

1. Executive Summary



Photo courtesy Friends of Sausal Creek

Introduction

The Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program, administered by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), has historically provided funding for regionally driven implementation projects that help meet the long-term water needs of the state, such as recycled water, water conservation, flood protection infrastructure, habitat restoration, and water supply projects. In recent years, recognizing that local and regional water planning and decision-making often overlook Disadvantaged Community-specific needs, there have been efforts to incorporate projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities into IRWM grant funding rounds. Such efforts have involved setting aside a percentage of funding specifically for these projects, and giving extra evaluation criteria points to, or waiving certain local match and permitting requirements for, projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities. However, IRWM projects that have in the past claimed to benefit Disadvantaged Communities have often been initiated or fully developed from outside of the communities they were intended to benefit. In addition, these efforts did not explicitly include Tribes.

In 2016, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) granted \$6,500,000 to the San Francisco Bay Funding Area of the IRWM Program as part of the statewide Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Program. The broad mandate to include Disadvantaged Communities in IRWM planning was implemented differently by the 12 IRWM Funding Areas throughout California. The San Francisco Bay Funding Area, which covers the majority of the nine Bay Area counties, expanded DACI to Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program (DACTI Program) to explicitly include Tribes.

The overall goal of the DACTI Program in the Bay Area was to support community-led problem-definition and solutions development processes and to create lasting social infrastructure to integrate Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes into water-related decision-making and planning. The DACTI Program in the Bay Area partnered with community-based organizations, nonprofits, Tribal organizations, and agencies with existing local Disadvantaged Community and Tribal relationships to design and conduct outreach and needs assessments to empower those Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to define their own water-related challenges and solutions.

Proposition 1 Funding Area


San Francisco Bay Region


- Community Partner
- 1 All Positives Possible (South Vallejo neighborhood of the City of Vallejo)
David R. Brower, Ronald V. Dellums
Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies
 - 2 and Action (Sobranste Park, Columbia Gardens, and Brookfield Village neighborhoods of Deep East Oakland)
 - 3 City of Hayward (Tennyson Corridor of the City of Hayward)
 - 4 Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (Cities of Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg)
 - 5 Friends of Sausal Creek (Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland)
 - 6 Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice (Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco)
 - 7 Marin City Climate Resilience and Health Justice (Unincorporated community of Marin City)
 - 8 Marin County Community Development Agency (Unincorporated communities of Dillon Beach, Point Reyes Station)
 - 9 Mujeres Empresarias Tomando Acción (East San José neighborhood of City of San José)
 - 10 The Multicultural Center of Marin (Canal District neighborhood of City of San Rafael)
 - 11 Nuestra Casa (City of East Palo Alto)
 - 12 Sonoma Ecology Center/Daily Acts (City of Petaluma and The Springs neighborhood of Sonoma Valley)
 - 13 The Watershed Project (Unincorporated community of North Richmond)

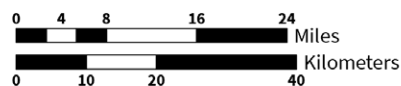
 Area Eligible for Funding

 Subregion Boundary

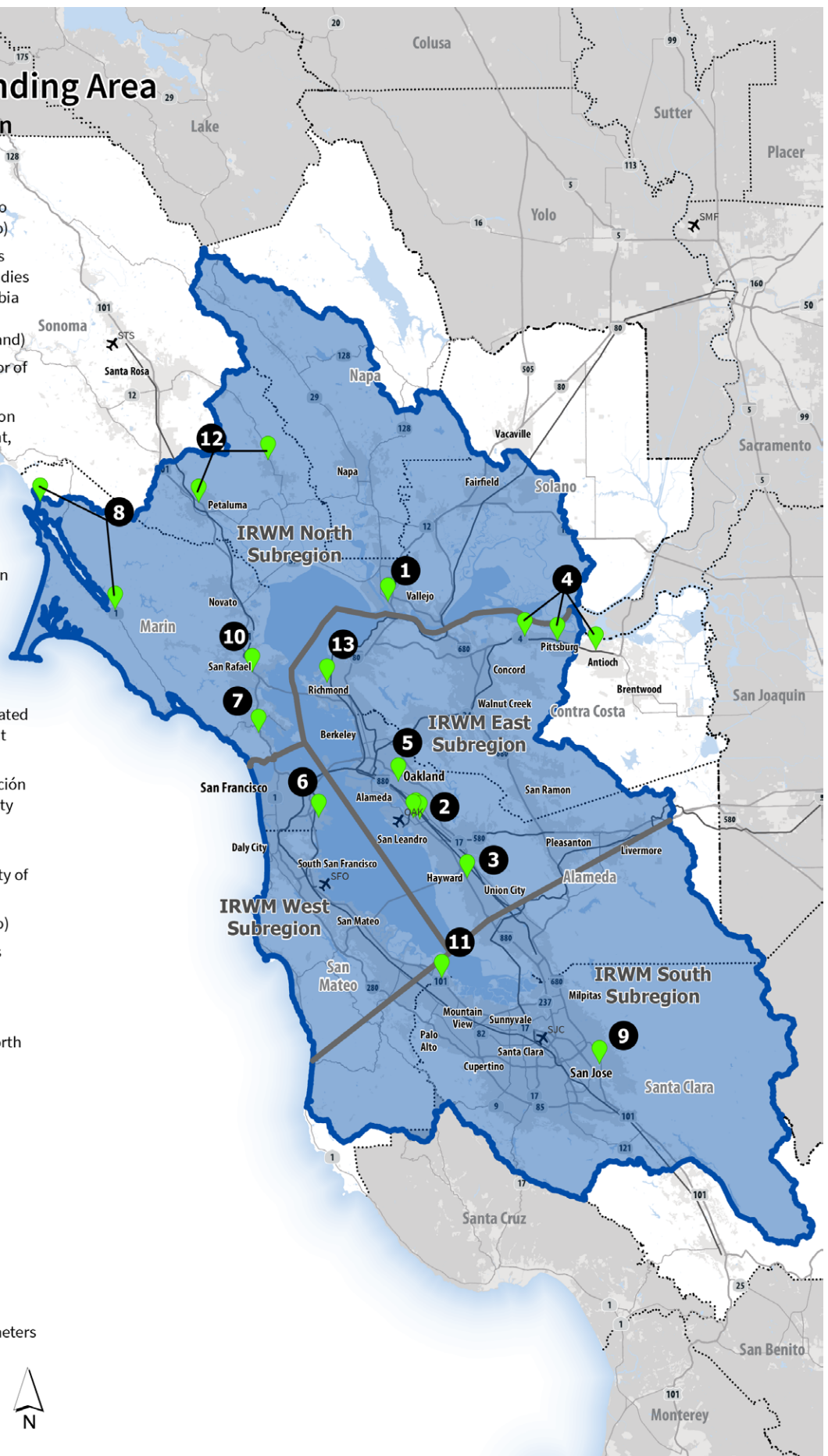
Bay Area Counties

 Urbanized Area

 Bay Area Surrounding Counties



Source: TomTom North America (2019)
California Department of Water Resources (2021)
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (2021)
Map Author: MDS, August 2022



This report gives an overview of the individual needs assessments conducted by Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners between 2017 and 2021, as well as a synthesis of findings and recommendations for the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM Program region. It also includes findings and recommendations from a survey conducted in partnership with two direct service providers to understand Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) access from the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness. One intended outcome of this work is to support the development of projects from Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to address identified issues that could be proposed in future IRWM funding rounds and other funding sources.

To include people experiencing homelessness in the Needs Assessment process, the DACTI Program partnered with:

- **Downtown Streets Team, and**
- **VOICES Youth Programs (VOICES)**

Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners who completed Needs Assessments in their communities include:

- **All Positives Possible (South Vallejo neighborhood of the City of Vallejo)**
- **City of Hayward (Tennyson Corridor of the City of Hayward)**
- **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (Cities of Antioch, Pittsburg, Bay Point)**
- **Friends of Sausal Creek (Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland)**
- **Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice (Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco)**
- **Marin City Climate Resilience and Health Justice (Unincorporated community of Marin City)**
- **Marin County Community Development Agency (Unincorporated communities of Dillon Beach and Point Reyes Station)**
- **Mujeres Empresarias Tomando Acción (East San Jose neighborhood of City of San Jose)**
- **The Multicultural Center of Marin (Canal District neighborhood of City of San Rafael)**
- **Nuestra Casa (City of East Palo Alto)**
- **David R. Brower, Ronald V. Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies and Action (Sobran Park, Columbia Gardens, and Brookfield Village neighborhoods of Deep East Oakland)**
- **Sonoma Ecology Center/Daily Acts (City of Petaluma and The Springs neighborhood of Sonoma Valley)**
- **The Watershed Project (Unincorporated community of North Richmond)**

California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) partnered with Tribes and Tribal Organizations through all nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM to complete the Tribal needs assessment. The Tribes and Tribal Organizations who participated in this process include:

- **Amah Mutsun Tribal Band/ Amah Mutsun Land Trust**
- **Association of Ramaytush Ohlone**
- **Him-r^n Ohlone, Jalquin, Saclan Tribe, Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok**
- **Indian People Organizing for Change/ Sogorea Te' Land Trust**
- **Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area,**
- **Napa Suscol Intertribal Council.**



Photo courtesy Downtown Streets Team

Needs Assessment with People Experiencing Homelessness

Background

The California Water Code acknowledges that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes” (State Water Resources Control Board, 2022). The human right to water extends to all Californians, recognizing that water is necessary for life and integral to health. However, this right has not been realized equally: over one million people in California still lack access to clean drinking water at home, with many more at risk of not being able to pay their monthly water bill (Al Jazeera America, 2015; Mack & Wrase, 2017). People experiencing homelessness – who make up an estimated population of more than 160,000 on any given day in the state of California – have some of the least access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, or WASH (Verbyla et al., 2021; United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2022).

To ensure that the voices and perspectives of people experiencing homelessness were included in and elevated through the Bay Area DACTI Program, a survey was developed in collaboration with partners around the state to characterize access to WASH and understand how gaps could be improved from the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness. This peer-to-peer survey was administered to nearly 650 people who had previously experienced or were currently experiencing homelessness from April to July of 2021 in Napa, Marin, and Solano counties, the City and County of San Francisco, and the cities of San Jose, Hayward, and Oakland by Downtown Streets Team (DST) and Voices Youth Programs (VOICES) team members who were or are experiencing homelessness, and who represent many different identities.

VOICES conducted 195 (191 long and 4 short) surveys with people, primarily youth, experiencing homelessness in Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, Solano, Sonoma, and Napa counties. DST conducted 453 (154 long and 299 short) surveys with people, primarily adults, experiencing homelessness in Marin County and the cities of San Jose, Oakland, San Francisco, and Hayward. Approximately 22 additional surveys were started, but information other than demographic data was not collected. Both groups began their outreach for this effort with people they serve and with whom they have ongoing relationships. They then expanded their outreach to people experiencing homelessness at shelters, encampments, mobile showers, churches that provide services, and other areas. In total, 648 surveys were completed, 345 of which were long surveys and 303 were short surveys.

This section of the Regional Needs Assessment report is a synthesis of interviews with people experiencing homelessness to highlight their current lack of access to WASH and elevate their voices in planning processes, as well as to inform next steps toward achieving water as a human right. Additional efforts are needed to understand the scope and settings of the issue to inform and develop meaningful local solutions.

Survey Findings

Results from the assessment show that the human right to water has not been met for people experiencing homelessness, who have difficulty accessing water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes.

How access to water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes could be improved from the perspective of people experiencing homelessness

Participants offered many recommendations for improving their access to WASH. These recommendations fell into the following broad categories:

Develop additional facilities

- **Improve and expand services and access at existing facilities**
- **Maintain facilities, including regular cleaning, keep them well-stocked, and make sure they are safe**
- **Make necessary water facilities and services reduced-cost or free**
- **Ensure services are coordinated and well-publicized so people know they exist, as well as where and when they can access them**
- **Continue access for those who have it**
- **Ensure housing for all**

Many of the recommendations participants provided are interrelated, and participants frequently explicitly highlighted these connections. While additional facilities on their own are a step in the right direction, to meaningfully meet existing needs, these facilities must be in an accessible location, well-maintained and stocked with necessary supplies, safe, free or affordable, and available throughout the day and night. All recommendations should be taken together to holistically address and improve gaps in access to water for people experiencing homelessness. Service providers should also coordinate with one another to cover the most areas at the most times.

Staff from DST and VOICES provided the perspective that for people experiencing homelessness, answering the survey questions that asked for suggestions to improve access to water for different services may have been a challenge. Some respondents may not have the information or experience to consider possibilities beyond existing conditions. Given this, many responses about how access could be improved were within the confines of existing experiences and services: more services, better maintenance, re-opening facilities that were closed due to COVID or other reasons, etc. Some participants simply said, “more access.” This directness is very powerful: we do not need imagination to understand what to do to improve the current situation, only the will to create positive change and to allocate resources to meet existing needs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated to address current gaps in WASH access based on insights from participants experiencing homelessness. Some recommendations were formulated with the additional expertise of direct service providers who contributed insights into the current funding and policy limitations that need to be addressed to realize the human right to water for all.

- Municipalities must formally recognize water as a human right and invest in infrastructure and services to provide safe and accessible water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes for all people.
- Decision-makers at every level should ensure that all planning commissions and policy development processes relating to homelessness meaningfully include people with current or past lived experience with homelessness.
- County and municipal governments should directly engage people experiencing homelessness and service providers in their area on how to tailor and implement the broad recommendations provided through this and other efforts regarding how to improve WASH access. This includes exactly which services and facilities would be the most useful in different areas.
- The Point in Time Count should identify one or two questions to add to their yearly or bi-yearly assessment to gather more information on access to WASH to inform service provision and facility development.
- Future research should further investigate how demographic factors, including living situation, and water access are correlated for different people experiencing homelessness to best prioritize those who have the least access.
- Include people experiencing homelessness in the framework and data tool to assess the status of water quality, accessibility, and affordability across the state. In 2019, Gov. Newsom signed SB 200 to provide funding to “provide safe drinking water in every California community, for every Californian.”
- Funding agencies should work directly with service providers to critically examine funding and service guidelines and identify and address elements that make it hard for service providers to be reimbursed for providing meaningful WASH services. These funding agencies include HUD, state agencies, and local governments.
- More general fund dollars should be allocated for people experiencing homelessness. If HUD policies do not change, cities and counties should take responsibility to match restrictive HUD dollars with general funds through the Request for Proposals (RFP) and contracting process.
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to provide WASH facilities such as restrooms and handwashing stations should include maintenance costs and safety measures.
- Funding agencies, researchers, and local stakeholders in all sectors should explore ways to leverage non-traditional funding sources to provide necessary services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Municipalities should rethink how funding related to homelessness is spent. Cities and counties spend enormous amounts of money every month and every year on removing encampments and making public spaces inhospitable to those experiencing homelessness. Funding strategies need to be reformed to be more sustainable and to center human health and dignity.
- Some participants expressed the desire to be part of their own solutions—to participate in the maintenance of restrooms and other service facilities. Several participants also explicitly expressed wanting to take care of their needs in a way that is friendly to the environment. Stipends for people experiencing homelessness should be provided for maintaining restrooms and other inclusive solutions that create safe, social centers and invest in the community in more humane and sustainable ways.

Conclusion

The goal of this effort was to elevate the experiences and voices of people experiencing homelessness into planning processes. The survey responses provide insight from people experiencing homelessness about how they are accessing water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes. Their recommendations for improvements provide a roadmap for future interventions to address existing gaps.

Overall, the results of this assessment demonstrate that the human right to water has not been fully realized in the Bay Area for people experiencing homelessness. While this information is specific to the Bay Area and to those who contributed responses, it could also be applicable to unhoused people in other communities across the U.S.

Respondents with access to a home or shelter, even intermittently, or other access to a building with plumbing through relationships, school, or work generally reported more access to water and were less reliant on public spaces or donations, services, and the kindness of others to meet their basic water needs. These findings support the conclusion that homelessness is ultimately the primary barrier to water access for people experiencing homelessness. Therefore, the most effective long-term solution to meet the human right to water for people experiencing homelessness is permanent housing with adequate water and facilities for drinking, hygiene, and sanitation. In the meantime, water remains a human right, and interim solutions to meet these basic needs for people experiencing homelessness must be implemented and expanded.

The most critical next step should be specific follow-up directly with people experiencing homelessness in each locality to understand where and which of these broad facilities and service recommendations are most helpful in different locations, and how these needs differ by living situation, demographics, and other factors. In tandem, any policy and funding restrictions that currently create barriers to filling existing gaps must be critically examined and reformed.



Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Youth summer camp outing to Pescadero Beach, part of Amah Mutsun Tribal Band's traditional territories. The camp teaches Tribal youth (in bright blue shirts) their Native culture, including language and plants. Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon.

Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Partner Regional Findings

The Bay Area DACTI Program, in collaboration with Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Partners, used a community- and Tribal-specific strategy to develop tailored needs assessment surveys for each location. Despite the differences in survey design and methodology, the results showed consistently similar priorities for water management across locations, in particular:

- **Drinking Water:** including water quality, affordability, and related infrastructure
- **Flooding:** including flooding as a result of storms, overflowing creeks and storm drains, and sea level rise
- **Trash and Litter:** including dumping sites and general litter
- **Contamination and Pollution:** including from industrial sites and other point sources as well as nonpoint sources
- **Green Space:** including quantity, accessibility, and quality of recreational green space
- At the local level, the problems experienced by Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes could be seen as isolated incidents but when reviewed holistically, they present a powerful picture of the systemic effects of decades of disinvestment in these communities. These priorities intersect with one another, often as the result of decades of systemic inequality and injustice. Most importantly, all of these issues identified by Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay are intimately connected to public health and safety.



Drinking Water

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area reported concerns about the safety and quality of drinking water from the tap. Some expressed concern about the role that aging infrastructure plays in water quality, and concern about the lack of agency renters have to address infrastructure issues. Many community members reported relying on bottled water for cooking and drinking.

In addition to drinking water quality, many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes also mentioned concerns about water affordability, which has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The unaffordability of water necessitates calculated trade-offs with other needs for those on tight budgets. This is exacerbated for groups with concerns about the quality of their tap water who, in addition to a water bill, buy bottled water for cooking or drinking.



Flooding

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area reported concerns about flooding related to storm surges, sea level rise, and groundwater rise. Flooding also causes a variety of other issues related to:

- 1) **Public Health:** Flood waters mix with contaminated materials that communities and Tribes are exposed to, or must wade through.

- 2) **Transportation Access:** Flooding cuts off access to homes, community centers, grocery stores, doctor's offices, and other important areas.
- 3) **Infrastructure:** Flooding damages or destroys critical infrastructure, including utilities such as electricity and gas, which can endanger public health.

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes also express concern over trash, illegal dumping and storm drains clogging with debris during flood events.



Trash and Litter

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area report concerns about illegal dumping and trash in streets that ends up in storm drains and surrounding water bodies. This concern was often linked to crime, disinvestment, and lack of services as well as to housing insecurity. Trash and litter that backs up storm drains can exacerbate flooding issues and result in Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal members wading through contaminated standing water.

Waterway pollution and contamination – including oil, plastic, and paint - was further detailed under this problem, as Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal members connected the street level trash with their concerns with the pollution and contamination in creeks and other waterways. One community member summed up the health effect on the community, “Fish eat the plastic, and then we eat the fish, and the other animals and everyone gets sick...”.



Industrial Contamination

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area report concerns about industrial and hazardous contamination, and how this contamination and pollution can get into waterways, and ultimately into peoples' bodies through exposure and/or ingestion.

There are many sources of hazardous and industrial contamination and pollution in communities: old gas stations, dry cleaners, and highways contaminate groundwater and pollute stormwater runoff, exposing Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal members to toxins in waterways and possibly leaching into drinking water supplies.

Clogged storm drains from trash and illegal dumping can cause contaminated runoff and flood waters to back up in Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal areas, resulting in residents wading through these contaminated waters to access important services such as grocery stores and work.



Green Space

Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area report concerns about lack of access to green space and nature for recreation. Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal members felt that there were few well-lit, safe, nearby green spaces where children and families can recreate. There is also limited access to existing spaces: folks don't know where to go or how to get there, or parks that are considered safe are too far away. This includes bodies of water such as creeks, waterways, and the ocean.

Many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes that participated in the Bay Area DACTI Program have historically been excluded from green public spaces, and/or have been the last to receive green infrastructure improvements. Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal members mentioned lack of trees and plants along sidewalks in their areas. Lack of greenery is also connected to lower physical and mental health.

More on these regional priorities, including highlights from around the region, can be found in the Regional Connections chapter on page 291.

Best Practices for Making Grant Processes Inclusive

Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the Bay Area have experienced institutional discrimination, disinvestment, and exclusion, and the resulting inequities have had severe health and water impacts, as explored over the course of this report. This inequity has also been implicitly and systematically baked into the way many government agencies undertake planning processes and allocate grant funding.

Throughout the DACTI Program needs assessment process, different Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes reiterated many of the same issues they have experienced with previous grant programs and planning processes and put forward recommendations for addressing them. These best practices are not new, but because they have not been sufficiently implemented or addressed, they are restated in the report. Issues Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes have experienced and recommendations for addressing them are detailed in the Best Practices section of this report, and summarized below:

Address Funding Insufficiency and Inequity

Not enough funding goes to programs that directly benefit Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes. The funding that is available often goes to outside groups, doesn't cover necessities for grassroots work such as 1) stable funding for full time positions, 2) stipends for community members to pay them for their time and expertise, or 3) food and childcare, and there is not much funding available for planning or other activities to cover the gap between identifying needs and developing a shovel-ready implementation project. Additionally, funding programs often aren't structured to address inequities as they exist, and some eligibility metrics are exclusive of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes who would qualify as Disadvantaged by many other metrics. Government agencies and grantmaking institutions should:

Increase the amount of funding for disadvantaged, frontline, and marginalized communities and for Tribes

Begin grant development processes with Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes and support them in leading these programs to ensure funding is allocated to meaningfully address issues

Target grant funding to increase economic impact specifically in Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes

Allow expenses that increase Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal engagement, including food and child care

Ensure Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes can access awarded funding expeditiously through initiatives including advanced payment

Proactively support Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in accessing funding through providing technical support, longer application lead times, and streamlining application processes

Ensure grant programs are inclusive by ensuring qualifying requirements do not unintentionally disqualify some Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes

Build Relationships and Earn Trust

Government agencies have not supported Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to lead the way on engagement with and improvements in their communities. Those involved in decision-making and planning, however well-intentioned, rarely come from the Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes who experience the impacts of the proposed solutions and resulting projects. Many efforts led by outside entities presuppose needs, desired solutions, and preferred ways of engaging. Additionally, technical and outside perspectives are often prioritized over the local expertise and lived experience of Disadvantaged Community and Tribal members in defining the problem and developing solutions. Outside entities will often be paid to engage with and gather ideas from Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes without understanding or addressing the historic context and barriers to participation, and without taking the time and resources to build meaningful partnerships and trust. Finally, many conversations with Outreach Partners have highlighted the importance of explicitly acknowledging the different histories, experiences, and needs of each Disadvantaged Community or Tribe, as well as the importance of self-determination and self-description, rather than the state or other outside actors projecting labels onto these Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes.

Government agencies and other outside entities can work to rectify these past practices with the following:

Take the time to learn about the unique histories and challenges of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes you are working with, don't overpromise, and invest your time to build trust

Do not apply labels: Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes have the right to self determination

Respect Disadvantaged Community and Tribal expertise: it is critical to success

Step back and support by following a Disadvantaged Communities or Tribes' lead

Understand and address barriers to participation, including ensuring materials are translated into relevant languages; that food, childcare, and interpretation are provided at meetings; and outreach materials are disseminated widely, not just through traditional channels

Work with Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners to understand how to engage, develop engagement tools and surveys, and hold meetings in their communities

Follow Tribes' lead on tribal-specific engagement, including ensuring meaningful partnership and endorsement from Tribal leadership

In addition to elevating Best Practices for bringing equity from Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Partners, the report includes administrative lessons learned on funding allocation and distribution, contracting, and invoicing, as well as the amount of time and dedication it takes to engage in this work, for the benefit of other agencies who are engaged in or are working to engage in meaningfully including Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in planning processes.

Next Steps

The needs assessment is one step in understanding and elevating water-related issues from the perspective of the Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes who experience them. Important next steps to follow-up on specific priorities can be found in the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal sections of this report. These next steps are moving forward quickly as Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes work to develop projects for IRWM Implementation and other funding sources to address identified needs. Important alongside project development work is further capacity building and technical assistance to ensure Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes can participate in water-related decision-making and planning processes.

DACTI Program: Next Steps

Following the results of the needs assessments, the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Outreach Partners identified these priority areas for the remainder of the DACTI Program funding:

Tap Water Quality Testing Program

One concern that was expressed by participants from nearly every Disadvantaged Community and Tribe who participated in the DACTI Program was a distrust in tap water. The DACTI Program worked with Disadvantaged Community and Tribal outreach partners to launch a grant funded tap water quality testing effort throughout the Bay Area. Community, Tribal members, and Tribal Organizations were able to test their water and collect detailed feedback on water quality experiences and perceptions to provide comparative information for future educational and advocacy efforts. In addition to supporting Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in the development and implementation of their tap water quality testing programs, the DACTI Program is developing educational information regarding tap water quality, water sources, and in-home filtration options to address unsafe or flawed tap water. A roll-up of these findings and lessons learned will be summarized in a future report.

Grantwriting

Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners also expressed an interest in grant-writing support, particularly to apply for Round 2 of the Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding. The DACTI Program is working to provide individualized grant-writing support to each of the partners, which includes direct grant writing and application review with technical experts. A collated list of funding opportunities is maintained by the DACTI Program Team along with a weekly email highlighting upcoming funding webinars and workshops. These resources will serve as additional supports to help Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners identify funding opportunities outside of IRWM to address identified issues.

Capacity-building

Capacity building is a key facet of the DACTI Program to equip Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners with the knowledge and skills needed to continue participation. The DACTI Program Team created a survey of capacity building needs heard through conversations with Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners. Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners were then asked to rank their needs. The top identified needs were workshops with DWR to understand project eligibility and local project sponsor expectations, graphics/conceptual design support, engineering/design-build support, and an online collaborative forum. The DACTI Program Team launched a shared Google Drive, the DACTI Program Collaborative Space, to serve as the online collaborative forum and a resource sharing space. The DACTI Program Collaborative Space will continue to be available to partners past the end of the grant and the DACTI Program Team is continuing work to load resources into the Drive to address other needs.



Photo courtesy of The Watershed Project

Beyond the DACTI Program

While the DACTI Program is limited in duration and scope, the needs and priorities identified through this assessment remain urgent and unaddressed. The results of this assessment should guide water planning efforts throughout the region. Any implementation should include the following:

Adopting/advocating for wide implementation of Best Practices elevated by Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Partners

The DACTI Program Team encourages the wide implementation of the Best Practices for Equitable and Accessible Grant Programs that have been highlighted again and again by Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners. The Best Practices section lays out issues Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes have experienced with grant programs and planning processes, and best practices for making these processes more equitable.

Continued support after the DACTI Program funding ends

Currently, there is no funding in the pipeline for IRWM after Proposition 1 funding for IRWM Implementation round 2 and the DACTI Program ends.

Through the DACTI Program, the Bay Area IRWM Coordinating Committee governance structure has been updated to include Tribal and Disadvantaged Community members, and the evaluation criteria are being updated in partnership with Disadvantaged Community and Tribal members to ensure projects that meaningfully benefit Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes are funded. These advances will, however, only be able to continue if there is additional funding through IRWM. The Bay Area IRWM is advocating for the continuation of funding for IRWM to support the development of these important relationships and programs.

This Regional Needs Assessment, and the individual needs assessments of the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Outreach Partners, represent just one step to identify and highlight the impacts of historic and current inequities systemically embedded in regional water management in the Bay Area. The real work will happen when regional leaders, government agencies, and utilities address these impacts under the leadership of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes.