. The HiAP Task Force centers around quarterly interagency convenings where staff from California State agencies and departments convene to address the structural barriers that many Californians face in accessing healthy, racially just, and resilient communities. Convenings host a diverse array of presentations, trainings, and updates or reports on state-led health and racial equity initiatives (with the inclusion of external entities as appropriate). Highlights from HiAP Task Force quarterly convenings since August 2023 include:

- California's Fifth **Climate Change Assessment** Public Health Topical Report
- **CALFIRE** Urban and Community Forestry Program
- **Department of Food and Agriculture** Urban Agriculture Program and Racial Equity Action Plan
- **Department of Public Health** Climate Change and Health Equity Section and Center for Health Communities Equity-Focused Funding Criteria
- **Natural Resources Agency** Outdoors for All Initiative
- **Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications** Master Services Agreement initiative
- **Office of Planning and Research** Vulnerable Communities Platform
- SGC Agricultural Land Equity Task Force, Community Resilience Centers grant program, Tribal Capacity Building Program, and Technical Assistance Toolkit

Featured presentations from entities that are external to state government included:

- Anti-Police Terror Project Traffic Calming Campaign

- ChangeLab Solutions Community Compensation Recommendations and Equitable Enforcement model
- Esri Equity and Social Justice Data Platforms
- PolicyLink National Equity Atlas
- Prevention Institute Equitable Transportation and Land Use Policies Model

The HiAP Task Force hosts two workgroups that meet monthly and focus on removing barriers for priority communities to access State resources, including State funding opportunities and data and information. Workgroup deliverables are planned and executed with guidance by action plans and input from HiAP Task Force members and their partners. Workgroup milestones include:

- Grant Programs, Contracts, and Funding Equity Work Group
 - **Development of a Community Compensation Memo** (in partnership with ChangeLab Solutions): ChangeLab Solutions conducted a landscape analysis and memorandum of recommendations for the HiAP Task Force surrounding strategies to expand community compensation strategies that aim to address barriers in access to state resources, engagement opportunities, and more.
 - **Forum on Outreach and Engagement Best Practices for Grant Programs:** In September 2023, the Task Force hosted a presentation of best practices for equity-driven outreach and engagement for state grants and contracts. This forum included a panel with practitioners from the Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Water Resources, and Strategic Growth Council, with facilitation from Natural Resources Agency.
 - **Forum on Technical Assistance & Contract Equity:** In May 2024, the Task Force hosted a forum on state technical assistance resources and efforts to advance equity in state contracts. This forum included a panel with practitioners from the Air Resources Board, Department of Food and Agriculture, and Department of Public Health, with facilitation from Strategic Growth Council.
 - **Administration of a Tribal Contracting Survey.** With direct support from the California Transportation Commission, the Task Force administered a survey to Task Force agencies around their tribal contracting processes and operations. The survey was intended to gather information around engagement and empowerment of tribes through state contracts, as well as any barriers or challenges state agencies and tribes experience in this process.
- Equity in Data and Access to Information Work Group
 - **Development of an Interagency Data Sharing Platform.** The Task Force is developing a platform for Task Force participants to share, disseminate, and collectively use data-driven resources. This platform addressed a need expressed by Task Force participants to make the ways state staff can share and learn about data more streamlined and efficient, as well as to promote interagency collaboration and sharing around data.

In April 2024, HiAP Task Force staff, with leadership from State of Equity, provided a training on health in all policies to the Rural Association of Northern California Health Officers, a cross-departmental initiative hosted by the California Center for Rural Policy. The focus of this training was to share about HiAP as an approach and provide applicable examples of HiAP in California, both within State and local jurisdictions. The training featured a guest from Montana's Western Transportation Institute who shared about implementing a HiAP approach in jurisdictions similar to Northern California, inclusive of rural, unincorporated, and tribal populations.

The HiAP Task Force held two Safe and Equitable Communities Roundtable Convenings. Spearheaded by PHI, State of Equity, and [Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice \(CURYJ\)](#), the Roundtable comprises members of the HiAP Task Force and other state government practitioners to discuss how State government can promote safe, violence-free communities. In April 2024, members received a presentation on the [Reimagining Community Safety](#) report, prepared by a UC, Berkeley student researcher, investigating California state government initiatives that aim to promote safe communities and violence prevention and approach a shared vision for the State's future work to promote safe, equitable, and violence-free communities. Following convenings, such as in July 2024, focused on the recommendations made in the report, where members discussed the report's suggested actions and identified barriers and sought consensus and agreement around goals, potential steps, and strategies for action for the Roundtable.

SGC Strategic Plan

During the June 26, 2024, SGC Council Meeting, SGC released its [Fiscal Year 2024-2027 Strategic Plan](#) Annual Update. This plan includes goals and strategies to continue to ideate, incubate, and scale solutions that advance climate and racial equity, implement infrastructure projects, and build capacity and resilience in California's under-resourced communities.

Although Goal 5 has a strong focus on advancing equity, the Strategic Plan holistically centers equity, and was informed by and developed in alignment with SGC's 2023-25 Racial Equity Action Plan. The Strategic Plan also draws on information and input gathered from historically disadvantaged and underserved communities, the 2023 SGC Catalyst Conference, and more. Short term priorities from the Strategic Plan for the coming year include:

- **Action 1.2.3.a** Collaborate with private sector partners to establish revenue-sharing models for the ongoing operation of community resilience centers. This could involve co-locating commercial services or events within the centers.
 - The Deputy Director of Energy Investments is coordinating with the Community Resilience Centers program to select projects to engage in SGC's Virtual Power Plants (VPP) for Community Benefit Initiative. The work aims to establish a model to identify additional awarded and non-awarded sites across SGC programs to engage and benefit from the VPP initiative.
- **Action 2.3.2.b** Program scan for federal funding readiness.
 - Connecting Communities initiative is working with TA provider Horne to work with SGC grantees (currently TCC, CRC, and RCC applicants/awardees) to



determine readiness for open federal funding opportunities like the EPA Community Change Grant. The team is also meeting with key staff agencies to identify areas of collaboration for collective applications to federal opportunities and researching new sources of federal funding.

- **Action 3.3.2.b** Host listening sessions through RCC implementation and other program development to inform ongoing TA needs.
 - The Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE) team is currently working with RCC Round 2 applicants to provide feedback on their applications and share other funding and technical assistance opportunities that may be of interest. Staff have also created profiles on SGC’s website for RCC applicants who wished to promote their projects and plan to share those profiles with public and private funders who may be interested in funding some component of the applicants’ scopes of work.
- **Action 4.2.1.a** Reconvene Council Priority 2: Advancing Capacity Building as a Key Equity Strategy (Council P2) workgroup to identify further strategies
 - The Deputy Director of Equity and Government Transformation is formalizing the internal SGC work plan for Council P2 into a public-facing action plan. This plan will be guided by Council P2 workgroup feedback and identify the top priority actions for the coming year.

Racial Equity Action Plan

SGC’s 2023-25 Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) is a statement of intent and accountability tool to embed racial equity across all facets of SGC. The REAP hosts strategies that include high-level, organizational priorities as well as program-specific, measurable, and actionable goals and actions across each SGC program. Highlights of SGC’s racial equity initiatives from September 2023 to August 2024 include:

- Advancements made to embed equity in SGC **grant program development, outreach, and administration** processes, including:
 - **Access to and availability of information and resources** about SGC grant programs, including increased availability of informational sessions, office hours, or ad-hoc supportive conversations between staff and applicants/awardees;
 - **Adjustments** to grant programs, including changes made to guidelines following public comment periods, adjusted or extended timelines to account for unforeseen barriers in the application process, or inclusion of technical assistance;
 - Continued administration of **advance pay** strategies in select SGC programs, with the aim for greater uptake in existing advance pay offerings including Transformative Climate Communities and Community Resilience Centers;
 - Greater **tracking of demographic and geographic data** related to the reach of SGC’s grant programs (for example, mapping where SGC investments are reaching for select programs);

- Provision of **technical assistance (TA, see more below) or other supportive services**, even for programs that may not have future funding (e.g., due to State budget changes); and more.
- Embedding racial equity as a priority in **SGC's organizational culture** and building belonging for the SGC workforce, including by administering an annual workforce equity survey, which gauges the demographic makeup of SGC and (every other year) solicits anonymous feedback around staff experiences working at SGC;
- Expanding engagement around **SGC's research- or science-driven initiatives and partnerships** to include communities and advance community-based research, participatory research models, and more;
- **Exploring greater support mechanisms for SGC applicants and grantees**, including methods to direct unsuccessful applicants to alternate State or Federal funding resources or projects (including through the new Connecting Communities Program);
- Increasing **technical assistance (TA)** offerings for priority communities and continue to investigate and remove barriers to applying, accessing, or administering SGC grant funding, with a focus on priority communities, such as communities of color and tribal communities;
- Increasing **outreach to and engagement with Native American tribes** across California, including building staff capacity and coordination around their programs' engagement with tribes via internal (working groups) and external (increased engagement) methods;
- **Surveying grantees and TA recipients** on experiences and using feedback to improve SGC offerings; and
- Further **aligning REAP commitments with SGC Strategic Plan** to ensure alignment with Executive Order N-16-22 and SGC's ongoing and emerging racial equity commitments.

SGC plans to provide an annual update of programmatic REAP implementation successes in December 2024.

Racial Equity Resource Hub

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. The Resource Hub has continued to be updated with new resources from across State government, with staffing from SGC HEP. The Resource Hub has 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, among others. Since its launch in April 2022, we have heard from both State and non-State government users that the Resource Hub has supported their work in various ways:

- The Resource Hub has helped an external health organization to conduct a statewide equity landscape project meant to support uptake of racial equity initiatives within California and across the country.



- HiAP Task Force members have shared that the Resource Hub has created a mechanism for amplifying interagency racial equity advancement initiatives with the public, while bringing further transparency and accountability to this work.
- Moreover, we have heard from State agencies and departments that the Resource Hub has further informed the development of Racial Equity Action Plans, and has provided staff resources to reference, learn from, and inspire their agency's or department's racial equity commitments and goals.

Next Steps

In alignment with the SGC Racial Equity Action Plan and Strategic Plan, SGC will continue to prioritize operationalizing racial equity across its programs and initiatives and identifying opportunities to further implement the Council's Racial Equity Resolution. Holistically, SGC is eager to continue to implement the Strategic Plan, which has taken an intentional approach to advancing equity and addressing structural barriers that SGC's partners and audiences have defined. The statewide budget has impacted various facets of SGC's programs and resources, but our organization will continue to ensure that racial equity is prioritized and standardized in our operations; this is important as limited budgets can threaten the administration of equity advancement initiatives within government, among other resources.

SGC will continue to utilize its interagency convening capacity to support the advancement of racial equity initiatives across the State. This includes the interagency Council, Health in All Policies Task Force, the Racial Equity Resource Hub, and support of CCOPE. With further implementation of Council P2 and new Equity and Government Transformation portfolio of programs, SGC will expand its TA and capacity building initiatives to better serve underserved communities through its own programs, operations, and partnerships.

Within the next year (and by end of calendar year 2025), SGC will have:

- Implemented its 2023-25 REAP, with an expected closeout and accompanying update by the end of 2025;
- Administered first rounds of funding for numerous new programs, demonstrating a commitment to identify resource gaps (including for underserved communities), design programs to meet needs, and pilot new approaches;
- Hosted its third Catalyst Conference, with 2025's convening having a greater approach on addressing barriers and leveraging funding, including Federal funding; and more.

Discussion Questions

- What do you see as critical to embedding advancement of racial equity into our standard practices as State government? Where do you assess us in this process?
- Considering your organization's racial equity advancement work, what are you most excited about or looking forward to in the coming year?

Attachments

Attachment A: Council Agency Updates

