December 17, 2024

Subject:	**SGC Racial Equity Action Plan Annual Update**
Reporting Period:	December 2023 – December 2024
Staff Lead:	Hoi-Fei Mok, Deputy Director of Equity and Government Transformation

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 2023 to 2024 and outlines high-level racial equity commitments for 2025.

Background

SGC Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Timeline

In April 2019, the SGC approved its inaugural 2019–22 REAP, making SGC the first multiagency 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 2019–22 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.
- April 2021: Councilmembers provide the first written SGC Racial Equity Resolution Report documenting their progress.

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- October 2021: The 2020–21 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 2019–22 REAP and reports on progress and next steps at the Oct. 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 2023–25 REAP.

2023–24 Implementation Progress

SGC Leadership, Operations, and Communications/External Affairs

Council Meetings and Priorities

SGC continues to build upon the [Racial Equity Resolution](#) and maintain the [Racial Equity Resource Hub](#). Two Council meetings a year highlight the racial equity progress from SGC and Council agencies. Staff conducted a crosswalk of existing state racial equity spaces and communities of practice, and are working with the Racial Equity Commission and Government Operations Agency to identify areas of collaboration with SGC's Racial Equity Working Group (a deliverable of the Racial Equity Resolution). Leadership participates in the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE)'s California Innovation Cohort to develop racial equity tools and best practices. Within [Council Priority 2](#), SGC will be deepening tribal support, holding an interagency convening around advance pay implementation practices, establishing a Technical Assistance Work Group, and working with the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force to evaluate inclusive grant management processes. SGC staff have already started implementing advance pay for eligible non-profit grantees under AB590 by Assemblymember Hart (D-Santa Barbara) and preparing guidance documents for the implementation of the newly passed AB3017 by Assemblymember Hart (D-Santa Barbara) on advance pay for federally recognized tribes on Jan. 1, 2025. SGC currently has a total of five grantees participating in advance pay across the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) and Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) programs.

Leadership, Human Resources & Operations

SGC continues to track and report on progress of its Strategic Plan, which embeds racial equity across many facets and features Goal 5: Center Equity in Achieving Healthy, Thriving, and Resilient Communities for All. An in-person leadership retreat was held in June to discuss the SGC Strategic Plan and workforce initiative. SGC continued to host several paid summer interns and evaluate the workforce equity process. A thorough workforce experiences survey is planned for early 2025. Overall, there has been an increase in in-person visits across programs, which led to increased purpose and belonging.

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Leadership restructured all-staff meetings to offer monthly opportunities for staff to share about their work in depth. Staff are able to hone their presentation skills, learn from each other, and organize around emerging challenges. In addition to encouraging staff to attend external professional development trainings, leadership is identifying specific trainings around institutional racism, starting with tribal affairs.

The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) contract team developed the Economic Equity First Action Plan (effective Jan. 1, 2024) to better operationalize hiring non-profit, community-based, minority-owned, and small businesses for LCI and SGC contracts. SGC leadership continues to work with Department of General Services and other partners on implementation. All programs were transitioned to Submittable for applications and contracting this year, allowing the opportunity to better track demographic data for contractors and applicants, and establish data-driven goals for diversity. A TA survey template has been uploaded to Submittable and staff will work to evaluate technical assistance delivery and program design across the organization.

Workforce Diversity

Under civil service, SGC will be able to utilize CalHR's hiring procedures and language around equity, inclusion, racial equity competencies, and value of both lived and work experience for the duty statement and job posting. SGC completed a transition process from government appointees to civil service this past year.

2024 Staff Demographic Survey

With facilitation from the Health & Equity Program (HEP), SGC administered its fourth annual staff demographic survey. The opt-in survey aimed to capture the demographic identities within SGC's staff workforce. Results from the survey are anonymous and staff respond to questions regarding their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, education level, age, and more – all in a disaggregated survey design. Nearly all SGC staff responded to the survey this year. Results are reported across broad racial categories, but staff were able to share about specific identities and background within each broad category, to ensure representation and respect the diverse experiences and identities across general, broad categories for race and ethnicity. For example, any staff that identify as Asian were also able to express and write in any ethnic backgrounds or other identities central to their identity. See figure below for a representation of SGC's diverse staff.

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SGC Staff Demographics

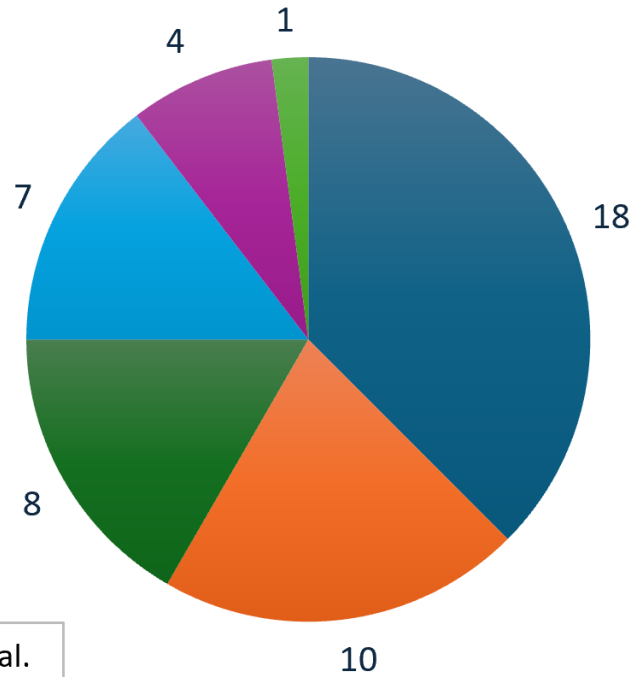■ **White or European**

■ **Asian**

■ **Latine/Latinx**

■ **Black or African**

■ **American Indian or Alaska Native**

■ **Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander**

26% of respondents identify as multiracial.

Pie chart values: 18, 10, 8, 7, 4, 1

Communications & External Affairs

The Communications and External Affairs Branch has continued its work to communicate with an equity lens and broaden information access to all SGC and LCI programs, initiatives, Councils, and Commissions. Areas that have seen documented success are community-centered storytelling, cultural outreach and language access, and cross sector collaboration.

Communications and External Affairs hired a Communications Lead in February 2024, enabling evaluation of current and past outreach efforts and engagement with diverse audiences. By April 2024, SGC and LCI had increased community-centered storytelling on social media, webpages, and throughout program deliverables by a minimum of 25%. This was a result of prioritizing relationship building with community partners to develop and disseminate media. Since April 2024, social media platforms have gained more than 2,000 followers, andorganic impressions are up 118% on our most used platform (LinkedIn). LCI has also diversified its media, including videos, visuals, and blogs, to increase community representation, access to programs and resources, and audience engagement overall.

In May 2024, Communications and External Affairs signed a $150,000 contract with a third-party vendor to provide translation and interpretation services for public meetings and outreach efforts. To date, more than 80 documents have been translated, for more than 15 public meetings and listening sessions which have offered interpretation services. By providing these services, individuals with Limited English Proficiency have greater opportunity to access and contribute feedback on programs and meetings. The contract will expire in August 2026;

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Communications and External Affairs will revisit the scope of work and draft a new contract to include additional services.

In alignment with Executive Order N-16-22, Communications and External Affairs increased its collaboration with partner agencies, partner advisors/consultants, and the Governor's Office Communications team. Realizing that true equity and inclusive outreach practices start from transforming internal practices, Communications and External Affairs has worked to remove silos by inviting external partners into communications and outreach planning earlier, with a focus on cultural engagement. Notable accomplishments include developing culturally sensitive grantee publicity guidelines for multiple grant programs and initiatives, and better utilizing tools and resources shared by partners to reach broader, more diverse audiences. This approach has produced organized, styled, and consistent messaging for priority communities, specifically those historically overlooked in policymaking, processes, and funding.

For 2024–25, Communications and External Affairs will continue to enhance its efforts to increase cultural language access to priority communities, specifically for Tribal engagement. This will include building relationships with Tribal advisors from across the state, and community, and developing a scope of work contract to compensate Tribal partners willing to offer specific target audience consultation for outreach campaigns. LCI will also launch three new social media platforms to elevate community stories and voices. With more than 3 billion active users, these new social media accounts will allow us to connect with more diverse audiences in a more timely and effective manner.

Communications and External Affairs is proud of the steps it has made toward a more collaborative, intentional, and strategic approach to equitable and culturally sensitive outreach and communication. Progress has required analysis, assessment, and adaption, inclusion of priority communities, and moving away from practices that meet bare minimums and "check boxes," to understanding the value true inclusion brings to our outreach efforts and exemplifying this shift within communications.

Connecting Communities

Connecting Communities aims to support SGC grantees and unawarded applicants of SGC grant programs in accessing federal funding through technical assistance (TA). This year, SGC contracted with HORNE to deliver holistic TA and outreach to key partners, including more than 67 different governments, tribal communities, and organizations who submitted more than 20 federal grant applications. Thus far, this has led to 25 applications submitted across three federal grant programs and seen three successfully awarded for a total of approximately $60 million. Many SGC programs have committed to supporting unsuccessful applicants in identifying alternative funding sources within the REAP, and Connecting Communities will continue to play a direct role in this effort. For example, Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE) developed profiles for unfunded Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 2 applicants to promote their applications and access to philanthropy and other funding sources.

In February 2024, SGC hosted its second Catalyst Conference, in partnership with the Milken Institute. The Catalyst Conference convened nearly 300 leaders across the country to build

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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 attendees from tribal entities and under-resourced communities across the state. Frontline leaders, researchers, funders, and government partners convened to learn from one another, prioritize areas of future focus for SGC, advance projects, and celebrate transformation already underway. Sessions reflected both the urgency to make place-based investments that center and support disinvested communities and considerations of the readiness of long under-served/under-invested and are also often communities of color, tribal communities, and/or low-income communities who often face additional capacity constraints.

SGC, in partnership with LCI, will plan a series of regional roundtables in 2025 as a continuation of the commitments made at the 2023 and 2024 Catalyst Conferences. The goal of the roundtables is to integrate local perspectives into state policy contexts and identify concrete steps to better align the long-term vitality of these communities. This place-based approach will facilitate greater collaboration between local partners and gather more intentional engagement with tribal leaders and improve responsiveness on tribal priorities. This work is part of the Connecting Communities Initiative's goal to accelerate community-led climate projects and demonstrate best practices in centering communities burdened by pollution and other structural harm.

Tribal-Serving Initiatives

SGC offers two grant opportunities specific to tribes – CACE's Tribal Capacity Building Program and LCI's Tribal Research Grant Program, and tribes are eligible to apply to SGC's other grant programs for housing and climate infrastructure. In the last rounds of five grant programs, SGC has seen a total of $38,956,751 awarded to tribes and tribal-serving organizations in 43 projects. SGC worked with six tribal-serving TA providers to support tribal applicants and is currently compiling metrics for a fuller picture of outreach and access across tribes. The California Fifth Climate Change Assessment (Fifth Assessment) team has a Tribal Advisory Group of six tribal leaders who help inform the development of the Fifth Assessment. The Tribal Advisory Group will soon include tribes based in the Los Angeles, Inland Desert, Central Coast, and Bay Area regions. In addition to these programs, each SGC program is following commitments within the REAP to better reach, engage with, build access for, and support tribes.

The HiAP Task Force administered an internal survey for state agencies on contracting processes with tribes, in support of its Grants, Contracts, and Funding Equity Work Group. This survey was intended to equip HiAP Task Force practitioners with information on existing, feasible practices being led by other state agencies and departments to build greater access to state resources for tribes.

Greater flexibility in SGC programs has also arisen as a key supportive priority for tribes. From hosting tribal-specific workshops or informational sessions, to establishing tribal funding targets and set-asides, including processes to exempt program requirements to respect tribal

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sovereignty, and extending deadlines as needed, SGC program staff are hard at work in ensuring greater access and equity in our programs for tribes.

Staff continued to attend tribal conferences and trainings this year, including the National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Change Conference in Anchorage, Alaska; the Tribal Climate and Health Adaptation Summit in Pala, California; and the Rural Housing Coalition Summit. Currently SGC is conducting an internal tribal needs and gaps assessment to identify existing resources for tribal support and priority areas for collaboration with the newly hired LCI Tribal Liaison.

California Climate Investment Programs

Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC)

Starting in Round 7 (2023), AHSC included a new racial equity scoring section that is scored competitively within applications. While equity is built into many aspects of the application, the Narrative section rewards applicants for aligning applications with REAP strategies. In the recently completed Round 8, 35% of applicants that passed Threshold received full points on the Equity and Transformation section of the Narrative, and nearly 60% received partial points for this section, demonstrating extensive effort of applicants to meet racial equity-focus program guidelines. For Narrative review, AHSC staff continued outreach to state reviewers with racial equity competencies and diverse perspectives.

AHSC also administered two standardized surveys. One survey, for TA recipients, aimed to understand the impact of TA services, 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. The second survey was conducted following the submission of Round 8 applications and was open to all AHSC interested parties. The survey asked pointed questions about AHSC processes and guidelines to address barriers, improve accessibility, and implement process improvements.

For Capacity Building Round 9, TA providers conducted five virtual workshops in 2024, focused on AHSC scoring topics, tribal and rural applicants, and community engagement. Topics were identified by TA providers and the AHSC Program Survey. Program staff also utilized a new outreach tracker to guide outreach efforts.

Round 8 awarded $789 million to 24 affordable housing and sustainable infrastructure projects across the state. Unfortunately, despite three tribal projects participating in the TA program, AHSC Round 8 did not receive a tribal application for an implementation project and thus was unable to meet the Council goal of awarding funds to at least one tribal entity (Round 8 Guidelines, Section 108(h)(3)). For Round 9, the team is targeting outreach efforts and updating guidelines with the intent of increasing access to regions and communities, including California tribes. One major change presented in Round 9 Draft Guidelines is the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) removal of Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity, one of the largest noted barriers for tribes to access all HCD funding programs, including AHSC.

AHSC will continue to facilitate TA that serves underrepresented developers and under-resourced communities; AHSC will continue to provide TA to affordable homeownership

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projects and tribal project applicants. For Round 9, AHSC aims to improve the Anti-Displacement Assessment with updated data sources.

With the passing of SB 1187 by Mike McGuire (D-District 2), the Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act, in September 2024, a new Tribal Housing Program will be created focused on funding Tribal housing. AHSC is exploring options to align its Tribal Set Aside with this upcoming Tribal Housing Program (expected late 2025). Round 9 Draft Guidelines may also modify the current council target of one tribal project per funding round to a target of $50 million (the maximum request amount for one project). In 2025, AHSC aims to continue engaging with partner agencies about financing rental Affordable Housing Developments (AHDs) as a grant for tribal applicants.

Tribal applicants and Tribal TA providers have reported that the current status of rental AHDs administered through loans is a barrier for Tribal applicants. Additionally, with Round 9 Draft Guidelines out for public comment, AHSC staff is developing additional guideline changes that would reduce barriers for tribal applicants.

Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

CCR centers racial equity in its [Participatory Research to Policy (PRP) Model](#), which prioritizes partnerships between community-based organizations and research institutions to ground-truth funded research, support communities to self-determine and implement solutions, and ensure that research findings are translated into action. CCR advances racial equity by incorporating climate-vulnerable communities and research partners into the research process from the beginning as funded partners, co-leads, and collaborators. Growing evidence suggests that co-producing research with community members, including throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation, can lead to deeper understandings of community needs and solutions. CCR embeds racial equity across three areas: 1) Expanding engagement with communities and researchers, including Native American and communities of color; 2) Building capacity between academics and community-based organizations; and 3) Applying the PRP Model to California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment (Fifth Assessment).

As CCR pivots from funding research projects to promoting the PRP Model, CCR ensures racial equity goals are amplified through robust partnerships with the University of California Office of the President's (UCOP) Climate Action Initiative, California State University Water Advocacy Towards Education and Research (CSU-WATER), and the Center for Regional Change (CRC) at University of California, Davis. Through these partnerships, CCR aims to create a paradigm shift within higher education and state-funded research to embed engagement in research.

Another example of CCR's PRP Model in practice is the Actionable Research Project, led by CSU-WATER. Focused on evaluating meaningful engagement in research, the project will provide a toolset, best practices, case studies, and refinement of current practices to inform grant and contract guidelines for the State, UC, and CSU systems. These resources will assist state staff and researchers in navigating community-based participatory research that uplifts climate-vulnerable communities.

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CCR continues to build capacity for the Fifth Assessment around community-based research. In partnership with CRC and Partners for Collaborative Change, CCR developed two tailored trainings for nine Regional Report author teams. The first training explored the development of internal team structures and roles to advance community based participatory research principles, with a focus on structures that prioritize equal power in partnerships between academics and communities historically underrepresented in research. The second training focused on the development of community engagement plans that build on existing community input, ground-truth understandings about regional and local climate impacts, and ensure that the Fifth Assessment is useful and relevant to communities.

In the next year, CCR will continue to promote the PRP Model, a framework for community-based research that brings together researchers with frontline communities, communities who experience the most immediate and worst impacts of climate change and are often communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income, to develop actionable, context-sensitive research that increases resilience and quality of life. CCR will continue working with academic partners across the UC and CSU systems to further structural changes for prioritizing community engagement and partnerships in research around climate risks. Additionally, CCR will support capacity building for Fifth Assessment partners, specifically for Regional and Topical Report author teams as they uplift the insights and perspectives of diverse community voices throughout the report development process. The Fifth Assessment's Racial Equity and Climate Justice Report, in particular, will examine the effects of current and projected climate change impacts on vulnerable and historically underserved communities, and the barriers and opportunities for fostering equitable climate resilience.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

SALC has continued to prioritize racial equity via strategies and programmatic changes that increase participation and access to the program by tribes, priority populations, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and communities of color. Through 2024, Staff provided direct TA to tribes, tribal-serving non-profits, and non-profits supporting beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This technical assistance 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.

SALC has continued to fund equity-focused grants. In December 2023, SALC awarded 19 capacity grants. Of those awarded, four were tribal-led, 11 claimed priority population benefits, and one included development of equity and diversity initiatives as part of their project scope. Of the planning grants awarded, one was awarded to a tribe and seven will provide priority population benefits with an emphasis on direct and ongoing outreach to disadvantaged communities. In addition to capacity and planning, nine acquisition grants were determined to provide priority population benefits, including 3 fee title acquisition grants to tribal entities, that will facilitate tribes' and tribal members' stewardship of one thousand acres of land for cultural purposes. The grants covered 100% of project costs and accounted for 6.7% of program funding awarded that round. One of these grants was the direct result of a capacity grant that was awarded to a tribal-serving non-profit in Round 8.

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In addition to four equity-focused workshops and presentations provided to both existing grantees and prospective applicants, SALC also hosted two tribal roundtables and coordinated with California Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and other tribal-focused programs and groups in developing SALC's Round 10 Guidelines. Notable changes to the SALC guidelines include the addition of a department-led tribal notification policy, clarification of investment targets and priority populations language based on feedback from CARB, allowance for grantee expenses that would increase disadvantaged community participation in planning grant-related outreach, modified eligible costs to include both ceremonial expenses and cultural resource evaluations, and increased flexibility related to development restrictions on tribal-led fee acquisition projects. These changes to the guidelines were the result of an approximately 8-month period of intensive research, outreach, and coordination with Agency, tribal communities, and land trusts. They were directly influenced and informed by the feedback received during the outreach, workshops, and roundtable events.

Based on current capacity grant project development and technical assistance provided by SALC staff and contract providers, SALC anticipates the submittal of 10 tribal-led and four projects specifically benefiting priority populations in Round 10. In the next year, SALC looks forward to further refining our program to better meet the needs of tribal and disadvantaged communities through direct engagement resulting from the notification process, ongoing outreach, and capacity development. Through this work, SALC will continue to explore how best to support tribal and lower capacity applicants in finding success with our program. This will include exploring the potential for advance payments, technical assistance for application and grant administration, and grant agreement and easement language to address tribal-specific needs.

Social & Climate Infrastructure Programs

Community Resilience Centers (CRC)

CRC prioritizes racial equity through: a flexible program design to account for the diverse communities and environmental impacts experienced throughout the State; a Tribal Funding Target and Geographic Diversity Funding Target; naming priority communities and populations; and community engagement and partnership requirements that ensure CRCs are rooted in and governed by beneficiary communities. CRCs aim to mitigate the effects of climate change and advance equity by empowering communities most impacted by climate emergencies to develop their own resilience strategies. With access to resources and SGC funding, these communities can implement solutions that not only address growing climate challenges but also strengthen overall wellbeing.

In Round 1, CRC received an impressive 189 applications spanning all three grant types, with a total funding request of over $685 million. Notably, 139 applications were submitted by low-income communities, 75 by disadvantaged communities, 49 by rural areas, 22 by unincorporated communities, and five by California tribes. This diverse and extensive applicant pool reflects not only the program's robust and collaborative development and application processes but also the accessibility to apply, marking significant milestones for the team.

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In February and April, Council approved $98.6 million for 24 Round 1 awards. Among these, four projects led by California Native American tribes were funded, nearly meeting the program's Tribal Funding Target to fund at least five qualifying Tribally-led projects. With multiple projects in each of the six CalOES Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid regions, CRC surpassed its Geographic Diversity Funding Target. All projects are located in CRC's priority communities: 15 projects in disadvantaged communities; 23 in low-income communities; six in unincorporated communities; 10 in rural areas; and five within Tribal communities.

CRC is authorized to provide advance payment to community-based nonprofits, local agencies, and nongovernmental entities until July 1, 2025, through AB 211 (Assm. Committee on Budget). This provision alleviates the burden of waiting months for reimbursements (particularly for smaller organizations), ensuring grantees can implement projects without financial barriers. AB 590 by Assemblymember Hart (D-Santa Barbara) and AB 3017 also by Assemblymember Hart (D-Santa Barbara) further extended eligibility for advanced payments to 501(c)3 nonprofits and federally recognized tribes, ensuring that nearly all CRC Grantees can benefit from this critical financial support. CRC is developing guidance for Grantees to ensure they meet the requirements by statute and remain in compliance to receive this financial support.

Many unsuccessful applicants presented compelling and competitive proposals. To foster continued progress for their initiatives, CRC is developing comprehensive profiles for the 165 unawarded applicants, to be shared broadly across the state to connect applicants with alternative funding opportunities, providers, and potential partners, fostering continued progress for their initiatives. The profiles created for all unawarded applicants will be distributed and tracked in an effort to support more communities in need of investment.

CRC staff will continue to address barriers and gaps for Round 1 Grantees. Progress will be monitored and tracked to inform future work while uplifting the voices and stories of grantees and their communities, including via applicant profiles. Staff plan to develop a TA plan for grantees to identify and secure the services and expertise they need to grow their capacities and successfully implement their projects. Excitingly, CRC will begin developing Round 2 Guidelines as more of this critical climate resiliency funding was secured in Proposition 4 (2024). During this process, CRC staff will continue to engage with priority communities and populations to ensure the Round 2 Guidelines reduce application barriers, support diverse applicants, and reflect the priorities and values of California communities.

Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)

TCC made significant strides in its REAP goals, particularly regarding grant implementation. In 2022–23, TCC introduced several programmatic changes to better support disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUC) and tribal communities, including a new Project Development grant type, and additional flexibility for tribes. In 2023–24, TCC measured the benefits of these changes. The Council awarded four Project Development Grants to rural communities, one of which has tribal partners that modified their Project Area to be noncontiguous, a milestone TCC modification. These Project Development Grants will create a strong foundation for communities as they later apply for future funding.

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In Round 5, the four awarded Implementation Grants faced a $7 million budget reduction; however, with the incredible support from Connecting Communities and HORNE, two grantees (the City of Bakersfield and the San Diego Foundation) were awarded Community Change Grants from the Environmental Protection Agency that filled this funding gap. TCC acknowledged that Round 5 did not meet applicants' entire needs. SGC provided further TA to past applicants to secure grant awards, leading to furthering catalytic investment and dignity in the application process.

One of TCC staff's largest REAP wins this year has been the rollout of our advance pay pilot, with interest and requests for advance pay from tribes, rural and unincorporated communities, and other priority communities. This, and navigating the aforementioned budget reduction, demonstrated the importance of collaboration across SGC programs and with state partners, as TCC aimed to enact transformative strategies such as advance pay.

To elevate TCC storytelling, staff launched a booking calendar, where grantees self-report on their community events. This year, staff tracked 20+ community events, which allowed coordination of SGC staff attendance and amplification of stories across diverse communication channels.

This past year, however, TCC staff did face some challenges, the largest being low staff capacity. Typically a full team of seven, TCC staff was a team of three at its lowest. Because of this, some REAP goals could not be prioritized, piloted, or completed to sufficient quality. However, TCC is fully staffed at the time of this report and has incorporated the REAP in onboarding materials for new staff.

As TCC trains new staff, the program is well-positioned to further implement its pending REAP goals and build upon those already achieved. TCC will continue to evaluate and improve advance pay, extending this opportunity to tribal grantees. Project Development Grants will complete their first of two years, with the intention of applying for TCC's Implementation Grant or similar large, infrastructure grants. TCC will collaborate with Connecting Communities to help grantees find the best opportunities for their projects. New initiatives include an advisory work group to strengthen feedback between grantees and staff, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. In Round 6, TCC will continue to prioritize reducing the structural barriers and racial inequities DUCs and tribal communities face when applying. TCC aims to add more flexibility, as well as retain supportive elements (such as the ability for tribes to modify certain application requirements), and remove elements that are proving to be hindrances. Along with guidelines and application development, TCC staff are working with a contractor to improve outreach by creating a landscape analysis of existing outreach efforts.

Technical Assistance & Capacity Building

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

In 2023–24, CACE made significant progress on increasing the provision of TA to tribes. Six California Native American tribes, four non-federally recognized and two federally recognized, were awarded $1.45 million for the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program. These six tribes will use the grant funds for staff salaries and activities that advance each tribe's climate change

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initiatives. Program staff also secured an advanced pay exemption for all of the grantees in the program, allowing up to 100% of grant funds to be disbursed to grantees in advance of grant activities.

During the past year, CACE began implementation of Round 1 of the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program. Program staff worked with a third-party TA team to support six grantees in their process of partnership building, aligning projects with funding opportunities, and creating or updating plans and policies. As a result of this implementation, the six RCC grantees have applied to over 70 individual grants, received more than $34 million in grant funding, and held over 70 external meetings to gain a greater awareness of the climate landscape for their regions.

CACE faced the challenge of an uncertain funding landscape during this year but found ways to pivot and support applicants. After losing funding for Round 2 of RCC, program staff held debrief calls with applicants to discuss ways to strengthen and potentially repurpose their applications. One Round 2 applicant was able to secure annual philanthropic funding after building upon their RCC Round 2 application. Pivoting to support applicants, CACE, in collaboration with the Governor's Office, The California Energy Commission, The Institute for Local Government, and The Latino Community Foundation, launched BOOST Imperial Valley with philanthropic funding as part of the Imperial Valley Ecosystem initiative. The Imperial Valley Ecosystem Initiative is a program designed for under-resourced Imperial Valley communities to access federal, state, and public investments to meet their infrastructure needs and community development goals. One BOOST Imperial Valley participant, the City of Calipatria, has already secured a $50,000 grant. CACE also developed a map that showcased all CACE program investments, totaling in $13.9 million, across the state. This map demonstrates the impact of past investments in under-resourced communities and supports the team's work ahead in areas without previous CACE investment.

Looking ahead, CACE will learn more about the specific capacity building and technical assistance needs for California Native American Tribes through implementation of the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program. CACE will also work on implementing upstream capacity building programs through the launch of BOOST Imperial Valley. Finally, CACE will facilitate an interagency Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Workgroup to share and connect with other State government staff that lead TA and capacity building programs to serve Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, rural communities, and low and moderate (LMI) income communities.

Interagency Initiatives

Agricultural Land Equity Initiative & Task Force (ALEI, Task Force)

SGC established ALEI and the Task Force in fall 2023. The Task Force is a 13-member body charged with drafting a report of recommendations on how to equitably increase access to land for agricultural and traditional tribal uses. The Task Force comprises members of three different Tribal Nations, a land trust representative, individuals with expertise in issues affecting socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, an individual with expertise in agricultural land acquisition

and finance, the State Board of Food and Agriculture member, a farmworker representative, a beginning farmer, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Farm Equity Advisor, and an individual from the CDFA BIPOC Farmer Advisory Committee.

Task Force members discuss land equity through many lenses including tribal ancestral land return, land access for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and economic and linguistic barriers, among other factors. Stable and secure access to agricultural land ensures tribal sovereignty and success as a farmer or rancher. However, Tribal Nations and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California have faced centuries of racism, systemic discrimination, displacement, and lands dispossession. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, 86% of farms in California are owned by white producers. ALEI staff are working to ensure that the recommendations drafted by the Agricultural Land Equity Task Force will lead to meaningful, material improvements for land stewards who have been excluded. To this end, staff are developing frameworks for diverse forms of community engagement and feedback including regional roundtables and an advisory committee.

To advance community engagement, staff collaborate with and compensate contributors including farm visit hosts, guest speakers, and community partner organizations. Staff have prioritized collaborators who center racial equity in their work, and ALEI quarterly public meetings offer language access services such as Spanish interpretation including the option to provide public comment. With Staff support, the Task Force also launched a multilingual survey in November 2024 in English, Spanish, and Chinese and has attended one site visit in Spanish featuring seven farmers.

Staff will build an Advisory Committee which will support the Task Force with research and a review of their draft recommendations to ensure equity, impact, and efficacy for the priority populations identified by the Task Force members.

ALEI staff intend to share best practices and lessons learned from administering a public body charged with advancing equity. Topics may include staff relationships and expectations of Task Force members who have full-time jobs outside of the Task Force and may have limited experience working within the State setting. Other potential topics include cultural competency, compensation for both Task Force members and engaged community members, relationships with CA Tribal Nations, and interagency coordination and peer learning and knowledge-sharing. With the passage of SB 1448 by Melissa Hurtado (D-Bakersfield)in September 2024, Task Force members will receive a per diem allowance starting in November 2024 through the end of their appointments.

In the next year, ALEI will continue working to increase access for historically excluded communities to the State process with the goal of ensuring that the Task Force's recommendations reflect and address the needs of the communities they wish to serve. In addition, staff will continue facilitating research and developing recommendations towards a final report by the end of 2025.

As ALEI was established after the 2023-25 SGC REAP was published, staff have developed new REAP goals for the initiative, for tracking and future incorporation into the REAP:

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1. Task Force Administration: Embed racial equity priorities in the administration of the Agricultural Land Equity Initiative, Task Force, and within ALEI staff capacity.
2. Interagency Coordination: Collaborate with other state-led public bodies, including SGC initiatives, Health in All Policies Task Force, the Racial Equity Commission, and more, to work across siloes, streamline communication and engagement, and align efforts where appropriate.
3. Outreach and Engagement: Administer outreach and engagement to priority communities, as defined by Task Force members, for inclusion in the Task Force's final report of recommendations.
4. ALETF Recommendations: Ensure ALETF Recommendations embed equity, include the voices and priorities of diverse communities, and holistically incorporate the broad set of perspectives and proposals put forth by each Task Force member.

Health & Equity Program (HEP)

HEP convenes the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force in partnership with State of Equity (Public Health Institute) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). In 2024, HEP continued to facilitate quarterly HiAP Task Force convenings, monthly and ongoing workgroup meetings, and ad hoc interagency convenings, trainings, and other capacity building activities. HiAP Quarterly and workgroup convenings featured more than 25 presentations of health and racial equity initiatives from state partners and external partners this year, across topics related to embedding health, racial equity, and government transformation models into state policies, programs, data systems, and more.

In April 2024, HiAP Task Force staff, with leadership from State of Equity, provided a training on HiAP approaches to the Rural Association of Northern California Health Officers, a cross-departmental initiative hosted by the California Center for Rural Policy, featuring a guest from Montana's Western Transportation Institute. In May 2024, the Task Force hosted a forum on state technical assistance resources and efforts to advance equity in state contracts, featuring a panel with practitioners from the Air Resources Board, Department of Food and Agriculture, and (CDPH), with facilitation from SGC.

HiAP workgroups host deliverables to embed racial equity and accessibility into state programs. For example, HiAP partnered with ChangeLab Solutions to develop a memo on community compensation needs and strategies. HiAP now hosts a resource sharing platform for data specialists, in Esri ArcGIS Hub.

The HiAP Task Force held two Safe and Equitable Communities Roundtable Convenings. Spearheaded by Public Health Institute, 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.

Per the SGC Racial Equity Resolution, HEP supports annual organizational and interagency updates on racial equity-focused initiatives, presented this year at the August Council meeting. SGC [published an announcement]() celebrating accomplishments and highlighting panelists who

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joined the conversation, from the CDPH, Department of Transportation, and Natural Resources Agency. To track progress around this work, HEP facilitates the Racial Equity Working Group with key representatives from each SGC agency.

To better tell the story of SGC's racial equity initiatives, HEP and Communications/External Affairs updated HEP's REAP webpage.

With direct support from SGC leadership and staff, HEP continues to lead internal SGC staff capacity building work groups to collectively advance racial equity and government transformation, including: Technical Assistance and Contract Equity, Tribal Coordination and Engagement Initiatives, and Workforce Equity.

HEP hired a new Program Manager, to join SGC in December 2024. This will be a milestone for HEP, as the program has had two of three positions vacant for the greater part of 2024. Despite this, HEP has been able to sustain its work with support from SGC staff, HiAP and interagency partners, and SGC's Deputy Director for Equity and Government Transformation.

HEP will continue to convene HiAP; in 2025, there will be more specific focus on SGC Council Priority 2 (CP2), and HEP will serve in a direct role integrating the CP2 workplan with the ongoing priorities, activities, and evaluation of the HiAP Task Force.

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. 2025 will be the final year of the current 2023-25 SGC REAP, and HEP will directly support the organization's reporting and synthesis of accomplishments to date, as well as further identifying barriers, strategies, and actions to embed in the next updated version of the SGC REAP.

Next Steps

SGC will continue implementing the 2023-25 REAP and start to coordinate for the development of 2026-28 REAP.

Discussion Questions

- What priorities should SGC focus on in the last year of this REAP?
- As SGC prepares for the development of the next REAP, what emerging issues or priorities should be included?

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