# Transforming Shorelines:
## Social and Racial Equity Workbook for Wastewater Agencies

# May 2023

San Francisco ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

BACWA

EBDA EAST BAY DISCHARGERS AUTHORITY

Calm Waters Group

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# 1 Workbook Goals and Use

Wastewater agencies around the San Francisco Bay Area are designing and implementing innovative technologies and strategies to address sea level rise and other climate change adaptation needs, including nature-based solutions. As their work moves beyond the walls of the treatment plant, wastewater agencies are finding that more community interaction and engagement is needed than ever before. These new practices require different skills, including training to support wastewater agencies in adopting best practices for racial and social justice, both within and outside their agencies.

The [Transforming Urban Water (TRUW)](#) initiative advances innovative nature-based solutions for the San Francisco Bay shoreline in conjunction with wastewater treatment facilities. The initiative is led by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, in close collaboration with the East Bay Dischargers Authority, Oro Loma Sanitary District, San Francisco Estuary Institute, and University of California (UC), Berkeley. It grew out of the development of the Oro Loma Living Laboratory, built in 2018 to study the concept of a horizontal levee and its associated benefits.

This workbook summarizes the content from a workshop on *Social and Racial Justice for Wastewater Agencies* held on March 7, 2023 in San Francisco, and provides additional resources and readings on the workshop topics. This workbook is meant to help guide wastewater agencies through key steps to building diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEI) through a more socially and racially equitable culture both within their agencies and in their work with communities. The workbook provides tools, case studies and resources around leadership development, community engagement, equitable policies, and strategies for measuring success.

# 2 Social Equity and the Wastewater Community

Institutional and systemic racism, injustice, and resulting inequities from discriminatory policymaking have had severe impacts on the lives, livelihoods, and health of Indigenous and racialized communities in the U.S., California, and the Bay Area. Racial oppression and segregation in the Bay area took many forms starting in the 1800s, with laws and violence that excluded and targeted Indigenous peoples and took away power and access to not only Indigenous

people, but Japanese farmers, Chinese and other Asian immigrants, African Americans, and Latinx communities. Laws also restricted African Americans and Latinx people from access to housing and economic development opportunities.[1]

Zoning laws that have excluded people based on race also regulate land use by separating residential, commercial, and industrial uses from each other, and give residential zones the greatest protection from land uses that may cause nuisances or hazards to residents. However, racial segregation in housing concentrated people of color in areas closer to the harm of hazardous land uses like heavy industry and hazardous materials facilities such as landfills, incinerators, and industrial plants in their neighborhoods. These disparities catalyzed the environmental justice movement. Racial exclusion in housing has had lasting effects on access to public infrastructure and amenities like parks, health service providers, and other resources. A more detailed account of the effects of racial segregation in the region can be found in Root, Race, and Place by the Othering and Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley.

**Common Wastewater Facility Community Concerns**

Past injustices in zoning and housing have left socially vulnerable communities more exposed to impacts of wastewater facilities. Early environmental justice issues frequently involved the siting of industrial facilities, such as waste disposal facilities and refineries, in low-income communities or areas with a high proportion of minority residents or workers. More recently, concerns around environmental justice have arisen in the context of siting and operations of wastewater treatment plants, and concerns over control of sewer overflows. Other examples of community concerns include:

- Siting and operations of wastewater treatment plants;
- Flooding; control of sewer overflows; basement backups of sewage; groundwater threats;
- Odor;
- Traffic and trucks (e.g. diesel particulate concentrations, cancer risk for toxic air contaminants);
- Toxic releases from facilities (i.e., chlorine gas, hydrogen sulfide)

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[1] Montojo, N., E. Moore, and N. Mauri. 2019. Roots, Race, & Place: A History of Racially Exclusionary Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area. https://belonging.berkeley.edu/rootsraceplace

- emerging chemicals in treated wastewater (e.g., pesticides, fluorinated stain repellants, surfactants from detergents and cleaning products, plastic additives such as bisphenols, flame retardants, and microplastics);
- Biosolids odor and potential contamination; and
- Impacts on fisheries (e.g., subsistence fishing).

As agencies consider broader ways to connect and engage with communities and address social equity within and outside their agencies, tools are needed to do this effectively. Agencies are looking at ways of reaching beyond the plant as an element in pollution prevention projects, nature based solutions, and community supported projects. The workbook below provides tools and concrete examples within and outside the wastewater treatment industry to continue to build on this movement.

# 3  Workshop: Transforming Shorelines Social and Racial Equity

On March 7, 2023, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's [Transforming Urban Water (TRUW)](#) initiative held a workshop focused on supporting Bay Area wastewater agencies in building capacity for integrating social and racial equity into policy and practice. An overview of the workshop discussions and resources are included below. The workshop included presentations on definitions of key terms and a brief history of racial disparities in the United States, interactive breakout group discussion sessions about building a racial equity plan and engaging communities, and a panel discussion to share experiences and lessons learned about advancing social and racial justice in wastewater agencies.

## 3.1 Goals

The Social and Racial Justice Workshop for Wastewater Agencies had the following goals:

- Build the capacity of wastewater agencies in utilizing a social and racial justice lens and learn strategies for how to integrate equity considerations into policies by giving each agency tools that fit their work.

- Provide concrete resources and tools on cultural competency when engaging with surrounding community members and community advocacy organizations.

- Bolster confidence of participants to discuss the intersection of racial justice and community engagement, nature-based shoreline approaches and wastewater treatment.

- Build a common vocabulary on equitable engagement.

- Share case studies of agencies building infrastructure for social/racial justice (e.g., other agencies making cultural shifts).

- Understand how wastewater professionals can solicit information about community needs, priorities, and potential community benefits.

## 3.2 Panelists

> *Panelists answered the question "What have been your successes and failures in advancing social and racial justice at your wastewater agency?"* *Failure is as informative for future progress as success, if not more, and indicative of resource gaps where workforce capacity is needed.*

Presentation highlights from **Joe Neugebauer, West County Wastewater District**. For the full slides, see Appendix C.

- Identify the physical boundaries of your project. Build on the legacy of organizations and planning stewards in the vicinity. Your priority is to serve the whole community and habitat within your boundaries.

- Identify and collaborate with local organizations that have developed a legacy centered on equity, community planning, and environmental stewardship.

- Cultural and environmental programs, along with educational opportunities, can support residents in making informed decisions that speak to community priorities.

- Form workgroups and invite community voices to co-create and embed multi-benefits within projects objectives.

- Explore and test possible connections between employment, housing, and education when considering multi-benefits related to sustainability

and growth of community resources.

- Create systemic change by building strong alliances among local stakeholders including community residents, artists, Indigenous people, and others.

Presentation highlights from **Ronnie Versher, Director of Community Benefits, SFPUC**. For the full slides, see Appendix C.

- Moving beyond acknowledgement of racial and environmental inequity involves developing new policies, strategies, and programs for enacting institutional and structural change. Compliance with specific directives is more effective than looser commitments to equity.

- SFPUC examples of this include the SFPUC [Environmental Justice Policy](#) (2009), [Community Benefits Policy](#) (2011), [Resolution Condemning Systemic Racism & Taking Action to Promote Racial Justice](#) (July 2020), and [SFPUC Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP)](#) (December 2020).

- The REAP contains indicators to measure current conditions and impact, goals and objectives resulting from changes made within programs or policy, and actions to demonstrate how the SFPUC will address racial disparities within the agency as well as in external projects, programs, and policies.

- Community benefits involves more than mitigating the impacts of agency activities and includes a holistic suite of program areas like arts and education, environmental justice and land use, workforce development, partnerships with a community center and/or community groups, and contracting processes that ensure meaningful, positive impacts to service area communities.

- Having Racial Equity Leads at various levels within an organization (agency-wide as well as within internal departments and bureaus) and cross-functional working groups focused on addressing specific social and racial equity issues (i.e., Contracting Equity, Water Power Sewer as Human Rights, Outreach and Engagement) has proven effective.

Racial equity work has often been taken up by BIPOC employees who have other full-time priorities and responsibilities, emphasizing a need for more internal capacity and resourcing (external consultant support and/or the hiring of dedicated racial equity staff) to sustain this work in the long-term.

Presentation highlights from **Heidi Nutters, Senior Program Manager, SF Estuary Partnership**:

- The [Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Project](#) serves as an example of nature-based adaptation with a focus on habitat improvement, treatment of tertiary-treated wastewater, and community engagement.

- Levers for meaningful engagement included: workshops, site visits, relationship building and consultations, and community events centered on community-based monitoring and education.

- Effective nature-based planning promotes and creates space for community collaboration and community monitoring which is attainable by leveraging local organizations and stakeholders.

- Training and capacity building nurture meaningful collaboration. Remember that community voices, guidance, and collaboration are a valuable resource, so offer compensation when feasible.

- Additional resources shared included the [Richmond Shoreline Vision](#) and the North Richmond Community Visioning: Outreach and Survey [Findings Report](#).

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**How do you begin implementing equity goals in an organization or project?**

Panelists shared that there is no beginning, only doing – we all have to begin somewhere in the DEI journey and the most important piece is to start taking action. Agencies can start by building relationships with local organizations serving the community or customer segment of interest.

To get to the next step, agencies can then dive deeper and inquire: what are the perceptions and lived experiences of those our agency seeks to serve? That fundamental question will lead to further research that identifies the challenges the agency may need to address, and it may provide insights on the project constraints and assets the agency can leverage to achieve its project and community goals.

Wastewater agencies can begin to discover a community's definition of equity by building relationships with local organizations while also making an effort to clearly understand the needs of a diverse range of community residents.

The following questions can serve as a starting point for conversations with an agency's team or community residents:

- What are the community conditions or experiences that influence priorities about equity for the people or community that the agency seeks to serve? In what context is equity most important to them (e.g., water quality, wastewater treatment systems, or climate resilience)?
- How can your wastewater agency align its policies and projects to address equity concerning the people and communities of interest?
- Why are those equity concepts meaningful to the agency, project, and community?

These fundamental questions will lead to further exploration and research, and may help identify systemic challenges, and provide insights about project constraints that can hinder future progress or agency assets that can be leveraged to achieve project goals.

## 3.3 Racial Equity Framework

A Racial Equity Framework helps guide organizations and agencies in bringing equity into their strategy, internal and external operations, and long-term sustainability to achieve progress. Components of the Framework are provided below. Additional resources are provided throughout this workbook to help guide wastewater agencies through this process of developing their own Racial Equity Framework with questions and relevant examples to the wastewater industry.

**The Foundation**
- Vision, Strategy, and Business Impact: Develop a strong diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) vision, mission, and strategy that aligns with organizational goals.

- Leadership Accountability: Leaders are change agents and role models for DEI. They inspire others to take individual responsibility and become role models themselves.

- DEI Structure and Implementation: The most senior person responsible for DEI is an equal and influential partner on the senior leadership team. Integrate DEI into core organizational structures, policies, systems, and practices.

**Internal Factors**

- Recruitment: The organization enhances its efforts to attract diverse and underrepresented employees by implementing practices that minimize or remove bias.

- Advancement and Retention: Employees with a diversity of racial identities hold positions at all levels to ensure equitable representation. The pool of candidates in the organization's succession plan is diverse and prioritizes underrepresented groups, so that as staff retire, opportunities exist for staff from underrepresented groups to take on these positions.

- Job Design, Classification, and Compensation: Regular reviews of pay equity are conducted and discrepancies between underrepresented groups and the dominant group are eliminated.

- Work-Life Integration, Flexibility, and Benefits: The organization's policies and practices regarding benefits and work-life balance meet the organization's commitment to psychological safety and respect for human rights.

**External Factors**

- Community, Government Relations, and Philanthropy: The organization helps its community by engaging and supporting groups that have been historically disadvantaged.

- Services: The organization successfully leverages diverse teams, including customers, partners, the community, and other stakeholders to improve its services.

- Marketing and Customer Service: The organization leverages the marketing, sales, distribution, and customer service expertise of diverse staff.

- Responsible Sourcing: The organization has embedded DEI in its responsible and ethical sourcing as is reflected by its policies, systems, and practices, including but not limited to purchasing equipment and contracts from disadvantaged, minority, and local businesses.

**Sustainability**

- Assessment, Measurement, and Research: Regular assessments are conducted quarterly and annually to measure success and progress.

- DEI Communications: The organization uses bold and transparent communication in naming and dealing with challenging issues such as

racism, sexism, homophobia, privilege, toxic masculinity, and white supremacy.

- <u>DEI Learning and Development:</u> Learning and education addresses racism, anti-racism, sexism, white supremacy, privilege, internalized oppression, classism/casteism, homophobia, transphobia, religious bias, disabilities, mental health awareness, and other issues.

- <u>Connecting DEI Sustainability:</u> The organization takes a leadership role in supporting the connection between DEI and sustainability initiatives by being a champion in their community and with other local and regional sustainability initiatives.

## 3.4 Prerequisites for Community Engagement

Wastewater agencies can improve internal operations to create pathways towards meaningful community engagement and other community benefits in several focus areas. Those areas include matching workforce representation with community diversity; elevating work cultures to reduce discomfort around racial equity topics; strengthening relationships to grow employee capacity to innovate solutions and solve problems; and cultivating cross-communication within an agency and between departments.

The focus areas above are a prerequisite, because if a wastewater agency is not aligned and guided by racial equity principles and community understanding and empathy, employees may confront internal barriers to meaningfully engage with communities of interest. Conversely, when an agency's internal structure upholds racial equity principles, then its employees will have team support, tools, and policies to enforce DEI principles throughout project cycles.

Personal identity and positionality on different topic areas influence how each person interprets information and behaves. To address these focus areas, agencies can collect monitoring data, build opportunities for racially and socio-economically diverse leadership, create feedback loops and accountability metrics, like key performance indicators (KIPs) to gauge an agency's overall long-term performance, co-design core values with stakeholders, and validate and integrate the experiential knowledge of community residents.

The resources below are organized to guide an agency's progress to bring about transformational change around DEI. When an agency can clearly identify its needs for improvement, understanding systems and how to alter them by way of community engagement, change flows efficiently and becomes most effective.

## 4      DEI in Leadership and Policy

One of the first strategies to address DEI is to lead by example and to set the tone for staff and programs within the wastewater agency. To effectively achieve this requires diverse leadership and workforce, broad policies on DEI, a vision and action plan, and a budget that takes these into account.

The demographics of people who serve on Boards and in leadership positions of utilities often do not resemble the customers they serve.   In racially diverse and highly educated cities, the composition of elected officials does not often reflect the gender and racial diversity of the municipality ([Bay Area, California](#) data). How public utility leaders work to increase representation in leadership roles, recruit and hire diverse candidates, and then retain diverse talent is approached differently in every community. Advancing DEI initiatives can require revisiting long-standing practices.

DEI is both internal and external. Agencies must remember to invest in their teams. When employees don't feel that their organization truly values their thoughts, ideas, commitments, and contributions, they will eventually shut down and possibly seek employment elsewhere. An inclusive workplace doesn't just have a diversity of people represented; it also has a variety of people engaged, included, empowered, and trusted by the organization.

An equity lens is a process that can be used to examine the impact of the design and implementation of policies, procedures, or practices on underserved and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers. Examples of this are provided below.

## 4.1 The Five Levels of DEI

One way to begin to look at your agency's DEI journey is through a qualitative evaluation. The Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks ([GDEIB](#)) guide

includes a checklist to achieve DEI across each of 15 categories of business operations. For each category, the benchmarks are divided into five levels that indicate progress toward the best practices in that category:

- Level 1: Inactive - No DEI work has begun; diversity, equity, and inclusion are not part of organizational goals.

- Level 2: Reactive - A compliance-only mindset; actions are taken primarily to comply with relevant laws and social pressures. Doing the bare minimum.

- Level 3: Proactive - A clear awareness of the value of DEI; starting to implement DEI systemically.

- Level 4: Progressive - Implementing DEI systemically and showing improved results and outcomes beyond what is required or expected.

- Level 5: Best Practice - Demonstrating current global best practices in DEI ; exemplary.

## 4.2 Tips on Building An Equity Vision and Strategy

To move DEI into an agency's vision and strategy for equity, the following commitments should be made:

- DEI is embedded in organizational culture as a core value, a source of innovation, and a means to achieve sustainability and success.
- The organization is proactive and responsive to DEI challenges that are faced by society, including but not limited to political and economic trends, and recognizes that organizations are microcosms of the societies in which they operate.

- Leaders are held accountable for implementing the organization's DEI vision, setting goals, achieving results, and being role models.

- The organization provides visible, dedicated support and structure with authority and budget to effectively implement DEI.

A useful strategy to set the vision for DEI is to reflect on the following questions:

- What can racial equity look like in the workplace?

- What would it feel like?

- How can leaders in the organization foster racial equity?

- What behaviors, policies, and practices would have to change to enable racial equity in the organization?

- How does the organization engage with the community it serves?

- Does the organization use language that's accessible to the community and culturally competent?

> **Holding Leadership Accountable**
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> To help hold leadership accountable, agencies can create and utilize task forces that have the capacity, expertise, and experience to conduct racial equity impact assessments to identify and propose structural changes to institutional laws, regulations, policies, and practices that have perpetuated inequitable sharing of power, access, and opportunity for underserved communities.

- Does the organization partner with community-based organizations?

## 4.3 Addressing Workforce Needs

A diverse workforce, representative of the communities that agencies serve, with a variety of lived experiences, knowledge of local communities, and understanding of how to build trust in neighborhoods are critical preconditions for agencies to address contemporary environmental issues.

Cities and communities across the country are facing staffing shortages for the operation and maintenance of essential drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Approximately one-third of drinking water and wastewater operators in the U.S. will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years and the water sector has been facing challenges with recruitment and retention of the skilled workers required.[2]

Many of the careers in the water and wastewater industries have low-educational barriers to entry, and the openings are often permanent, civil service positions. When paired with strong community partnerships and intentional strategies to address barriers to employment for hard-to-serve communities, these training programs can help reduce income inequality and address the shrinking middle class.

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[2] Kane, J. W., &; Tomer, A. (2018). (rep.). Renewing the Water Workforce: Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity (pp. 1–72). Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Policy Program. https://www.brookings.edu/research/water-workforce/

**BAYWORK Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Water Sector Workforce Initiative** includes a presentation by Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Sonoma Water, Valley Water. BAYWORK is a workforce collaborative group representing water and wastewater industries in the Bay Area.

The Bay Area Consortium for Water and Wastewater Education (BACCWE) is a group that provides scholarships for students interested in the water and wastewater sector. Students can take water and wastewater-related classes at community colleges and get fully reimbursed for the course fee. BACCWE is looking to expand its services to identify other areas where they can support the development of a diverse and robust workforce.

The SFPUC has long been a national leader in offering career development and workforce training programs. Through initiatives such as the Sewer System Improvement Program Cityworks, Project Pull and the Jobs Training and Opportunities Program, the agency creates meaningful job training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents.

**CalEPA Practices to Advance Racial Equity in Workforce Planning** promotes promising practices that may be applied in support of increasing equity in hiring, promotion and retention practices and policies. The document includes best practices around broadening the scope of outreach to target applicants; hiring candidates with more diverse skill sets; and increasing objectivity in hiring. Also included are longer-term practices focused on retention, training and development (promotion).

## 4.4 Impact Analysis and Budgeting

One of the most powerful demonstrations of equity is inclusion in the budgeting process. One way to accomplish this is through participatory budgeting, where the community served by and/or located near wastewater infrastructure gets to decide on how a slice of the budget is spent. An even more sustainable approach is to integrate measurable equity strategies and performance measures into the capital improvement budget.

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**Participatory Budgeting to Empower Communities**

Participatory budgeting is among the fastest growing forms of public engagement in local governance, having expanded to over 46 communities in the U.S. including Boston, New York, San Francisco, and Canada.[3] Participatory budgeting cracks open the closed-door process of fiscal decision-making in cities, letting citizens vote on exactly how government money is spent in their communities. Decades of under-participation in local processes and a history of underrepresentation of marginalized groups have often led to mistrust between residents and agencies.

Participatory Budgeting acknowledges that a rift exists and tries to build trust with community so that residents feel heard. It empowers community members to take ownership of their communities by identifying what they see as the most pressing needs in their neighborhoods. Participatory budgeting works simply by allocating a modest set amount focused primarily to capital projects and letting those residents dictate how best to spend the money on community needs.

A number of cities set aside American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which included Infrastructure investments related to water, wastewater and broadband.[4] Many cities elected to set aside a portion of their budgets to support participatory budgeting, including Marin County, CA; Vallejo, CA; San Francisco, CA; Durham, NC; and Seattle, WA. This action may be more appropriate for agencies that are embedded into a City or County government, rather than special wastewater districts.

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Another way is to look across the affordability of programs for underserved communities and align costs with community socioeconomic status.[5] In California the primary approach is through the provision of wastewater bill reimbursements by the State based on income levels. The California Department of Community Services and Development is leading the distribution of federal funds from the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) that provides financial assistance to low-income Californians to help manage their

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[3] https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/case-studies/

[4] https://www.pbevanston.org/what-is-pb

[5] Note: Local governments that provide utility services sometimes structure their rates so that regular clients subsidize service to low income clients ("lifeline" rates). Such an arrangement is prohibited under Proposition 218's requirement that the fee charged to a parcel not exceed the cost of providing service to that parcel. The State of California provides rebates and other programs, and some agencies find a way to offset rates for low income customers using revenue streams other than rates.

residential wastewater and water utility costs. LIHWAP allows for full payments of past-due water bills to ensure continuing connection to services—and help with payment of current bills to eligible households. However, this program ends December 31, 2023.

Cities in California with other sources of low-income wastewater rate assistance include Santa Rosa, East Bay MUD, Chino Hills, Monterey, Sacramento. The City of Santa Rosa—Help to Others (H2O) Program hopes to provide assistance to 1,000 customers per year, each of whom would receive 50% off the fixed charge for water and wastewater service (equivalent to about $17 per month). The program is funded by leasing state-owned property for cell phone towers and by voluntary, tax-deductible donations from customers. The city partnered with a local community group—Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County—to help connect the program with customers and evaluate their eligibility.

## 4.5 Developing Your Action Plan

Once an agency has completed the above steps, it's time to put it all together into an action plan. Below is a self-assessment for the development of your organization's action plan, and an example from EBMUD's Equity Toolkit.

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**Questions to ask leadership when developing a DEI Strategy**

*Leadership*

- Has your agency or city you are part of adopted a proclamation, resolution or other public statement committing to addressing racial/social equity? Does your municipality have a racial equity policy?

- Does your municipality have an internal structure whose goal is to address issues of racial equity (e.g., Equity Committee, Equity Officer, etc.)?

- Does your municipality have a written racial equity plan with clear actions, timelines, people responsible for each action, indicators of progress and processes for monitoring?

*Workforce*

- Do you collect and review data on racial, ethnic and linguistic makeup of your workforce?

- Does your municipality have written procedures to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of people of color? When filling senior positions, do you promote from within or prefer lateral hires?

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- Does your municipality have an internal committee/position dedicated to promoting workforce diversity and inclusion?
- Are racial equity and cultural competency trainings made available to your workforce?
- Do employee performance appraisals include progress on racial equity goals?
- How do you reach diverse candidates? Are employee referrals hindering growth of diverse groups?
- At what stage of the selection process are diverse candidates disproportionately falling out? Are the preferred qualifications discouraging diverse applicants who may be qualified?
- Do you recognize the barriers for advancement? How do you keep hold of your best talent?

*Budgeting*

- Does your municipality have a process to consider budgetary decisions through a racial equity lens?
- Does your municipality have a Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business policy to guide your procurement and contracting processes?
- Does your municipality implement procurement and contracting processes that provide more access and opportunity for communities of color?

*Adapted from Self-Assessment tool created by the Coalition of Communities of Color*

EBMUD's Equity Toolkit highlighted below includes DEI resolutions, audits, employee surveys, and goals and outcomes around DEI. For additional examples of concrete policy and budgetary changes local elected officials have made to prioritize racial equity in their cities, towns and villages see **National League of Cities: Racial Equity Initiatives, Policies, and Resolutions from Across the U.S.** Examples cut across the multiple functions of local government including budget decisions, ordinances and other high-level decisions that are shaped by cities' commitments and investment of political will and resources. The components in these examples can be embedded into your action plan.

**Equity Assessment in Practice:**
**EBMUD Equity Toolkit**

**East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) DEI Strategic Plan**: In 2022 EBMUD released a plan for addressing DEI across all programs (long term supply, water quality, capital projects, budget and contracts, workforce development and community engagement) focused on the pillars of leadership commitment, workforce diversity, inclusive culture, supplier diversity, and social responsibility. The plan builds off existing efforts such as their workforce development programs, the Contract Equity Program, Affinity Groups, and public outreach for projects including internships for youth from underserved communities. The Plan includes Board Resolutions outlining racial equity strategies and the outcomes of a Cultural Audit. In July 2021, EBMUD established the new Office of Diversity, Equity, and Culture (ODEC) and includes governance by a Diversity Committee, Affinity Groups, Equity Core Team, Contract Equity Office, and Values Advocates.

A key element to the evaluation process is the implementation of the DEI Dashboard. The DEI Dashboard will be an evolving tool intended to guide management in making business decisions with an equity lens. EBMUD conducted the first evaluation in early 2023 by an external consultant. The Equity Core Team supports the process, with an initial focus on the departments: Hiring and Recruitment, Promotion and Retention, Contracts and Procurement, Capital Improvement Projects, and Community Engagement.

For each program EBMUD's Equity Core Team asks the questions below.

1. Benefits and Burdens: Who would benefit or be burdened by a policy, proposal, program, or project?

2. Understanding Data: What does the data tell us about who is affected? Specifically, look at race, income, language, ability, gender, and neighborhood.

3. Community Engagement: How do we engage those who are not often represented in decision-making or most impacted by inequities?  Do we engage people early enough in the process to have an impact?

4. Decision-Making: Who sits at and is missing from the decision-making table? Who has the power to invite or participate? Whose interests are being prioritized?

5. Implementation: How can we advance equity through the goals of a policy, proposal, procedure, program, or project?

6. Unintended Consequences: What unintended consequences might be produced?

7. Accountability and Communications: How will we be accountable to and communicate with the community?

# 5  Community Engagement and Understanding

Correcting historical environmental burdens begins with effective community engagement, building trust with underserved and disadvantaged communities, and through working relationships through a trauma-informed lens (empathetic understanding of challenges endured by different communities of color). Engaging and working intentionally within BIPOC communities and with community-based organizations in decision-making, developing racial equity action plans, and managing available resources and programs that directly affect these communities are important strategies for overcoming environmental justice challenges and empowering impacted communities.[6]

When considering the "community", wastewater agencies should look beyond the plant fenceline to the broader community served, including the sewershed, the buildings served by the systems, the treatment facilities, and the discharge locations.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) has adopted the "Utility of the Future" concept where agencies take on broader stewardship roles for their communities and watersheds and build local economies through creation of jobs and actions to foster higher tax revenue. "NACWA's vision is that adoption and proliferation of these community service initiatives will become the norm, not the exception, and prompt widespread implementation of sustainable policies that will become the core of every clean water utility's mission."

Resources for understanding the needs and characteristics of communities in the Bay area include the Bay Area Equity Atlas, SFEP Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Program Regional Needs Assessment, and San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Adapting to Rising Tides Program Community Vulnerability Mapping and Equity Resources.

Tools such as community asset mapping and stakeholder mapping are useful for discovering community strengths and opportunities for partnerships when

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[6] Equitable Community Engagement Plan, Boston Public Health Commission, 2019. Pages 1-13.
https://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/racialjusticeandhealthequity/Pages/Community-
Engagement.aspx#:~:text=What%20is%20Equitable%20Community%20Engagement,to%20achieve%20an%20equitable%20outcome.; "A Guide to Using the Community Engagement Framework," New York City Department of Health, accessed July 25, 2022, https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/dpho/race-to-justice-action-kit-guide-community-engagement-framework.pdf

information is not already available or is incomplete. To understand communities effectively, agencies can work to understand the needs of the community, partner with community organizations who serve as trusted messengers, and explore the role of community benefits.

Engagement can be considered in all aspects of planning and operations, including:

- Identifying community impacts and needs (e.g., community advisors);
- Pre-treatment, pollution prevention programs;
- Locational permitting; siting; benefits and impacts in service area, beyond the plant;
- Equity screening for capital improvement projects;
- Monitoring, operations, and remedial decisions;
- Contracting and workforce development; and
- Regulatory policies (e.g., Water Board Racial Equity Plan & US EPA policies, Justice40).

## 5.1 Role of Community and Building Trust/Transparency

Agencies can take the time to learn about the unique histories and challenges in their community, embrace transparency and don't overpromise, and invest time to build trust. Building trust often requires meeting communities where they are (e.g., materials are translated into relevant languages; food, childcare, and interpretation are provided at meetings; and outreach materials are disseminated widely), translating community priorities into policies and strategies, and consistently coming back to the community. Ideally the community is engaged during the idea development phase, project concept, and through implementation. One approach to understanding community engagement opportunities and establishing shared goals with the community is the Spectrum of Community Engagement.

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership[7] is based on the Public Participation Spectrum created by the International Association for Public Participation. The goal of using the Spectrum is to identify best practices for deepening community understanding. Opportunities to move along the

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[7] https://movementstrategy.org/resources/the-spectrum-of-community-engagement-to-ownership/
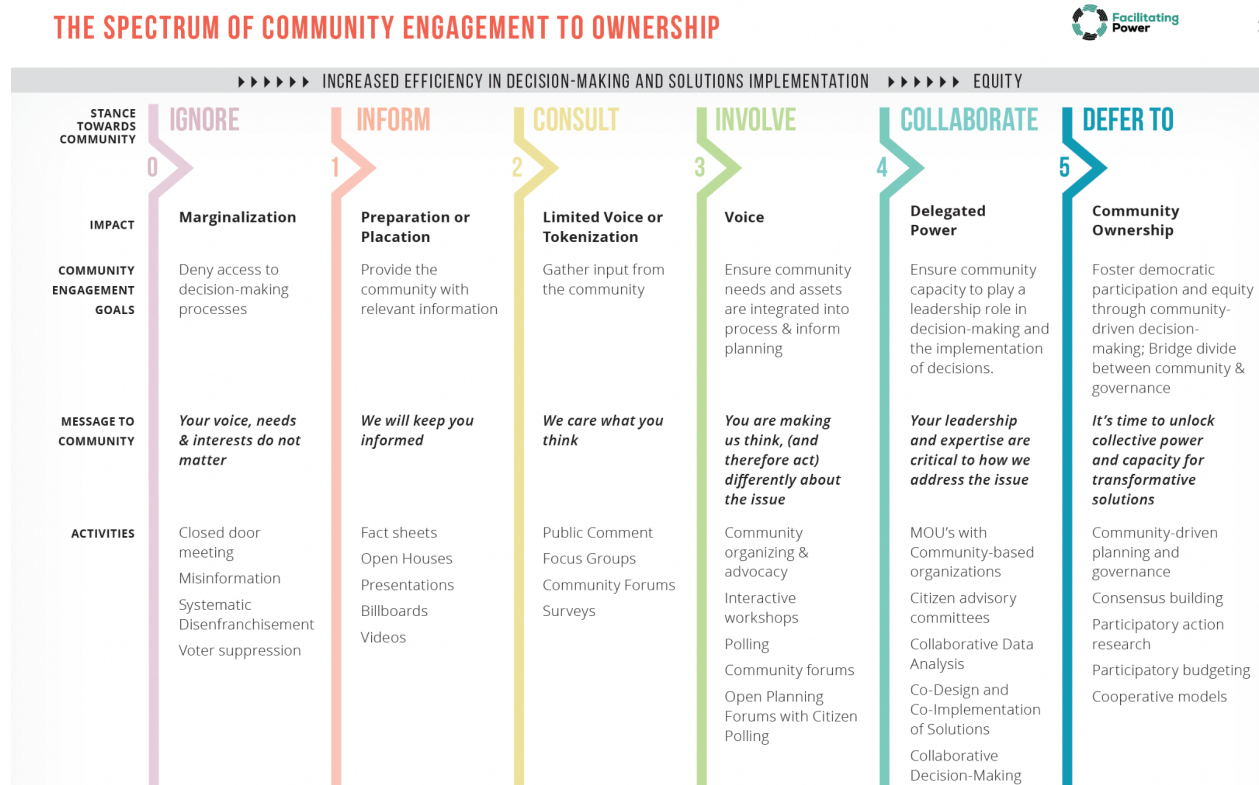
spectrum typically advance as trust is built between the community and the project proposers.

The ideal balance of community engagement and project development occurs when projects are co-designed with a broad swath of community representatives from conceptualization to implementation and stewardship. Through deep and meaningful engagement, agencies can reduce conflict, meet community goals early on in the process, and infuse technical knowledge into the community. Achieving the end point of community ownership takes time and engagement over the course of multiple projects to build trust, and to develop a set of shared goals and priorities. It is this continued engagement that leads to successful and sustained community projects.

The figure below highlights tools traditionally used by agencies to engage the public (e.g., activities). Many organizations traditionally shared their final plan for a capital project to the public as a presentation or fact sheet, yet this did not provide the opportunity for the community to be part of the solution. Deep community engagement always takes more time and more resources, but the value of becoming seen as part of the community cannot be overstated. Even moving slightly to the right on the engagement spectrum figure below can build trust with the community. Examples include:

- Involve Stage: Instead of presenting the final project, agencies can host community forums and participatory workshops at the concept or 30% design stage to discover opportunities to refine the designs.

- Collaborate Stage: Instead of relying solely on a Board of Directors, agencies can create a Citizens Advisory Committee that has the power to make decisions and give substantive feedback on strategies and projects (e.g., voting on capital projects). Another option is to contract with community based organizations to help understand and incorporate community needs into agency plans and policies.

- Defer to Stage: The most difficult practice for agencies is deferring completely to communities, which may be limited by existing policies, regulations, and engineering requirements. However, agencies do not need to open up the entire process but can allow the community to lead components. For example, participatory budgeting is a strategy to

empower communities. Another option is to partner on a community-led grant for a project where your agency's skills would be beneficial, such as a nature-based sea level rise project or a green infrastructure project in a community where your conveyance pipes or facilities are located.

## THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP

Facilitating Power

▶▶▶▶▶▶ INCREASED EFFICIENCY IN DECISION-MAKING AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTATION ▶▶▶▶▶▶ EQUITY

| STANCE TOWARDS COMMUNITY | IGNORE 0 | INFORM 1 | CONSULT 2 | INVOLVE 3 | COLLABORATE 4 | DEFER TO 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IMPACT | Marginalization | Preparation or Placation | Limited Voice or Tokenization | Voice | Delegated Power | Community Ownership |
| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS | Deny access to decision-making processes | Provide the community with relevant information | Gather input from the community | Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process & inform planning | Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in decision-making and the implementation of decisions. | Foster democratic participation and equity through community-driven decision-making; Bridge divide between community & governance |
| MESSAGE TO COMMUNITY | *Your voice, needs & interests do not matter* | *We will keep you informed* | *We care what you think* | *You are making us think, (and therefore act) differently about the issue* | *Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue* | *It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions* |
| ACTIVITIES | Closed door meeting<br>Misinformation<br>Systematic Disenfranchisement<br>Voter suppression | Fact sheets<br>Open Houses<br>Presentations<br>Billboards<br>Videos | Public Comment<br>Focus Groups<br>Community Forums<br>Surveys | Community organizing & advocacy<br>Interactive workshops<br>Polling<br>Community forums<br>Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling | MOU's with Community-based organizations<br>Citizen advisory committees<br>Collaborative Data Analysis<br>Co-Design and Co-Implementation of Solutions<br>Collaborative Decision-Making | Community-driven planning and governance<br>Consensus building<br>Participatory action research<br>Participatory budgeting<br>Cooperative models |

# 5.2 Working with and Finding CBOs

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) often serve as the interface between community needs and funding resources. They are trusted anchors in communities and seek to elevate community voices and priorities. Collaboration with CBOs is a critical component for meaningful engagement, yet CBOs are often mission focused and are stretched thin with existing efforts. Agencies partnering with CBOs should consider strategies that work to align agency needs and community priorities and seek to develop trust and reciprocity. Community and stakeholder mapping can identify smaller organizations in your community.

BCDC developed an interactive CBO map for the Bay Area that can be used to discover CBOs and to get a sense of their areas of focus. The map allows users

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to draw an area and download a list of CBOs that work in the region, and the map of socially vulnerable communities.

> **Evaluating Your Community Engagement Practices**
>
> - Are communications and materials assessed for racial and social equity and reviewed to reflect your community's diversity and voices?
> - Do you collect racial, ethnic, and linguistic data on your constituents?
> - Do you provide language interpreter/translator services for people who speak languages other than English?
> - Do you measure constituent use of, and satisfaction with your services? If so, is your data segmented by race and ethnicity?
> - Does your agency have formal partnerships with organizations representing community residents of color and socially vulnerable communities to secure feedback and advice on racial and social equity-related and other issues?
> - Does your agency allocate resources for engagement and outreach in communities of color and socially vulnerable communities?
>
> Additional best practices for engagement for the Bay area include the [Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) Community Engagement Best Practices.](#)

[Bayview-Hunters Point Environmental Justice Task Force](#) is a community-led, multi-stakeholder collaborative effort initiated by Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice and is part of the IVAN (Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods) Network. The Task Force brings together residents with community, environmental justice and health organizations, businesses and government agencies in a multi-stakeholder, problem-solving task force to remedy environmental pollution problems in the low-income community of color of Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco. The [bvhp-ivan.org](#) website enables community members to file complaints and tips about pollution problems such as illegal dumping, odors and air and water pollution including from wastewater facilities which are then discussed with government agencies and businesses during monthly community-led meetings with agencies.

[SFPUC Citizens Advisory Committee](#) includes resident representatives from every district in San Francisco. The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) provides recommendations to the General Manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and the Board of Supervisors regarding the agency's long-term strategic, financial and capital improvement plans. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#)). Candidates must demonstrate

one or more of the following qualifications: represent a community, business, environmental, or environmental justice organization, or have demonstrated knowledge, skill or experience in a field related to public utilities, environmental justice or environmental science.

## 6 Measuring Success

To measure progress, when agencies are in the process of setting goals, they will need to determine how to measure the achievement of those goals. A good practice is to start with the process your organization currently uses to measure other organizational goals. For example, if your organization uses an employee opinion survey, client satisfaction survey, or employee engagement survey, you may want to use the GDEIB to craft wording for some of the survey items. The GDEIB includes a checklist to achieve DEI across each of 15 categories of business operations, including Assessment, Measurement, and Research. Key questions in the checklist address:

- Inactive (Level 1): There are no assessments to gather information about underrepresented employee or customer needs and concerns. There is no effort to evaluate or monitor diversity-related issues or DEI progress.

- Reactive (Level 2): Representation of groups of some diversity dimensions are monitored, but only if required by law. Measurements are primarily based on past indicators, such as turnover, lawsuits, and complaints.

- Proactive (Level 3):  Employees regard DEI measurements as credible and they participate willingly in assessment, measurement, and research. Cultural audits, assessments, and surveys take into account issues as language, education levels, complexity, and accessibility. Data are sorted by self-identified characteristics and diversity dimensions to increase an organization's learnings about employee groups. The organization regularly conducts a census of employee demographics and monitors representation throughout the organization. The principles of self-identification for use in collection of employee information is clear, applied ethically, and agreed-upon by all impacted parties.

- Progressive (Level 4): Integrated, multiple approaches to monitoring and evaluating DEI goals to track impact, outcomes, and effectiveness, including measuring employees on their performance related to DEI. DEI measurement is integrated into assessment tools, such as engagement

surveys or cultural audits. Information from all assessments from employees, former employees, and customers shape future DEI initiatives.

- Best practices (Level 5): Regularly conducts and reports on DEI assessments.

After measuring your current state, determine time intervals to repeat the cycle (12 months, 18 months, etc.) and assess progress. Patience is required as it can take a year or longer to show demonstrable progress, and managing expectations with internal and external stakeholders is critical, as is transparency and humility.

To support transparency, a dashboard could be developed that includes an equitable data analysis framework and methodology to collect, track, and report disaggregated data such as race, ethnicity, gender, income, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and parent/caregiver status to identify root causes of racial and social disparities and to inform evidenced-based equity action plans and policy solutions that effectively address disparities. The results and conclusions should be reported to the public in a transparent manner that meaningfully captures racial, social, and economic metrics and outcomes.

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**Why do we disaggregate data?**

Racial and social disparities and inequities can only be eliminated if high-quality information is available to track status and progress on DEI. Disaggregating diversity data means to look underneath the data, and to ask meaningful questions of your data in order to get the real story and the root causes of a lack of diversity and equity. You can't address what you don't identify as a challenge or issue, and robust data on DEI help to illuminate pressing problems in talent management and social impact.

Disaggregated data is data that can be broken down and analyzed by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, income, veteran status, age, or other key demographic variables. In the workplace, the data should be broken down by pay, employment type, and classifications. For instance, doing so can help managers understand if certain demographics are disproportionately promoted or paid higher salaries.

By disaggregating data, organizations and agencies can better discern which employees are impacted and more precisely target equitable workforce development policies. People can use disaggregated data to provide clarity in places and policy areas where disparities have been suspected but not

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identified, can allow people to better see themselves in the data so they can understand their challenges and opportunities and advocate for themselves, and can promote a more just and equitable distribution of resources.

**SFPUC Racial Equity Progress Reports** are annual reports that measure progress towards established equity goals. The reports include self-evaluation on leadership, hiring and recruitment; retention and promotion; discipline and separation; job mobility; culture of belonging and inclusion; Boards and Commissions; and resourcing. They also include workforce and board/commission demographic data and a Budget Equity Tool.

**Seattle PUC Racial Equity Toolkit** includes forms/tools to address equity in Stakeholder Analysis/Mapping; Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Plan Development; Management Discussions and Decision Making; Master or Comprehensive Plan Development; Policy, Procedure, Director's Rule, or Code Development; and Service, Project or Program Development.

**Operationalizing Equity for Integrated Water Resources Management** provides a series of equity metrics for water resources projects related to project timing by providing questions to ask, examples, and equity linkages:

- Before a "project" begins: Building context, Identifying structural issues, institutional constraints and process, stakeholder identification, public participation, logistics, and availability versus accessibility.

- Project planning: problem definition, objective setting, development of alternatives, consequence assessment, and trade-off assessment.

- Project execution: design, construction and implementation, operations and maintenance, and monitoring.

  Life cycle management: adaptive management and long-term change.

# 7 Suggested Topics for Future Trainings

A number of topics emerged at the workshop for future exploration. These included:

- DEI best practices
  - Inclusive Leadership & Creating Psychologically Safe Workspaces
  - Diversity Recruitment Practices
  - Implicit Bias
  - Microaggressions
  - Allyship towards the BIPOC community
  - Allyship towards the LGBTQ+ community
  - Allyship towards the community of people with disabilities
- Policy Development
- Community Projects and Pollution Prevention examples
- Building Trust with Community Based Organizations
- Budgeting and Resource Allocation
- Measuring Success

# Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Developing a shared language for DEI is an important step for any organization. Below are useful DEI definitions, borrowed from a number of sources. This list is not exhaustive and should be built upon as the state of practice grows.

**Ally**: Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, ag e, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

**Anti-racism**: An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional, and systemic/structural racism. Because racism occurs at all levels of society and can function to produce and maintain exclusionary "levels," antiracism education/activism is necessary aspects of society. It does not happen exclusively in the workplace, in the classroom, or in selected aspects of our lives.

**Bias**: A form of prejudice that results from one's need to quickly classify individuals into categories.

**BIPOC**: BIPOC is an acronym for 'Black, Indigenous, People of Color,' and it is meant to unite all people of color in the work for liberation while intentionally acknowledging that not all people of color face the same levels of injustice. While "POC" or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities.

**Cisgender**: A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.

**Discrimination**: The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories.

**Diversity**: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status,

language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

**Environmental Justice**: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.

**Environmental Racism**: Any policy, practice or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups or communities based on race or color.

**Equity**: The just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

**Equity Lens**: An equity lens is a process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design implementation of policies on underserved and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.

**Ethnicity**: A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

**Gender Identity**: Distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Inclusion**: Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**Inclusive Language**: Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equitable opportunities.

**Indigenous Land Acknowledgement**: A land acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous people as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous people and their traditional territories. It is important to understand the history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past

tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.

**Intersectionality**: Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

**LGBTQIA+**: An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. The "plusfluid" symbol is used to represent those who do not identify with one of the letters in the acronym (for example, those who identify as pansexual or as gender neutral).

**Marginalization**: A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or "mainstream" society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status. To what extent such populations are marginalized, however, is context specific and reliant on the cultural organization of the social site in question.

**Multicultural Competency**: A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from different cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.

**Nonbinary**: used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the margins of gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman. Some nonbinary people may feel comfortable within trans communities and find this is a safe space to be with others who don't identify as cis, but this isn't always the case.

**Oppression**: Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

**People of Color**: Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of

color" (not to be confused with the pejorative "colored people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While "people of color" can be a politically useful term and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., "non-White"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

**Prejudice**: A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

**Privilege**: Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g., white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

**Racial Equity**: Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted how one fares. Racial equity is also a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.

**Racial Inequity**: Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing, such as the percentages of each ethnic group in terms of dropout rates, single family home ownership, access to healthcare, etc.

**Racial Justice**: The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity— goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

**Racism**: Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

**Structural Racism:** The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics, and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

**White Supremacy:** White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

# Appendix B Additional Resources

## Resources to Learn More About Social Equity in the San Francisco Bay Region

[Pollution and Prejudice: Redlining and Environmental Injustice in California](#): CalEPA published a storymap about the intersection of redlining and environmental justice to help people understand the role of government in perpetuating institutional and structural racism. Redlining is a practice through which federal and local governments and financing entities systematically denied public and private financial services to Black people and other people of color.

**[Bay Area Equity Atlas](#)** is a comprehensive data support system from the San Francisco Foundation, PolicyLink, and the USC Equity Research Institute to track the state of equity and equip community leaders with data to inform solutions for inclusive prosperity. The resource includes data/maps on People, Place, and Power indicators: Nativity and Ancestry, College Readiness, Educational Attainment, Disconnected Youth, Employment and Earnings Growth, Housing Burden, Extreme Commutes, Gentrification, Diversity of Elected Officials, and Economic Gains

**[San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Adapting to Rising Tides Program Community Vulnerability Mapping and Equity Resources](#)**: BCDC developed maps to better understand how socio-economic indicators and contamination burdens contribute to a community's vulnerability. Available metrics include renters, people younger than 5 years old, % People under 200% poverty rate, % People not U.S. citizens, % Households without a vehicle, % Households with 1 or more persons with a disability, % Single parent families, % People of Color, % Households with 1 or more people 65 years and over, % Limited English speaking household, % People 25 years and older without a high school degree, and % Households spending greater than 50% income on housing. The maps were supported by BCDC's staff report [Toward Equitable Shorelines:  Environmental Justice and Social Equity at the San Francisco Bay Background Report in Support of Bay Plan Amendment No. 2-17](#) that provides a review of the causes of environmental and social injustices in the region, establishes a set of guiding principles for social equity, provides an analysis of

the relationship between BCDC policies and social equity, and lays out an approach to incorporating social equity into BCDC's policies and regulations.

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Equity Platform**: The Equity Platform was adopted by MTC in January 2023. The Equity Platform is based on a commitment to meaningfully reverse disparities in access and dismantle systemic exclusion. The Platform is grounded by a set of Equity Pillars: Define & Measure; Listen & Learn; Focus & Deliver; and Train & Grow. The Platform includes maps of Equity Priority Communities and a Technical Assistance Portal, informed by a 2021 Equity Analysis.

**Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN) Equitable Adaptation Resource Guide**: BayCAN is a collaborative network of local government staff and partnering organizations working to help the Bay Area respond effectively and equitably to the impacts of climate change on human health, infrastructure and natural systems. The Equitable Adaptation Resource Guide provides strategies and best practices around Making the Case for Equity; Leadership and Power-shifting; Funding Equity; Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping; Plan Drafting and Identifying Solutions; and Measuring / Analyzing for Equity.

## DEI in Leadership and Policy

**Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization** includes characteristics of organizations along a spectrum from being a monoculture to multicultural, where racial and cultural differences seen as assets. Organizations can evaluate their practices and policies through this lens to address potential changes in policies and DEI practices.

**BCDC San Francisco Bay Plan Environmental Justice and Social Equity Amendment**: On July 20, 2017, BCDC unanimously initiated a process to amend the San Francisco Bay Plan to address two issues: the need to place an increasing amount of Bay Fill for projects to restore and enhance natural habitat to adapt to sea level rise and to address environmental justice and social equity issues. These two Bay Plan amendment process updates became the Bay Fill for Habitat and Environmental Justice and Social Equity Plan Amendments. In October 2019, BCDC Commissioners adopted *two* new Bay Plan Amendments, Fill for Habitat and Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

**California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) DEI Program:** CUWA developed a toolkit that includes best practices and lessons learned to help benefit and improve CUWA agencies and the entire water community in their DEI efforts. The site includes example Boards Policies and Resolutions, and DEI Action Plans and Strategic Plans.

**California Water Board Racial Equity Action Plan**: The Water Board's equity journey began with a 2021 Racial Equity Resolution that encourages the nine Regional Water Boards to counteract racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and racial injustice. And practice racial equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and anti-racism. Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) required the use of racial equity data to identify EJ impacts, engage with communities, and develop findings based on data and outreach. The outcomes have included a 2023 Racial Equity Action Plan that includes addressing racial equity in 1) 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Reports, 2) in urban water use efficiency regulations, 3) for impaired waters through development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), 4) to simplify water policy and improve responsiveness to community complaints, and 5)develop internal agreements to promote equitable participation, engagement, and foster partnerships.

**Justice40**: Historically, federal funds have disproportionately been awarded to whiter and wealthier communities. For example, for U.S. EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, communities with larger communities of color have received less federal assistance for upgrading wastewater treatment plants.[8] In January 2021, President Biden's Executive Order 14008 – Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad announced Justice40, which mandates that at least 40% of the benefits of certain federal programs must flow to disadvantaged communities. The categories of investment are: climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. The Administration guidance directed Justice40 covered programs to conduct meaningful engagement with stakeholders to ensure community members have an opportunity to provide input on program decisions, including in the identification of the benefits of Justice40 covered programs. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is a

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[8] https://www.eenews.net/articles/racial-disparities-beset-epa-state-wastewater-funds/

geospatial mapping tool to identify disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

**SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit** by the California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks. In the context of SB1000 (Environmental Justice in Local Land Use Planning), this online toolkit offers a range of useful tactics on community engagement and strategies to embed equity into the General Plan process in California.

**Water Environment Federation Integrated Leadership Webcast Series** is an online course for anyone looking to improve their leadership skills while connecting with professionals in the water industry. Access includes Water Leadership Institute pre-recorded webcasts, handouts, and discussion boards and facilitated discussions with peers. Course topics include Strengths-Based Leadership; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Managing and Leading; Leading with Emotional Intelligence; and Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

**WaterNow's Impact Leader Award Winner's stories**: The Emerging Leader Award, is dedicated to celebrating and advancing professionals from under - represented communities in the utility space. These individuals have demonstrated promise and creativity in advancing meaningful cultural change in the areas of sustainability, equity, or community engagement. Cástulo Estrada shares his experience as the first Latino and youngest member elected to the Coachella Valley Water District board of directors and work supporting equity by connecting over a dozen small operators. Lily Lopez, Director External Affairs at Walnut Valley Water District speaks to an organization that represents the community. Cathleen Chavez Morris, Environmental Supervisor at Los Angeles Department of Water and Power discusses their work to reach into underserved communities using Telenovelas.

**WELL UnTapped Fellowship Program:** Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL) and WELL UnTapped is a selective, six-month program for local elected leaders aimed at helping participants make an impact on California water policy while addressing individual community water challenges.

## Workforce Development

**American Water Works Association Incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Into Your Workforce Development Strategy Webinar** provides case study discussions of strategies utilities have used to incorporate DEI into workforce development.

**Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA) Green Jobs Projects:** Camden, New Jersey is one of the most economically distressed municipalities in the country, and consequently lacks sufficient resources for optimal water and sewer systems management or replacement of century-old infrastructure. Unemployment is almost 16 percent, and the poverty rate is a mammoth 48.8 percent. PowerCorps Camden is CCMUA's partnership with Camden and Camden's Center for Family Services, funded by AmeriCorps to provide jobs for at-risk young people between the ages of 18 and 25.  The Center for Family Services, a respected nonprofit service agency in Camden, screens the candidates, and delivers the skills training and job placement services.

**DC Water - Water Works Project:** The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water) actively encourages and supports the development and inclusion of local residents in the Authority's contractor workforce. The majority of workers on DC Water's construction projects are hired and employed in a variety of trades by construction contractors and their subcontractors. DC Water Works prioritizes general worker readiness, training and apprenticeships in the construction trades, job placement for training graduates, and coaching. They work with local resource providers that serve as strategic partners including government agencies, labor organizations, training providers, and high schools.

**Los Angeles Department of Water and Power:** The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's governing board approved a five-year, $5 million research partnership with engineering schools at 15 historically Black colleges and universities across the nation based on its 2021 Racial Equity Action Plan. The initiative will coordinate technical and scientific research on behalf of the nation's largest municipal utility. In October 2020, the Board of Water and Power Commissioners became the first all-female city commission in Los Angeles history.[9]

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[9] https://www.publicpower.org/periodical/article/boosting-diversity-equity-and-inclusion

## Budgeting

[King County - Equity in Capital Projects](#): King County, Washington's equity journey started with the development of an Equity and Social Justice Ordinance. This set the stage for a series of actions. The County evaluated how to site, build, operate and maintain facilities in relation to the neighborhood demographics in the service area. They completed an equity assessment of existing design, mitigation measures and maintenance and assessed pump stations in residential neighborhoods to evaluate consistency of service standards and quality. Lastly, they assessed inequities in practices that could unfairly impact minority and low-income communities with more nuisance impacts such as odor, noise, unkempt landscaping, blocked views and other design problems.

[Philadelphia Water: Budgeting for Racial Equity](#): In 2023 Philadelphia Water implemented a Racial Equity approach to their budget process. The document includes a Racial Equity Questionnaire asked to all Departments, guidance materials, office hours to assist departments in assessing and communicating their contributions and opportunities to reduce racial disparities, and oversight by a Budget Equity Committee. Categories included core competencies on racial equity, evidence of impact, inclusive workplace, stakeholder engagement, mayoral alignment (with mayoral anti-racist imperative), disparity focused, performance impact, leverages partnerships, structurally sustainable, diversity, equity, inclusion infrastructure, social services safety net, and reparative public policy or practice.

## Community Engagement

[A Water Utility Manager's Guide to Community Stewardship](#): Community stewardship simply means leveraging the utility's assets and operations to benefit the larger community, lessen utility impacts and provide service equitably across the service area, particularly for traditionally underserved neighborhoods. Examples of community stewardship include integrating service affordability, workforce development and local hiring considerations into utility operations to create economic opportunity for both individual households and businesses more broadly. The Guide highlights community focused strategies and case studies on Capital Planning, Project Design, Construction &

Preventative Maintenance, Contracting & Procurement, Finance, Customer Service & Communications, Environmental Stewardship, and Human Resources.

**[Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) Community Engagement Best Practices](link)** report includes strategies and examples for seven best practices for meaningful engagement: 1. budget wisely for effective community engagement 2. expand engagement through interagency partnerships 3. co-design your process with community 4. make engagement activities accessible and relevant for all 5. identify locally meaningful vulnerabilities and assets 6. prioritize community-supported resilience actions 7. collaborate to bring equitable solutions to fruition.

**Capital Region Water City Beautiful H2O Project**[10] created a Community Ambassador Program to engage thousands of residents and educated them about the utility's initiative to reduce combined sewer overflows and construct green spaces to enhance the surrounding areas and create a Green Infrastructure Master Plan. Community Ambassadors empowered residents, encouraged peer-to-peer neighborhood outreach and discussions, and supported face-to-face interaction and feedback.  During the campaign, Ambassadors met monthly to discuss activities, and issues, and provide feedback on City Beautiful H2O planning efforts.  In addition to the direct water quality improvements, the Plan's green infrastructure projects will deliver multiple benefits for residents and the public.  Social benefits include reviving public space in distressed neighborhoods, community engagement, improving parks and green spaces, public health and recreation, and reducing the urban heat island effect.

**[SFEP Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Program Regional Needs Assessment](link)**: 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

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[10] NACWA - Opportunities for Municipal Clean Water Utilities to Advance Environmental Justice & Community Service

solutions. Communities noted a number of concerns related to water in the bay area including overflowing creeks and storm drains, contamination and pollution, lack of green space, and trash pollution.

## Measuring Success

**Affordability metrics:** In a survey of 260 water utilities and 180 wastewater utilities across 42 states, average water rates increased by 40 percent and average wastewater rates increased by 24 percent between 2008 and 2016 alone. Customer assistance programs treat the symptoms of unaffordability, but alternative rate designs treat the structural root causes. This paper reviews potential affordability metrics.

**River Network's Equitable Water Infrastructure Toolkit** provides best practices and case studies on rate affordability, equitable financing, and equitable leadership for utilities to consider.

# General DEI Resources

## Books on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Brown, J., 2019, How to be an inclusive leader: your role in creating cultures of belonging where everyone can thrive. Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Jana, T., and M. Baran, 2020, Subtle acts of exclusion: how to understand, identify, and stop microaggressions: Oakland, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Oluo, I., 2018, So you want to talk about race: New York, NY, Seal Press.

Pamela Fuller, M. M., 2020, The Leader's Guide to Unconscious Bias: How To Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams: New York, Simon & Schuster.

Perry, R., 2018, Belonging at work: everyday actions you can take to cultivate an inclusive organization: Portland, OR, PYP Academy Press.
Winters, M.-F., 2017, We can't talk about that at work!: how to talk about race, religion, politics, and other polarizing topics: Oakland, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

## Podcasts on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### Asian Enough
In this podcast that explores being Asian American, hosts Jen Yamato, Johana Bhuiyan, Tracy Brown and Suhauna Hussain of the Los Angeles Times invite guests to share personal stories and unpack identity on their own terms. They explore the vast diaspora across cultures, backgrounds and generations, and try to expand the ways in which being Asian American is defined.

### Code Switch
Code switching involves adjusting one's behavior or expression in order to make others feel more comfortable, and that's where NPR's diversity podcast draws its name. Since 2013, journalists Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji have explored race, culture, and identity with insight and intellectual vigor. And while Meraji is now an occasional contributor, rather than a host, Code Switch remains as compelling and thought-provoking as ever.

### Disability Matters
Host Joyce Bender has been on a mission to employ and empower people with disabilities since 2004. With over 700 episodes, the disability employment consultant talks with experts about recruitment, mentoring and accessibility in the workplace.

### Diversity: Beyond the Checkbox
On the program, Certified Diversity Executive Jackie Ferguson interviews industry leaders and explores what DEI means to them. She also discusses why businesses should be focused on implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives, why DEI is the right thing to do, and how going beyond compliance – the checkbox – drives business excellence and long-term success.

### Latinos Who Lunch
In addition to pop culture and art, FavyFav and Bebelito discuss race, gender and class in LatinX communities with the mission of "maintaining visibility, accessibility and philosophy of de-centering white, male dominating cultural practices," according to the show's website. While the duo isn't producing new shows, exploring the 200-episode archive is a great way to learn more about intersectionality.

## [Making Gay History](#)

In order to get where we're going, we need to take a hard look about how we got here. Making Gay History is an oral history of key figures from the LGBTQ+ movement from 1945-1990. The podcast mines author and historian Eric Marcus's decades-old audio archive of rare interviews to create intimate, personal portraits of both known and long-forgotten champions, heroes, and witnesses to history.

## [Race at Work](#)

Host Porter Braswell wants to create a safe space to talk about how race can affect work experiences and outcomes. On the podcast, produced by the Harvard Business Review, leaders share their personal career journeys and talk about how race, equity and inclusion has influenced their paths.

## [Still Processing](#)

Hosted by New York Times journalists Jenna Wortham and Wesley Morris, this podcast is both entertaining and educational, and the two discuss topics around race, DEI in the workplace, and key cultural conversations.

## [The Diversity Gap](#)

As important as these conversations are, they're only meaningful if listeners turn their knowledge into action, and The Diversity Gap is about just that. Host Bethaney Wilkison talks to industry leaders about where they see gaps in diversity and offers solutions to fill them.

## [The Will to Change: Uncovering True Stories of Diversity & Inclusion](#)

Informed by more than a decade consulting to Fortune 500 companies, host Jennifer Brown creates a compelling case for leadership to embrace diversity and create more enlightened and productive workplaces. On her podcast, she invites CEOs, best-selling authors, entrepreneurs, and activists to tell their stories of diversity and inclusion.