

## REI Working Group Meeting Summary

Friday, April 21, 2023 | 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Meeting recording available at: <https://youtu.be/fQHZOPhSSFY>

### Working Group Outcomes for 2023

- Build understanding and support among key stakeholders and Board members for SACOG's Racial Equity Action Plan implementation.
- Better understand and define the key components of a meaningful community engagement processes.
- Develop regional equity indicators that SACOG will collect and report on a regular basis.
- 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 changes to the REAP to increase its effectiveness and impact.

**Agenda** available at: <https://sacog.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=3799>

Meeting Agenda Topics:

Welcome and Settle in

Introduction and Overview

Opening Activity: What's the story of your name?

Review Community Agreements and Shared Values

Key/Grounding Terms and Discussion

Introduction to REAP

What's Next and What to Expect?

Discussion: What does the working group need to be successful?

Wrap-up and Closing

### Pre-reading:

- SACOG Racial Equity Action Plan
- Glossary of terms

### Meeting Attendees

Rick Jennings, II, Chair

Darren Suen, Vice Chair

Shawntay Arroyo

Aimee Barnes

Pamela Bulahan

Maria Chacon Kniestedt

Woodrow Deloria

Rich Desmond

Jill Gayaldo

Martha Guerrero

Shon Harris  
Elisa Herrera  
Kendra Lewis  
Jesse Loren  
Raul Martinez  
Michael Saragosa  
Christine Tien  
William Walker

Absent: Lakhvir Ghag, Marco Lizarraga

## Meeting Summary

April 21, 2023 was the second meeting of the 2023-2024 Race, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group.

This meeting was focused on continuing to establish a baseline understanding of SACOG's race, equity, and inclusion work to date, building an understanding of working group members' collective and individual roles in SACOG's Racial Equity Action Plan implementation, and continuing to build personal connections.

## Welcome, Introduction and Overview

Chair Jennings welcomed the members of the 2023 REI Working Group. Danielle DeRuiter-Williams, meeting facilitator, provided an overview of the day's agenda and desired outcomes for the group.

## Opening Activity: What's the story of your name?

Chair Jennings asked working group members to share the story of their name—first, middle, last, or a combination—to continue to build members' mutual understanding of one another.

## Review Community Agreements and Shared Values

Danielle DeRuiter-Williams then reviewed the community agreements and shared values developed in the first meeting and moved to a discussion of key REI terms in SACOG's REAP.

## Key/Grounding Terms and Discussion

Danielle DeRuiter-Williams reminded the group that this discussion of key and grounding terms was a continuation from the first meeting. For the key terms of *race*, *racial equity*, *inclusion*, *diversity*, and *equity versus equality*, the working group was asked if they saw anything missing. They were also asked if there was anything they'd like to highlight or amplify in any of the definitions, and if they could share best examples they have seen of any of the concepts in action. The working group's discussion is summarized here:

- Amplify the welcoming aspect of *inclusion*: The welcoming aspect of *inclusion* is important in order for people to be comfortable and engaged. For example, today's opening activity helped us come together and be comfortable to have these deep conversations. Similarly, when we're out in

public trying to practice equity and inclusion to encourage participation, it's important for people to feel welcomed and comfortable.

- Amplify the inclusive and intersectional aspects of racial equity: The practice of equity involves including those who might be affected by it. This is summed up in the phrase “nothing about us without us.” The part of the definition “when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved” is also important to lift up because right now, the economy dictates the life of poor people in general, and especially the lives of African Americans and people of color. There will never be an improvement in that unless we can focus on not letting race be a predictor of people's lives.

When we operationalize racial equity, it's not just disparities of race that we're focused on—it's race *and* gender, race *and* income, etc. Often people hear 'racial equity' and think it is exclusively focused on race. In fact, it means we are leading with addressing racial disparities and injustices, and also addressing disparities and injustices in other areas. For example: there are racialized disparities in standardized testing due to biases in standardized tests. Students who are neurodivergent can also struggle with standardized tests. Addressing the biases in standardized tests can benefit both students of color and neurodivergent students. When we make connections across groups, we can make the transition away from 'zero-sum game' thinking toward inclusion.

- Missing Terms: Two additional key terms were recommended—*racial equity lens* and *racial equity culture*. These terms are not included in the REAP glossary and suggested as rounding out the key terms, to be presented and discussed at the next meeting.

## Introduction to the REAP

Erik Johnson, Kacey Lizon, and James Corless, of SACOG staff, presented each of the goals and objectives of the REAP, by each focus area—Operations, Programs, and Board Practices. There are specific objectives that the working group will work on in its meetings, as those are called out for working group input in the REAP. There are many other objectives that SACOG will be carrying out and the working group will hear about via progress reports at its meetings. This walk through of the REAP is to provide the working group members an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the REAP activities, begin to ask questions and provide feedback, and think about the topics they may want to dig deeper individually. The working group provided the following questions and comments by focus area:

### Operations:

- Regarding the training objectives for Goals Ops1 and Ops2, is there budget to do the work? And suggest participatory training that would allow staff to learn about other cultures.
- Regarding Objective 2D, make sure to be aware that even if you're doing recruitment and training correctly, there are subsets of the population whose resumes may not read well even if they have skills. How can you help them with resume and interview skills?
- Regarding Procurement and Contracting (Objectives Ops3A and Ops3B), move beyond use of the terms “disadvantaged” and “minority” as much as possible.
- A global comment: across all three areas (Operations, Programs, Board Practices) would like to see where we might be able to address insensitive language.

- Appreciate how this information is shared in this forum. A global comment: what assumptions are we making that will lead to progress on stated goals and objectives ? And what might get in the way of progress to goals? As such, might a theory of action help us assess where progress might be made more quickly and where more time is needed?

#### Programs:

- Regarding Goal Pgm1, does SACOG have a plan or framework that deals with community engagement? If so, it's an opportunity to embed equity into the work. Look at what you already have and assess how it could be changed to incorporate equity.
- Regarding Objective Pgm 2B, could we look back in time to see if our infrastructure investments improved quality of life and reduced inequities in communities? Come up with a strategy to measure that. Do you have a baseline for this objective as it relates to evaluating programs and looking at the gains?
- Regarding Program Goals, when it comes to developing trainings and toolkits for community engagement, focus on using basic terminology and plain language. And sometimes, a different messenger (than government) makes it easier for people to engage.

#### Board Practices:

- Regarding Objective BP 1A, coming to the board with discussions about trends in transportation and land use impacts on various groups—make sure we don't forget about refugee populations that are unique and distinct in terms of their challenges and the impacts of the decisions we make.
- Regarding Objective BP 1C, love that there's a collaboration with CBOs, which is important.
- Regarding Goal BP 1, is there any expectation of board members that are new to SACOG having DEI training? Any expectations for ongoing capacity building over time?

### **What's next and what to expect**

Danielle DeRuiter-Williams informed the working group that members will be invited to identify the specific parts of the REAP they are motivated to engage, as there will be multiple opportunities for members to do so in between working group meetings. Members will have the option to advise on individual REAP objectives and the option to participate in 2 to 3 additional sessions to dig deeper into certain REI topics. Often information will also be presented to the working group that is not fully polished or finished, to ensure the working group has multiple opportunities to engage and shape the work. Ultimately, the working group will make recommendations to the SACOG board.

### **Discussion: What does the working group need to be successful?**

Danielle DeRuiter-Williams facilitated this discussion. Working group members provided the following responses:

- Having the slide deck after the meeting will be helpful.
- Continuing to have meeting materials a few days before the meeting so that we can come prepared and be present.

- For any smaller working groups, a small charter so we understand the parameters around our participation.
- Danielle's ongoing facilitation of this group.
- All of the working group members attending these meetings.
- More opportunities for personal dialogue amongst members of the group.

## **Meeting Adjourn**

### **Next meeting dates in 2023:**

**June 29, 2023, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**October 26, 2023, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm**