

Meeting Summary of the 2023-2024 Race, Equity & Inclusion Working Group

Friday, December 6, 2024 | 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Working Group Outcomes:

- Build understanding and support among key stakeholders and Board members for SACOG's Racial Equity Action Plan implementation
- Develop regional equity indicators that SACOG will collect and report on a regular basis
- Better understand and define the key components of meaningful community engagement processes
- Provide recommendations to the SACOG board on assessing equity impacts of proposed policy decisions
- Based on REAP progress reports, make recommendations to the SACOG board of any updates to the REAP to increase its effectiveness and impact

Agenda Packet available at:

<https://sacog.primegov.com/Public/CompiledDocument?meetingTemplateId=5528&compileOutputType=1>

Pre-reading: A. Proposed Goals and Objectives for Racial Equity Action Plan; B. Proposed REI Working Group Charge (Focus Areas)

Meeting Attendees: Chair Rick Jennings, II, Vice Chair Darren Suen, Shon Harris, Christine Tien, Jesse Loren, Maria Chacon Kniestedt, Pamela Bulahan, Raul Martinez, Elisa Herrera, Martha Guerrero, Aimee Barnes, William Walker, Darren Suen, Jill Gayaldo

Absent: Rich Desmond, Lakhvir Ghag, Michael Saragosa, Kendra Lewis, Woody Deloria, Marco Lizarraga

Meeting Summary

December 6, 2024, was the ninth meeting of the 2023-2024 Race, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group.

Chair Jennings led the working group in a review of their shared values and community agreements.

Recap Last Meeting and Overview of Today's Meeting

Kacey Lizon, SACOG staff, recapped the major milestones of the REI Initiative since 2022: the SACOG board's adoption of a racial equity statement of change and commitment and racial equity action plan, and in 2023 and 2024, implementation of the racial equity action plan. Lizon then summarized the discussion points of the Working Group over the fall (September through November). At its November meeting, and at the SACOG board, Working Group Chair Jennings and Vice Chair Suen presented the successes of the last two years. At its November meeting, the Working Group also discussed potential focus areas for the the REI Working Group for the next two years. SACOG staff used the fall discussions to develop draft goals and objectives for SACOG's

racial equity action plan and a draft charge for the 2025-2026 REI Working Group, both to be reviewed, finalized, and forwarded to the SACOG board for approval at its December meeting.

Review, Finalize, and Recommend Goals and Objectives for Racial Equity Action Plan

Staff presented a summary of their proposed changes to the goals and objectives of the racial equity action plan:

Operations Goals and Objectives: No proposal to change the goals. A lot of the current objectives set up internal structures to support SACOG operations. Staff proposes modifying objectives to move from a start up to a programmatic objective. In addition, we learned a lot in implementing the objectives; modifications also reflect those learnings. For example, Objectives 3A and 3B focused on procurement: we are constrained by the type of funding we have. So, we want to focus more on how to better promote opportunities to work with SACOG, and how to find and attract new vendors to work with us.

Programs Goals and Objectives: No proposal to change the goals. For Goal 1 (Increasing engagement with community representatives...), staff proposes continuing two objectives and deleting one (Objective 1B) because it has been completed, and the next step would be to continue work that falls within other objectives. For Goal 2 (Increasing funding for projects/programs prioritizing REI or serving underrepresented groups), we have learned from piloting practices and now we propose to operationalize the lessons across programs at SACOG. Thus, staff propose modifying objectives and then adding two new ones. For Goal 3 (Learning from and with partner agencies...), a similar theme applies to the modified objectives: take lessons from what we've done so far and move to the next level.

Board Practices Goals and Objectives: Staff proposes maintaining all three goals but for the second goal, proposes rewording it so that it is clearer. For Goal 1 that has to do with the board deepen understanding of how equity affects different issues, the objectives have been successful, and staff proposes adding an emphasis on onboarding new board members, in addition to continual engagement of current board members. Goal 2 has to do with the board considering equity frameworks in new programs. In addition to rewording it to be clearer of that intent, staff proposes modifying the objectives to hold staff accountable to bringing the necessary information to the board and the REI Working Group at the beginning and end of the calendar year: e.g., using the WG to say, here are the major programs in which we'll re-think or launch brand new this year, and at the end of the year, look back at what we've done with those programs. Goal 3 is that the board maintains consistent engagement with the racial equity action plan implementation process. We think this should continue as is. Similar theme to other objectives: staff proposes modifying them to use the tools developed (regional equity indicators) and involve the REI Working Group in the design and implementation of programs.

After hearing an overview of staff's proposed changes to the racial equity action plan goals and objectives, the working group broke out into small groups to review the specific changes. Working Group members provided their comments, questions, and ideas on each change.

Working Group members then reconvened to discuss their comments:

Regarding the Engage, Empower, Implement Program: It is a great program, but community-based organizations (CBOs) need government permission to proceed. How can the program be run so that CBOs are not beholden to government permissions/processes? Where are you going to keep track of that issue, if not in the objectives, to make sure it doesn't get lost?

Regarding CBO-government interactions and partnerships, sometimes a CBO is asked to provide a letter of recommendation for a government agency that the CBO experiences as working at odds with REI goals. How can you vet government agencies in this case, to keep from harming communities.

Staff suggested that they will track these issues to be taken up by the Working Group next year when it helps SACOG implement its priority programs, of which Engage, Empower, Implement is one.

Regarding the Operations goals and objectives: as SACOG looks for talent in the region, reach out to CBOs and others in the workforce system. They receive a lot of resumes and could send them to you. We are out in the community and know where the talent is.

Regarding this work overall: this is still new work. It would be good to track and measure how investments are working out. What would happen if this program wasn't in place? What has been the return for those communities? Would it be an economic comparison? For some that might be a more resonant way to measure.

Regarding the goals and objectives: they have evolved to become clearer and that is better. Be prepared for your board to ask "how" you'll be doing this work. For example, if you say you'll re-evaluate how you do community engagement, how will you do that? With a process map? Applying a racial equity tool or process? This could enliven the goals and objectives.

Regarding board education: really appreciate the educational pieces of this work. We pick up on a sense of resistance to the idea of racial equity and equity. So much of this work depends on the delivery of the information and explaining why we do the work. The economic benefit of this work to individuals and communities is compelling.

Upon motion by Director Loren, seconded by Director Guererro, the Working Group unanimously approved the goals and objectives.

Review, Finalize, and Recommend 2025-2026 Charge for the Race, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group

James Corless, SACOG executive director, reminded the Working Group of their discussion of the charge at their November meeting, and then presented a charge informed by that discussion. The charge reflects the Working Group's interest in board engagement and onboarding and in opportunities for the Working Group to help implement SACOG's priority programs next year.

Upon motion by Director Guerrero, seconded by Director Walker, it was unanimously approved that the group recommend a charge to the board.

The Working Group then discussed what information was presented to the SACOG board in the past to inform and create interest in the topics of race, equity, and inclusion. The prior REI Working Group group identified the three topics areas for board engagement (board workshop topics, an annual REI primer/refreshers presentation, and annual REI sit visit in the region) when they developed the current racial equity action plan. Therefore, in the last two years, SACOG held at least two board workshops on a racial equity topic, an annual REI primer/refreshers presentation to the board, and an annual REI-themed site visit to a community in the region. Executive Director Corless explained that onboarding for new board members will be shaped by this Working Group. Working Group members also determined that the focus of education and engagement is to create an interest in the REI topic for both new and continuing board members.

The Working Group then broke into three groups to brainstorm ideas related to the racial equity action plan objectives for board education and engagement. SACOG staff will work with these ideas as they work plan for 2025 and bring back needs and opportunities for Working Group members to help with specific board engagements. The brainstormed ideas are:

1) Topics for board workshops

- Brookings 2017 Report
 - Why from economy + race intersection
 - Economist from university (or Brookings)
- Air Pollution & Stories
 - Human perspective
 - ♣ Carl Pinkston
 - ♣ Jesus Hernandez
 - ♣ Youth
- How do we teach an equity framework?
- How equity benefits all/targeted universalism

2) Information to include in a REI onboarding for new board members

- What's our tagline?
- History is good, but how to also use data to make it real in current times, e.g., health disparities in Placer
- Everyone reads Color of Law
 - What was the goal of government/federal money?
- "Principles of change management"
 - What are ways in which we can get people to care?
 - State grant funding
- Grounding in "why SACOG is doing this?" and the "How" examples
- Stories – human stories
 - Can we make a video?
 - Racial covenants

- o List of REI definitions
- Brookings report
 - o Economic disparities
 - o SACOG translation

3) Ideas/topics for the annual site visit

- Whatever the location, have a nexus of past issues to current planning (e.g., 505 separating communities)
- Visit indigenous cultural sites, learn history of tribe
- Lincoln – what challenges are they trying to address with their minority communities?
- Can site visits be in the evening/late afternoon (post 10:00 a.m. even)?
- Smaller groups of board members learning about communities/CBOs in their subregion
- Transportation challenge of health access (board workshop?)

Adjourn

At the conclusion of the brainstorm, Chair Jennings reconvened the group, invited all public members to attend the December board meeting to speak on the agenda item for the racial equity action plan and REI Working Group charge, and then adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting dates in 2025 (meeting will be in-person):

March 21, 2025 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

June 13, 2025 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

September 19, 2025 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

November 14, 2025 11:30 am – 1:30 pm