

CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD



2023-2025

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

2023 ANNUAL UPDATE



Acknowledgements

The State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board or Board) Racial Equity Action Plan was developed in partnership with employees and the communities they serve. Many people dedicated their time and resources to contribute to the visioning and strategizing sessions, participate in government-to-government tribal consultations, attend public workshops, submit public comments, and engage with the State Water Board in many other ways to ensure this plan reflects the needs and priorities of communities most impacted by our work. The Water Boards acknowledges and thanks our community partners, community members, California Native American tribes, and Water Boards staff for their continued support and engagement throughout the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.

This report was prepared by Adriana Renteria and Jenalyn Guzman from the State Water Resources Control Board Office of Public Participation. Information was provided by Water Boards regions, divisions, and offices.

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RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN | 2023 ANNUAL UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the nine regional water boards, collectively the Water Boards, have a shared mission to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water. This mission is strengthened by a commitment to racial equity and environmental justice. *Racial equity* is achieved when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved. *Environmental justice* means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The Water Boards envision a future where California's water resources and drinking water are equitably preserved, enhanced, and restored for all Californians, regardless of race, and where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees.

Between 2020 and 2023 the State Water Board engaged with its employees, the public, and with California Native American tribes to develop a [Racial Equity Resolution](#) and associated [Racial Equity Action Plan](#). The Racial Equity Action Plan has been implemented for one year and this annual report describes progress made so far. The Racial Equity Action Plan establishes three strategic directions the State Water Board will take to approach the work of advancing racial equity:

1. Integrating racial equity and measuring impact by infusing considerations throughout policies, programs, and practices; and monitoring progress.
2. Creating and maintaining inclusive spaces by addressing representation within the Water Boards and elevating understanding of racial equity.
3. Activating community wisdom and sharing power by removing barriers for participation and incorporating input.

The Racial Equity Action Plan establishes goals for each strategic direction that the Water Boards aim to achieve and establishes actions to overcome existing barriers and achieve goals. Every action has a division or office responsible for leading the implementation of that specific action. On a quarterly basis, representatives from all Water Boards regions, divisions, and offices meet to coordinate on environmental justice and racial equity through the Environmental Justice Roundtable. The Environmental Justice Roundtable now serves as the main convening place for the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan and other related racial equity and environmental justice efforts across the Water Boards. Through this roundtable, quarterly written updates are developed and shared internally to support ongoing coordination.

Reflections on Year 1 Implementation

The Water Boards have been hard at work during the first year of implementing the State Water Board's Racial Equity Action Plan, aiming to bring about significant, and permanent organizational changes within the Water Boards. While many identified actions are currently in progress, the Water Boards recognize that establishing a strong foundation is key for lasting transformation. In the first year of implementation, much focus and attention was dedicated to improving coordination and alignment, building internal capacity, expanding engagement, and using racial equity tools to embed a racial equity lens throughout all programs and projects. While these foundational elements are built, the Water Boards also leveraged immediate opportunities to advance equitable outcomes in existing programs and projects.

In September 2022, the California legislature passed [Assembly Bill 2108](#) (Chapter 347, Statutes of 2022). This legislation requires the Water Boards to consider how certain water quality projects or decisions may disproportionately impact low income and tribal communities, and meaningfully engage with those communities. As a result of Assembly Bill 2108, the Racial Equity Resolution and Action Plan, and region-specific racial equity efforts, there was an immediate shift towards more equity-centered engagement in 2023. Water Boards staff are building their understanding of how to engage with communities using a racial equity lens.

Key accomplishments for 2023 include:

Improving coordination and alignment

- The Environmental Justice Roundtable now serves as the main coordinating body for implementing the Racial Equity Action Plan and related efforts [[Action 8](#)].
- Racial equity is becoming a standing agenda item in program-specific roundtables and meetings [[Action 29](#)].
- Strategic planning processes, like the annual State Water Board Strategic Work Plan, integrate racial equity considerations [[Action 13](#)].
- A Workplace Equity and Inclusion Advisor was hired to advise on policy and administrative issues involving internal workforce racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. A Racial Equity Training Coordinator was also hired to help develop and implement a racial equity training curriculum [[Action 12](#)].

Building internal capacity

- The second racial equity survey shows increased awareness and support for equity efforts within the Water Boards [[Action 30](#)].
- A Racial Equity Train-the-Trainer program was developed to equip Water Boards staff with the skills to deliver the course, "Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards" to other staff within the Water Boards [[Action 11](#)].
- The Water Boards Training Academy's Cornerstone web application now provides Water Boards staff with a range of on-demand training content focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion [[Action 12](#)].

- Results Based Accountability training was delivered to provide a framework for assessing if programs benefit who they are trying to serve by using data to measure impacts [Action 12].

Expanding engagement

- Guidance for developing engagement plans, developing community profiles, and applying a racial equity lens to decision-making processes was developed [Action 45 and Action 46].
- A repository of statewide external contacts was developed to support targeted outreach and relationship building [Action 43].
- New contacts and relationships established with ethnic media outlets [Action 32].
- Improvements were made in enforcement complaint responsiveness through IVAN community meetings [Action 19 and Action 40].
- Online forms for the public to request language services and submit questions/concerns were created [Action 38].

Using Racial Equity Tools

- The Drinking Water Needs Assessment, Fund Expenditure Plan for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, and Integrated Water Quality Reports now overlay demographic information to better understand potential disparate impacts [Action 3, Action 6, and Action 7].
- The Water Use Objective Exploration Tool, created to support discussion of the proposed regulation to make conservation a California way of life, overlays CalEnviroScreen data to better understand potential disparate impacts [Action 16].
- Site cleanup investigations are evaluating cleanup progress using demographic data to understand disparities [Action 4 and Action 7].

Advancing equitable outcomes in existing programs

- **Clear Lake Hitch:** The State Water Board adopted Emergency Information Order Regulations for the Clear Lake Watershed to assist the State Water Board's efforts to protect the Clear Lake hitch, a fish endemic to Clear Lake and a California threatened species. This decision came after a coalition of local Native American Tribes including the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, and Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians requested that state and federal agencies, including the State Water Board, help address the extinction risk faced by the hitch [Action 20].
- **Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds:** The State Water Board re-adopted emergency curtailment regulations in the Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds. The regulation establishes emergency in-stream flow requirements to protect commercially and culturally significant fall-run chinook salmon, threatened Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho salmon, and culturally significant steelhead. This decision came after the Karuk Tribe, Environmental Law Foundation, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, and Institute for Fisheries Resources submitted a petition for rulemaking to the State Water Board requesting a permanent regulation that establishes minimum flows in the Scott.

- Site Cleanup Subaccount Program (SCAP):** The State Water Board adopted a new methodology and revised policies governing the Site Cleanup Subaccount Program, which was adopted in April 2023 ([Resolution 2023-0011](#)). The Site Cleanup Subaccount Program primarily funds the cleanup of contaminated sites when the responsible party has no or limited ability to pay for the cleanup. The methodology used to establish funding priorities provides greater weight to projects in economically disadvantaged and environmental justice communities. The Division of Financial Assistance also engaged with a group of interested parties representing a variety of interests to evaluate implementation of the new methodology and develop recommendations for further revisions [[Action 4](#) and [Action 7](#)].
- Wastewater needs assessment:** The State Water Board adopted [Resolution No. 2022-0019](#), which commits \$4,000,000 to support a four-year, statewide assessment of wastewater needs to improve sanitation access to all California communities. The Division of Financial Assistance along with the Division of Water Quality and contractors completed the first year of Phase 1. Phase 1 focuses on determining what sanitation system data is currently available or needs to be developed; framing sanitation system risk definitions and inequities; drafting a model for evaluating sanitation systems of concern for solutions and costs; developing work plans; and processes for outreach to interested persons.

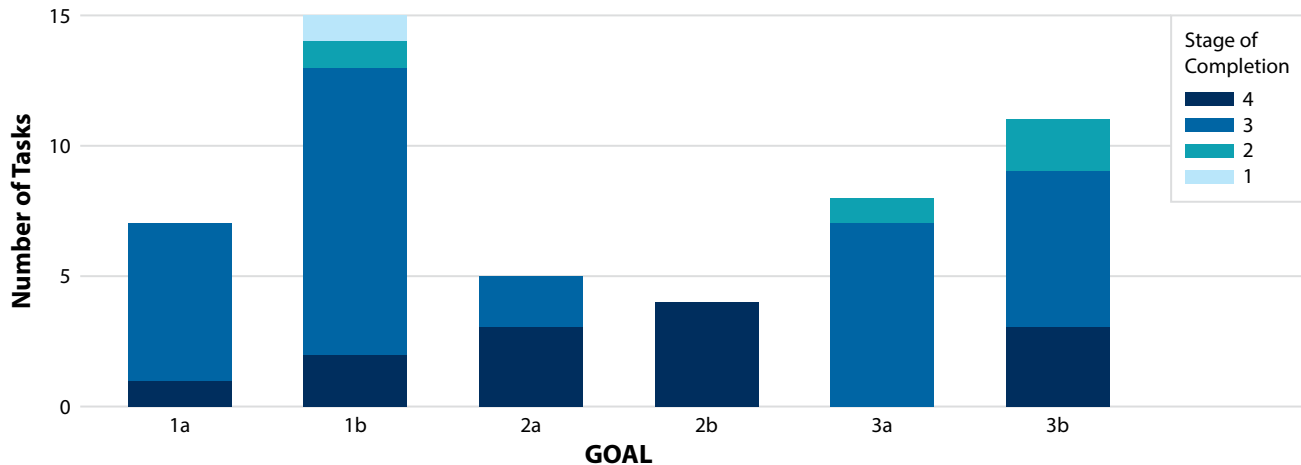
In 2023 the Water Boards took significant steps to continue building a culture that advances equity and justice. Reflecting on the progress made in 2023, the Water Boards acknowledge both the advancements achieved as well as a recognition of the need to continue doing more. The Water Boards’ commitment lies in this long-term journey, laying the groundwork for an organization that values and promotes racial equity in all its endeavors.

Summary of Action Progress Made in 2023

Stages		# Actions within stage
Stage 1	Preparation or scoping not yet started	1
Stage 2	Preparation, scoping, data collection, securing funding and resources	4
Stage 3	Work in progress	35
Stage 4	Action complete and/or at least one cycle of continual action complete; monitoring and evaluation of action is complete or ongoing	13

Table 1: Defines the stages of completion and how many actions are within each stage at the end of 2023

Tasks at each Stage on Completion per Goal at the end of Quarter 4, 2023



Graph of tasks at each Stage of Completion per Goal at the end of Quarter 4, 2023

Strategic Direction #1

**INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY,
MEASURING IMPACT**

Infusing racial equity throughout the Water Boards’ policies, programs, and practices; measuring progress toward goals and adapting when necessary.

GOAL 1A:

Water Boards data are accessible, equitable and culturally relevant

ACTION 1

Update the State Water Board’s racial equity webpage to include a page for tracking and measuring progress on the Racial Equity Action Plan.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation will update the racial equity webpage to include the annual report before each annual update to the State Water Board.

ACTION 2

Develop and implement a Racial Equity Data Action Plan. At a minimum, the Racial Equity Data Action Plan must do the following: (1) Develop training and best practices guidance for Water Boards staff on incorporating racial equity concepts into the planning and design of data collection methods and visualizations (e.g., maps, factsheets, etc.) projects. (2) Identify and expand existing opportunities for public participation in science and community data gathering programs to develop new data collection methods, support existing programs, and incorporate community datasets into the database. (3) Create a publicly accessible data catalog tool / interface that includes existing demographic data, Water Boards program data, and other available data (such as heat maps or flood hazard maps) to inform the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.

LEAD: Office of Information Management and Assessment

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Racial Equity Data Action Plan is being developed by a Racial Equity Data Taskforce, which is a group led by the Office of Information Management and Analysis and the Office of Public Participation and includes representation from many divisions and offices. The Racial Equity Data Action Plan will include three components: 1) Guidance on best practices, 2) Compilation of data tools, and 3) Plan for Water Boards-wide implementation of best practices and data tools. Key accomplishments include:

- **OpenScapes Cohort:** Racial Equity Data Taskforce participated in the fall 2023 OpenScapes program, which provided training in open science practices to expedite data-driven solutions and enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- **Online catalog:** An online catalog of available equity-related tools has been developed and is currently being tested and used internally.
- **Guidance on terminology:** Guidance around terminology and how to use identity characteristics is being developed, including guidance around the use of terms like Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), “disadvantaged community,” “vulnerable community or populations,” etc., in data analyses.
- **Literature review:** A literature review is underway that aims to assess existing available best practices and tailor guidance to support the specific needs of Water Boards programs.
- **Increased coordination:** Coordination with colleagues working on equity data projects is taking place to improve consistency and reduce duplicated efforts.
- **External coaching:** The Office of Information Management and Analysis is in the process of procuring outside resources to help coach the development of a racial equity section within the existing Strategic Data Action Plan that was developed in response to data literacy and open data principles in 2016.

ACTION 3

Incorporate racial equity analysis into the 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report to identify impacted waters in Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and disadvantaged communities, starting by identifying data gaps. The Integrated Report is a document with a comprehensive review of surface water quality and includes a list of currently impaired water bodies by pollutant type.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The California Integrated Report is a requirement of the Federal Clean Water Act. The Division of Water Quality coordinates with regional water boards to assess surface waters and determine if they contain pollutants at levels that exceed protective water quality standards. The Integrated Report includes a list of impaired water bodies, which are streams, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters that contain pollutants. The Division of Water Quality is analyzing spatial data to develop a preliminary estimate of the impaired waterbody size in miles and acres, and the percentage of streams, lakes, and coastal/bay shorelines that are impaired in California. A geographic analysis is being conducted of the impaired waterbody layers in relation to disadvantaged communities and communities of color to identify areas of impact and to identify where additional water quality monitoring is needed.

ACTION 4

Identify and assess available data to identify racial equity data gaps related to water quality.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Quality has several efforts related to assessing water quality impacts underway:

- **Expanding the GeoTracker Map:** The Division of Water Quality added layers that identify environmental justice and low-income areas, including CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and Department of Water Resources Disadvantaged Community Map. GeoTracker is the Water Boards data management system for sites that impact, or have the potential to impact, water quality in California, with emphasis on groundwater.

- **Equity in underground storage tanks:** The Division of Water Quality developed a method to evaluate environmental justice considerations for each Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). A Certified Unified Program Agency plays a crucial role in regulating and overseeing underground storage tanks (USTs) to ensure environmental and public safety at the local level. Evaluators of the Certified Unified Program Agencies will assess CalEnviroScreen scores for each underground storage tank facility and will provide results to the Certified Unified Program Agencies as part of their regular observations.
- **Evaluation of systemic disparities in the Site Cleanup Program:** Progress on site cleanup cases were evaluated with an overlay of CalEnviroScreen scores, disadvantaged community status, and racial and ethnic demographics to understand the baseline of systemic inequalities in current program progress. Based on this analysis, internal targets have been set to work toward minimizing existing disparities.
- **Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) drinking water exposure:** The Division of Drinking Water is examining data on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water to evaluate exposure levels among different racial and ethnic demographic groups and low-income populations. This assessment will be used to align the use of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill funding to prioritize the installation of treatment systems in identified vulnerable, low-income communities. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a large group of human-made substances that do not occur naturally in the environment and are resistant to heat, water, and oil. They are persistent in the environment, can accumulate within the human body over time.
- **Equitable grant funding for nonpoint source pollution projects:** The Division of Water Quality is working with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to use the Recovery Potential Screening tool to prioritize water quality improvement projects funded with Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant funding in underserved and overburdened communities that have not received funding for watershed recovery efforts before. This effort includes funding eligible projects and informing and providing technical assistance to communities to access available grant funds for eligible projects.

ACTION 5

Include a Racial Equity Action Plan progress update at a State Water Board meeting. The update should include any barriers, such as funding or legislation, encountered as the plan is implemented.

LEAD: Executive Office

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

State Water Board divisions and offices will present an update to the State Water Board as an information item in early 2024.

ACTION 6

Incorporate racial equity analysis into the annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment, including a measurement of the number of BIPOC communities impacted by primary and secondary contaminants in drinking water and water unaffordability. Work with U.S. EPA to implement a similar analysis to federally regulated tribal water systems.

LEAD: Division of Drinking Water

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment is a core component that guides and informs the implementation of the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program. The Needs Assessment is comprised of four core components: the Failing Water System List (Failing list), the Risk Assessment, the Cost Assessment, and the Affordability Assessment. The 2023 Needs Assessment includes an analysis of drinking water systems that are failing or at-risk of not supplying safe and affordable drinking water as well as an analysis of state-small water systems and domestic well areas. This analysis includes an overlay of demographic information, such as race/ethnicity and income, among others. More information can be found on the [Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience webpage](#).

ACTION 7

Assess race/ethnicity data and other relevant demographic data, associated with the communities that benefit from funding administered by DFA. Existing annual funding reports and plans will be the primary mechanism to report these data on a project specific basis, where appropriate. In addition, summaries for the funding program will be provided.

LEAD: Division of Financial Assistance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Financial Assistance has applied this action to several funding programs:

- **Site Cleanup Subaccount Program:** The Division of Financial Assistance brought proposed revisions to the resolution governing the Site Cleanup Subaccount Program (SCAP) to the State Water Board, which was adopted in April 2023 ([Resolution 2023-0011](#)). The Site Cleanup Subaccount Program primarily funds the cleanup of contaminated sites when the responsible party has no or limited ability to pay for the cleanup. The methodology used to establish funding priorities provides greater weight to projects in economically disadvantaged and

environmental justice communities. The Division of Financial Assistance have engaged with a group of interested parties representing a variety of interests to evaluate implementation of the new methodology and develop recommendations for further revisions.

- **Annual Fund Expenditure Plan:** The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program’s annual Fund Expenditure Plan for the last two fiscal years has included a summary of demographic information for projects funded in the previous fiscal year. This included information on predominant identity characteristics, average household size, average percent of households below the two times the federal poverty level and the CalEnviroscreen score. The Fund Expenditure Plan included comparisons of community demographic characteristics receiving funding to the demographic characteristic of all failing and at-risk water systems as compiled in the Division of Drinking Water’s Needs Assessment.
- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** and **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund:** The annual reports for these funds will include summaries of demographic information for both programs and were presented to the State Water Board as an informational item in 2023. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund program offers low-cost financing for a wide variety of water quality projects. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program assists public water systems in financing the cost of drinking water infrastructure projects needed to achieve or maintain compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.
- **Utilizing data in funding programs:** Demographic data is being evaluated at the census block group scale for projects funded by the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funding Programs, and for sites funded by the Site Cleanup Subaccount Programs.

**GOAL 1B:
Programs and policies are evaluated and realigned to address racial injustices**

ACTION 8			
Deputy directors and directors should regularly discuss their division’s or office’s progress with their staff on actions identified in the Racial Equity Action Plan and gauge where more support is needed.			
LEAD: ALL			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

Discussions about opportunities to consider and address racial injustices in program and policies take place at various levels and coordination spaces within the Water Boards:

- **Internal coordination:** Divisions and offices regularly discuss and implement new approaches with their programs. Many program roundtables now have racial equity as a standing agenda item. State Water Board briefings now include considerations of racial equity impacts.

Coordination meetings like the Deputy Management Committee and the Management Coordinating Committee regularly discuss racial equity and environmental justice. The Environmental Justice Roundtable serves as a quarterly internal coordination meeting to discuss progress made towards advancing equity and justice. A racial equity training advisory team has been established. The State Water Board’s draft 2024 Strategic Work Plan also includes considerations for equity throughout the plan.

- **Including racial equity into duty statements:** Multiple divisions and offices are starting to add racial equity language to duty statements. The Division of Water Quality provided direction to regional water boards on how to include racial equity language in their duty statements and coordinated with the Division of Administrative Services to establish racial equity language for incorporation into existing staff duty statements.
- **Establishing positions for racial equity:** Within the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance, which houses Training Services, a vacant position was used to establish the new role of Racial Equity Training Manager for the Water Boards. The Racial Equity Training Manager position was successfully filled in April 2023 and will lead efforts to develop racial equity training competencies, integrate equity into more existing Training Academy courses, and develop new courses, alongside the Workplace Equity and Inclusion Advisor. Within the Office of Public Participation, the new position of Workplace Equity and Inclusion Advisor was successfully filled in September 2023. The Workplace Equity and Inclusion Advisor position is the first of its kind within the Water Boards, solely dedicated to supporting internal workplace equity and inclusion efforts. Both newly established positions represent a pivotal moment in the Water Boards’ commitment to advancing equity. These positions signify a significant step forward as the Water Boards work to create a future where an individual’s race does not predict professional outcomes within the Water Boards and where all Water Boards staff feel welcome and that they belong.
- **Racial equity support lunches:** Water Boards staff continue to host monthly Racial Equity Support Lunches, which provide a supportive space for Water Boards staff and help normalize conversations about racial equity. The lunch discussions are an opportunity to discuss current events, share experiences, celebrate cultures, and promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- **Division, region, and office-specific workgroups:** Multiple regions, divisions, and offices have established employee workgroups to inform and guide their division, office, or region’s directions towards advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice.

ACTION 9

Develop a racial equity toolkit for all Water Boards staff to consider racial equity in their day-to-day work.

LEAD: Office of Information Management and Analysis

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The racial equity toolkit will be a collection of resources and tools developed under the Racial Equity Data Action Plan [[Action 2](#)].

ACTION 10			
Develop training and guidance for how to implement the racial equity toolkit to examine potential disproportionate impacts of policies and programs on BIPOC communities.			
LEAD: Office of Public Participation			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

Pending completion of the toolkit which is still under development [[Action 9](#)].

ACTION 11			
Select, train, and support a second cohort of Water Boards staff to deliver “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” trainings.			
LEAD: Office of Public Participation			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation developed a Racial Equity Train-the-Trainer program to equip Water Boards staff with the skills to deliver a three-part racial equity course to their colleagues. The program aims to build internal capacity to deliver racial equity trainings to as many Water Boards staff as possible. This course, titled “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards,” was adapted from a similar course developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency and adds content specific to the Water Boards. It is an opportunity to engage with peers who are exploring and developing a shared understanding of fundamental racial equity concepts, a model of change to become an antiracist organization, and an overview of racial equity tools. In 2022, ten staff were certified as trainers as part of the first train-the-trainer cohort, and 270 Water Boards staff have taken the training, including approximately 60 senior leaders. The second cohort of 10 staff are currently going through the train-the-trainer program and once certified as trainers, will join the current trainers in delivering the training to approximately 800 staff over the next year. The training is offered through the Training Academy, which is coordinated by the Office of Research Planning and Performance.

ACTION 12

Develop a racial equity training plan for staff that will guide efforts to develop and coordinate a racial equity curriculum through the Training Academy. Elements may include analysis of what trainings are effective; what trainings should be required; how often people should get training; which current courses could be modified to incorporate more content related to racial equity; how racial equity goals should inform the selection, onboarding, and evaluation of instructors and vendors providing materials or courses; and what educational content could be developed or made available.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance houses Training Services, which leads a robust and engaged employee training and development program that works to anticipate organizational needs. Several areas of growth and expansion have taken place over the last year:

- **Increased focus on racial equity in Training Services:** The newly established position of Racial Equity Training Manager within the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance will be leading efforts to develop racial equity training competencies, integrate equity into more existing Training Academy courses, and develop new courses, in coordination with Office of Public Participation and other partners. To ensure alignment with the Water Boards’ needs and to incorporate diverse employee perspectives, the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance and the Office of Public Participation established a Racial Equity Training Advisory Committee that will contribute to the development of trainings and content.
- **On-demand courses and new course development:** The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance made racial equity-related courses available on-demand to all Water Boards staff through Cornerstone, the Water Boards’ new learning management system. To provide capacity building for senior leaders, racial equity content and frameworks have been included in the Water Boards’ planned Water Leadership Program executive course starting in 2024. In a broader context, the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance’s racial equity training team is actively reviewing literature on equity-related training and development programs and are creating tools to ensure alignment between courses, instructors, and the Water Board’s initiatives. This effort will impact both new courses and future iterations of previously offered courses.
- **Results Based Accountability training course:** A Results Based Accountability training program, delivered by Clear Impact, was offered as a complement to the Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards course. Results Based Accountability is a framework for assessing if programs benefit who they are trying to serve. The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance will offer two cohorts to receive the training and will also work with Clear Impact to train a Water Boards employee to lead future classes. Additionally, the Office of

Research, Planning, and Performance engaged a professional to train Water Board staff to be instructors. This strategic move enables Training Services to tap into internal expertise for Water Board-specific topics, particularly in the application of racial equity tools within the Water Board’s context.

ACTION 13			
As appropriate, ensure that priorities and actions within the State Water Board’s annual Strategic Work Plan reflect this action plan.			
LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance is developing the 2024 State Water Board Strategic Work Plan and coordinating with programs to effectively include equity considerations.

ACTION 14			
Develop a plan to identify climate change impacts (related to State Water Board authorities) and how they may potentially disproportionately impact BIPOC communities or interests.			
LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Climate and Racial Equity Strategy (CARES), conceived by the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance, provides consultation to Water Boards units and programs to help them advance climate resilience and racial equity; connects Water Boards staff with academics, community organizations, and advocates; and manages a framework to organize work at the intersections of climate change, racial equity, and the Water Boards’ work.

In July 2023, the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance hosted an online Climate and Racial Equity Forum connecting Water Boards staff with academics, community organizations, and advocates. The forum aimed to explore intersections of climate change, racial equity, and the Water Boards’ jurisdictions. The forum was also an opportunity to learn about current research efforts related to understanding disproportionate climate change impacts for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.

ACTION 15

In basins where State Water Board intervention into groundwater management (through SGMA authorities) is likely, engage with BIPOC communities that may be affected.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance, in collaboration with the Office of Public Participation, crafted equitable engagement plans for the State Water Board’s implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). In 2014, the California State Legislature adopted the historic Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, which established a statewide framework to help protect groundwater resources. Groundwater issues related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act include drinking water wells going dry or becoming polluted due to lowered water levels or water quality issues caused by pumping. Such issues may disproportionately affect predominantly Latiné communities in the Central Valley. Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the State Water Board may intervene at the basin scale to safeguard groundwater resources under specific conditions. While the State Water Board has not yet intervened in any basins, it has tasked the Office of Research, Planning, and Performance with assessing local efforts and providing recommendations.

Equity is being considered throughout the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. For instance, demographic data informs the prioritization of groundwater basins recommended to the State Water Board. Demographic data in basins potentially subject to intervention help guide community engagement efforts. Equity is further addressed in groundwater pumping fee schedules, with fee waivers available for certain community water systems and public schools serving disadvantaged communities and for low-income residents. The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance collaborates closely with the Office of Public Participation, holding regular meetings with environmental justice organizations to enhance coordination and communication.

The draft staff report for the Tulare Lake Basin, the first of its kind, incorporates language on racial equity, basin demographics, and recommendations to the State Water Board developed with equity in mind. Recommendations, aligned with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and State Water Board priorities, encompass considerations for impacts on and engagement with drinking water users. These include managing groundwater levels to protect drinking water wells, improved monitoring for detecting impacts on drinking water quality, mitigating impacts to drinking water wells, and excluding most domestic well owners from reporting and fee requirements. The draft report underwent public comment and was discussed at an in-person staff-led workshop in Hanford in the fall of 2023, which was held in the evening for increased meeting accessibility. A virtual intervention workshop was also conducted in the fall of 2023, addressing transportation and accessibility barriers to meeting participation. All workshop materials were translated into Spanish, with live interpretation services provided. As workshops are conducted for other basins, the

individual engagement needs of communities will be considered, informing the final staff recommendations to the State Water Board regarding possible intervention.



Public meeting in Hanford, CA

ACTION 16

Assess potential equity impacts of the proposed urban water use efficiency regulation.

LEAD: Office of Research, Planning, and Performance

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Research, Planning, and Performance is proposing a regulation, as mandated by law, to enhance water use efficiency in California cities and suburban areas. This proposed regulation would establish a framework for individualized efficiency goals for each urban retail water supplier, collectively serving nearly all Californians. The proposed “Making Conservation a California Way of Life” regulation aims to save water and is structured to support equity in various ways. Notably, an “alternative compliance pathway” is incorporated for suppliers meeting specific criteria. Suppliers serving disadvantaged communities may qualify by demonstrating sustained water savings, while those serving more affluent communities may be eligible by allocating 40% of their landscape transformation funding to low-income households or disadvantaged communities

within their service area. Equity considerations are a key focus of engagement with affected suppliers and communities. The team met with managers of regulated water suppliers serving disadvantaged communities, acknowledged potential resource challenges, explored data accuracy, and discussed possible compliance pathways. In addition, the team developed an online Water Use Exploration Tool so interested parties can assess suppliers’ conservation needs under different scenarios. This tool incorporates CalEnviroScreen information to facilitate equity discussions. Ongoing engagement efforts are underway, with plans to present the proposed regulation to the State Water Board for consideration and potential adoption in 2024. More information can be found on the [water conservation website](#).

ACTION 17			
Pilot the racial equity toolkit to identify program-specific actions, priorities, and metrics, and realign programs and practices to advance racial equity, and assess the effectiveness of programs.			
LEAD: Division of Water Quality			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Nonpoint Source Program is working collaboratively with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to align Clean Water Act 319(h) grant funding with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Justice 40 initiative, which aims to allocate 40% of federal grant funds to disadvantaged communities. To achieve this, the program is utilizing online tools like the Recovery Potential Screening tool, CalEnviroScreen, and EJScreen. These tools aid in identifying and prioritizing watersheds where federal non-point source funding can benefit disadvantaged communities and address program priorities like reducing aquatic toxicity and harmful algal blooms. In 2023, the program achieved several milestones, including the development of a definition for disadvantaged communities. Additionally, it initiated the development of models to identify funding opportunities and conducted an evaluation of barriers hindering community involvement in the grants. More information on the online tools can be found on these websites: [Recovery Potential Screening tool](#), [CalEnviroScreen](#), and [EJScreen](#).

ACTION 18			
Provide guidance to Regional Water Boards on the consideration of impacts to BIPOC communities and environmental justice when addressing impaired waters through development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or other actions to restore clean water. Use prioritization to inform allocation of funding for environmental cleanup projects.			
LEAD: Division of Water Quality			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Quality is working with the regional water boards on a statewide framework which considers impacts to disadvantaged communities and environmental justice as key factors when prioritizing total maximum daily loads and other restoration actions to address impaired waters. As part of this initiative, the Wetlands Permitting and Planning Program Roundtable’s annual workplan has been updated to incorporate a section dedicated to implementing this action. Additionally, the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE AB 1282) inter-agency collaboration now includes environmental justice-related outreach and considerations as a standard component in wetlands permitting and enforcement workplans and guidance.

ACTION 19			
Participate as partners in implementing the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency.			
LEAD: Office of Enforcement			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding establishes a collaborative framework for joint environmental justice activities, encompassing enforcement, inspections, and community outreach. The primary goal is to strengthen enforcement and ensure compliance in environmental justice communities. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines an agreement between federal and state agencies to devise environmental justice strategies, specifically aimed at safeguarding the health of residents in communities disproportionately burdened by pollution. Annual progress reports on these initiatives are made available to the public.

The Office of Enforcement actively participates in standing meetings of various Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) networks. Spanning seven locations across the state, these networks serve as resources, connecting communities with individuals who can address local environmental concerns. Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods functions as a community-based environmental enforcement reporting platform, enabling residents to report violations to the appropriate authorities.

In addition to attending regular Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods network meetings, the Office of Enforcement is participating in the Rapid Response Team. This team is mobilized in response to urgent environmental threats or community concerns requiring immediate attention from both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Environmental Protection Agency. Notably, a Rapid Response Team was activated for West Oakland following a fire at a metal recycler, and investigations and responses are ongoing. Furthermore, the Office of Enforcement has conducted multimedia inspections in Bayview-Hunters Point, Los Angeles, and Torrance as part of the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding efforts.

ACTION 20

Consider impacts to BIPOC communities, tribal beneficial uses and cultural resources, and related ecosystems when developing, implementing, and enforcing instream flow requirements, consistent with all applicable laws and requirements, including those related to water rights, basin planning, public trust resources, and endangered species.

LEAD: Division of Water Rights

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

- **Prioritizing instream flows:** The Division of Water Rights is prioritizing instream flow work in watersheds with a strong tribal and equity focus. This includes protective measures in the Clear Lake watershed to protect the Clear Lake hitch (or chi), establishing emergency instream flow requirements in the Scott and Shasta watersheds, developing science and options for permanent flow requirements in these watersheds, and advancing supply/ demand models and assessments.
- **Water rights data transparency:** The Division of Water Rights is actively working on the Updating Water Rights Data for California (UPWARD) project, which is designed to significantly enhance access to information and materials. UPWARD includes a new water rights data system and involves digitizing over seven million hardcopy records currently only accessible by visiting the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in person. UPWARD has established a user advisory group, and initial versions of the system are anticipated for public review in 2025. Additional efforts on water diversion data, including telemetry pilot projects, aim to promote more equitable access to data and information.



Water Board staff participating in a Chi/Clear Lake Hitch fish rescue



Scott River outside Fort Jones

ACTION 21

Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Water Rights to serve as a coordinator on Bay-Delta tribal and BIPOC engagement to improve communication and outreach and conduct tribal outreach under AB 52 and B-10-11 for the Bay-Delta Plan implementation regulation for Lower San Joaquin River flows and Southern Delta Salinity.

LEAD: Division of Water Rights

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Water Rights is currently prioritizing the update of the Sacramento River and Delta tributaries section of the Bay-Delta Plan, along with the implementation of the Lower San Joaquin River flows and Southern Delta Salinity segment of the Bay-Delta Plan. To enhance engagement with tribes within the Bay-Delta, the Division has assigned a staff tribal coordinator and sent consultation notification letters to over 90 tribes. The State Water Board conducted an informational session to receive feedback from tribal representatives and the public concerning the potential inclusion of tribal and subsistence fishing beneficial uses into the Bay-Delta Plan.

A draft staff report was released in September 2023, accompanied by multiple staff-led workshops aimed at gathering input from tribal representatives, environmental justice advocates and communities, and the public. Three public hearings will take place in November and December to provide additional opportunities for public comment.

ACTION 22			
Incorporate racial equity analysis when developing maximum contaminant levels using available data and as data and methods allow. LEAD: Division of Drinking Water			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Division of Drinking Water aimed to integrate an equity analysis into the development of the maximum contaminant level for hexavalent chromium, utilizing demographic information by zip code to identify communities receiving water contaminated with this substance. However, due to limited data, the Division of Drinking Water could not confidently pinpoint areas receiving contaminated water, preventing the inclusion of this analysis in the formal rulemaking process. Some drinking water systems do not blend water from multiple sources, making it challenging to trace who receives water from a source contaminated with hexavalent chromium.

To address this data gap, a pilot project is underway to explore frameworks for tracking chemicals through distribution systems. The objective is to trace manganese within drinking water systems, establish a framework for assessing exposure risks, and develop strategies to mitigate these risks. This pilot project will enhance the analysis of equity impacts for contaminants, aiding future rulemakings to establish maximum contaminant levels. Moving forward, equity analyses will be conducted for future maximum contaminant levels when feasible with available data and methods.

Strategic Direction #2

CREATING, MAINTAINING SPACES FOR INCLUSION & BELONGING

Addressing internal and external representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color at all Water Boards’ levels; elevating overall understanding of racial equity.

GOAL 2A:

Water Boards staff and leadership reflect the diversity of California

ACTION 23			
<p>Review existing data, and new data to be collected and produced by CalHR, on demographics of Water Boards staff. Disaggregate data by Region, Division, Office, position classification, etc. and publish findings to the Racial Equity Webpage.</p> <p>LEAD: Division of Administrative Services</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) has expanded the diversity data collection for individual departments, and this information is now accessible on their website. The Division of Administrative Services is currently collaborating with the California Department of Human Resources to determine the additional data and analysis they will provide following the Governor’s executive order N-16-22 on advancing equity. The Office of Information Management and Analysis anticipates analyzing and interpreting this California Department of Human Resources demographic data. Once ready, a report on Water Boards’ demographics will be posted on the State Water Board’s racial equity webpage.

ACTION 24			
<p>Review and revise the “Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity” to improve long-term effectiveness of strategies to recruit, promote, and retain BIPOC staff.</p> <p>LEAD: Division of Administrative Services</p>			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Division of Administrative Services updated the Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity and has distributed the updated document internally to supervisors and managers. The plan establishes a set of hiring practices that can be put in place immediately to promote workforce diversity. The plan is not intended to be either a comprehensive or complete set of practices and strategies. Rather, it is meant to be an interim solution while a more holistic approach is developed in a long-term plan. This plan focuses on the following key goals: 1) requiring hiring panelists to have training on implicit bias or racial equity, 2) including a diversity statement in job advertisement packages, 3) establishing model diversity interview questions, and 4) focusing recruitment efforts. This current version incorporates improvements and lessons learned since the initial release of the Immediate Action Plan in the Fall of 2019.

ACTION 25

Increase recruitment for job openings and internship opportunities at high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, workforce development networks, and community-based groups that serve BIPOC communities in California. Collaborate with Regional Water Boards on future recruitment efforts.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Improving and expanding recruitment efforts is an ongoing goal that will not have a completion. The Division of Administrative Services established a recruitment unit in 2019 to support recruitment efforts for the Water Boards. The recruitment team has aligned its recruitment practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and has identified, and is implementing, the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Partner with Water Boards’ divisions, offices, and regions to improve the Water Boards’ brand and provide a positive candidate experience.
- **Goal 2:** Establish and sustain partnerships with educational institutions and community organizations.
- **Goal 3:** Employment assistance public web-pages are revised and updated to provide additional resources for prospective applicants.
- **Goal 4:** Support Water Boards staff in low-paying classifications by providing resources for career development and upward mobility.



Water Boards staff at a job fair

ACTION 26

Update the Water Boards’ website to include additional guidance for prospective applicants on how to navigate the state’s hiring process, with a focus on successfully applying for Water Board positions.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Administrative Services is currently working on this project. The Division of Administrative Services is writing and compiling materials to be posted to the Water Boards’ website to provide practical information and tools to prospective candidates on how to apply for state jobs, including those at the Water Boards. It is anticipated that materials will be ready to post in the spring of 2024.

ACTION 27

Require implicit bias and racial equity training for all hiring panelists, supervisors, and State and Regional Board Members.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity contains the requirements for all hiring panelists and supervisors to take implicit bias and/or equity training [[Action 24](#)]. These courses are regularly offered through the Water Boards Training Academy.

GOAL 2B: Foster a culture of inclusion and belonging

ACTION 28

Develop a mentorship program that allows employees, including BIPOC staff, to connect with others who may have similar experiences and to provide coaching on career growth and advancement.

LEAD: Division of Administrative Services

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Division of Administrative Services developed and launched a Water Boards mentorship program with the goal of aiding professional growth for both mentors and mentees. The guidance handbook for the mentorship program includes instructions and requirements for enrollment and best practices for both mentors and mentees. Implementation for the mentorship program has begun and applications for mentors are currently being solicited.

ACTION 29			
Update roundtable charters or workplans to include racial equity and include racial equity discussions as a standing agenda item on roundtables..			
LEAD: Division of Water Quality			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

Water Boards roundtables serve as coordinating bodies for specific programs within the organization’s structure. These forums are designed to ensure the efficient, consistent, and effective implementation of program requirements. Roundtables facilitate the incubation of ideas, exchange of information, discussion of program challenges and associated lessons learned, consideration of improvements, and the development of collective feedback and recommendations for upper management regarding program implementation and enhancement.

Environmental justice and racial equity are being added as standing agenda items to all program roundtables. Of the 17 program roundtables with established workplans or charters, 11 made updates in 2023 to include racial equity and environmental justice. Deputy Management Committee (DMC) roundtable liaisons are verifying that the remaining program roundtable charters and/or workplans are updated to include racial equity in 2024.

ACTION 30			
Distribute the second, biannual racial equity survey to the Water Boards to measure staff understanding of racial equity.			
LEAD: Office of Information Management and Assessment			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

In 2023, the Water Boards collaborated with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to survey Water Boards staff. The purpose of the optional and voluntary survey was to assess racial equity knowledge, skills, and experiences among staff to inform future action steps toward advancing racial equity. An online questionnaire, consisting of 62 questions, was administered. An electronic invitation to participate in the survey, as well as several follow-up reminders, were sent to all Water Boards staff.

Overall, respondents indicated a willingness and capacity to engage in racial equity work. Survey results revealed increased agreement on divisional and enterprise-wide actions as compared to 2020, validating the internal efforts that have been underway. While awareness of activities being undertaken improved, there is now an increased expressed desire to understand how the work fits within the various work of Water Boards divisions and offices, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of the activities put in motion. Disaggregated results across race and ethnicity, supervisory status, and division or work unit suggest the experiences and perspectives differ across the organization, calling for a nuanced, targeted approach. Survey results suggest that progress has been made over time and that continued support and resourcing will maximize the impacts of those activities, as well as provide opportunities to expand upon it. The survey results will be useful for shaping Water Boards’ long-term organizational racial equity strategy.

ACTION 31

Develop educational materials for staff to improve understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) processes for submitting racial discrimination/harassment complaints and following up after a complaint has been submitted.

LEAD: Equal Employment Opportunity

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

Equal Employment Opportunity Office is delivering trainings on the complaints process to regional water boards and will be training State Water Board staff in 2024.

Strategic Direction #3

ACTIVATING BIPOC COMMUNITY WISDOM AND SHARING POWER

Fostering open communications for voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities; building power in BIPOC communities by cultivating authentic relationships and engaging communities as partners for racial equity; offering ongoing training, education, and dedicated resources to raise awareness of the Water Boards’ role in managing the state’s water resources; and incorporating wisdom from Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities in Water Boards’ decision-making processes.

GOAL 3A:

Engage with BIPOC communities by providing effective language access services and accessible communication

ACTION 32

Cultivate relationships with ethnic and multi-language media in BIPOC communities and provide opportunities for them to understand and contextualize water policy information.

LEAD: Office of Public Affairs

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Affairs has been conducting outreach to media outlets throughout the state to expand its media relationships and encourage local reporting on water quality issues impacting Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. The Office of Public Affairs has met with umbrella organizations like Ethnic Media Services and others to facilitate this outreach and understand how to best elicit local media interest in water issues and connect reporters with resources. Using the Ethnic Media Services 2020 California Media Directory and other resources, the Office of Public Affairs has engaged with 27 new outlets this year, one-third of which are Spanish language media. During these contacts, the Office of Public Affairs has helped reporters understand the structure of the Water Boards, how to navigate the Water Boards’ websites and the types of stories that may be relevant to their geographical and thematic areas of interest.

ACTION 33

Review and evaluate existing photo library inventory and identify gaps to diversify photos so that our communications material better reflect California’s people. Create guidance for staff on use of culturally sensitive imagery, such as for Native American ceremonies, and avoiding images that reinforce racial stereotypes.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Affairs reviewed imagery (photographs and graphics) on Water Boards’ most mature social media channels, Twitter (now X), and Instagram, to evaluate its diversity and inclusion. As the Water Boards did not have a dedicated position to social media management during 2023, content on Instagram was dormant for part of the year. As a result, a comparison of imagery on Instagram was conducted across a six-month timeframe in 2022 versus 2021, while content on Twitter was evaluated across a six-month timeframe in 2023 versus 2022.

Overall, much of the imagery on the Water Boards’ social media channels depicts the natural environment and does not feature people. On Twitter, about half of the photographs used contain people, while on Instagram only one-third do. Of those images on Twitter that do have people, about 67% contained at least one person of color in 2023 versus about 75% in 2022; on Instagram, about 79% contained at least one person of color in 2022 versus about 63% in 2021.

The channels differ in format, presentation and use, leading to a natural qualitative difference between the selection photographs and other imagery. Board member appearances and events were highlighted more frequently on Twitter, while Instagram featured many job postings and announcements, but also storytelling featuring people. An opportunity may exist to boost the diversity on these channels by increasing the overall number of photos of people. The Communications Office will be adding a position dedicated to social media management in 2024; among the incumbent’s duties will be the strategic management of the Water Boards’ social media presence to increase content that supports communications objectives, expands the Water Boards’ reach to new platforms, and promotes diversity and the Water Boards’ racial equity goals.

ACTION 34

Add racial equity, diversity, and inclusion guidance to the Water Boards’ existing editorial style guide, including plain language writing, using acronyms, a racial equity glossary of terms, and culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive language, etc.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Affairs is developing an editorial guide and anticipates completing a draft by the end of 2024.

ACTION 35

Revise the Water Boards’ public comment webpages and instructions to better describe the process and improve access to participation.

LEAD: Communications Office

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation, in collaboration with the State Water Board Clerk, is developing the webpage revisions and anticipates finalizing revisions to the webpages in 2024.

ACTION 36

Create a new public notice template to be used by Water Boards staff. The template will use plain language, have an intuitive layout, communicate potential racial equity impacts, and explain how participant input will be considered.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation, the State Water Board Clerk, and Office of Chief Counsel are actively working on this project.

ACTION 37

Finalize language access guidance document and deliver training to Water Boards staff on language access laws and best practices.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation is actively working on this project and anticipates the draft guidance will be released in 2024.



Water Boards staff receiving input in Spanish through a collaborative breakout session for the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program's Advisory Group meeting.

ACTION 38

Implement a form that the public can use to request language services. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation developed an online form that the public can use to request language services for translation or interpretation needs and to submit complaints for language services. The form is available in six languages: Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Punjabi. In 2024, a public rollout will be implemented to raise awareness of the availability of language services and of how to access the services. The [online form](#) can be found on Water Boards websites.

ACTION 39

Expand the Spanish language glossary to include more terminology related to water. Use glossary to ensure consistent and accessible use of terminology.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation is regularly adding new terms to the Spanish language glossary. The glossary is used to provide guidance to Spanish language interpreters and translators to ensure consistency with Water Boards Spanish language terminology. In 2024, the Office of Public Participation will vet the terminology with Spanish speaking communities to ensure alignment in understanding of terms and will publish the glossary online to be used as a resource.

GOAL 3B:

Remove barriers for community access and participation in water decision-making by providing resources for capacity building, including funding, training, and education

ACTION 40			
Improve Water Board participation in community-based environmental violations monitoring meetings (IVAN meetings). LEAD: Office of Enforcement			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Enforcement collaborates with various California Environmental Protection Agency boards, departments, and offices in attending regular community Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) meetings to gather and address environmental complaints. Additionally, the Office of Enforcement leads monthly focus group sessions within the Los Angeles Environmental Justice Network and leads or co-leads collaborative teams addressing illegal dumping for Kern and Fresno Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods groups. When necessary or appropriate, the Office of Enforcement assumes a leadership role in addressing community concerns related to water pollution arising from Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods meetings.

ACTION 41			
Develop guidance document for improvising/streamlining enforcement complaint process to improve responsiveness to community complaints. LEAD: Office of Enforcement			
NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Enforcement reviewed Water Boards complaint portals for duplicated complaint pathways, broken links, and outdated contact information. The Office of Enforcement is exploring how to create a centralized tracking system for complaints received across regions, divisions, and offices in coordination with California Environmental Protection Agency’s complaint tracking system.



Water Boards staff participating in a community-led environmental compliance monitoring event

ACTION 42

Develop a form for members of the public to submit questions or requests. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation currently manages ombudsperson phone calls and emails from the public. As questions and concerns come in, the Office of Public Participation routes the member of the public to the appropriate region, division, or office. An online form is being developed to streamline this process and develop template responses for commonly asked questions and requests. The online form will be able to better route and track public inquiries and will be made available in 2024.

ACTION 43

Continue to update the external contact list on a quarterly basis and expand curated lists for groups and leaders working on racial and environmental justice.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation compiled an external contact list for Water Boards staff to utilize for enhancing their project outreach efforts. This external contact list can be used by staff to create tailored project contact lists. The contact list includes organizations representing various interests, expertise, and geographic areas. Categories include community organizations, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, schools/academia, advocacy groups, and tribal interest groups. Over 200 new contacts were added this quarter for a total of 2,866 contacts. In 2024, the Office of Public Participation will continue expanding the list and raising awareness of how to utilize the resource. The Office of Public Participation will also explore opportunities for public vetting and expansion of the list.

ACTION 44

Coordinate the second cohort of the Facilitation and Training Pool to train Water Boards staff on how to engage with communities effectively, how to design and manage engagement processes, and how to navigate challenging conversations.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

One of the Office of Public Participation’s priorities is to build the capacity of all Water Boards staff to engage effectively with communities, tribes, and other interested parties.

In 2023, a cohort within the Office of Public Participation pursued and obtained a Professional Certificate in Public Engagement for Government through the Davenport Institute in Pepperdine University’s School of Public Policy. The Office of Public Participation will leverage the expertise obtained through this certificate program to develop and implement a public engagement training curriculum through the Water Boards’ Training Academy. Supplementary templates and resources to support effective public engagement practices will also be developed and made available to Water Boards staff in 2024 and 2025.

ACTION 45

Develop guidance and templates for developing outreach and engagement plans that support equitable public participation, engagement, and community and tribal partnerships.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

In 2022, Assembly Bill 2108 added sections 189.7 and 13149.2 to the Water Code. This legislation requires the Water Boards to consider how certain water quality projects or decisions may disproportionately impact low income and tribal communities, and meaningfully engage with those communities. To ensure effective engagement, the Office of Public Participation developed guidance for best practices in community and tribal outreach. The guidance document is not a prescriptive checklist, but rather a flexible tool to be used in developing an engagement plan. The guidance document was accompanied by a project plan template that models a format staff can use to track and manage their projects from start to completion. The excel document can be downloaded and used as a tool to collect community profile and water quality data, as well as organize and plan outreach and engagement activities. An internal staff-led workshop was held to train staff on how to utilize these new tools.

Throughout 2023, many programs have actively utilized these tools to implement enhanced engagement strategies. The Office of Public Participation intends to collect internal and external feedback on how to improve this guidance for better outcomes and revise the guidance accordingly. Additional resources and templates for equitable engagement will be developed in the coming months.

ACTION 46

Develop a template and guidance for creating and using community profiles to inform engagement strategies, for planning equitable and accessible meetings, and for using plain language in document development.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation developed this action as part of the outreach and engagement guidance action. Please see the response to [Action 45](#).

ACTION 47

Create a local workforce development pilot through the SAFER drinking water program to address barriers to maintaining sustainable drinking water solutions in small, disadvantaged communities.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation and the Division of Drinking Water interviewed a number of interested parties to better understand the need and opportunity to support workforce development efforts. Interviews have included drinking water operators, water systems, community colleges, universities, and workforce development organizations, including the California Workforce Development Board.

As part of its continued scoping efforts, the Office of Public Participation facilitated a discussion about language needs for the operator certification program with the Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committees coordinated by the Division of Financial Assistance. The Water Boards are currently exploring the potential of translating the operator certification exam and associated materials as part of its broader workforce development scoping efforts.

ACTION 48

Develop a community capacity building pilot fund to: 1) compensate tribal and BIPOC community partners for their time and expertise; and 2) support tribal- and community-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation developed a proposal for piloting a community capacity building funding program. The project has not moved forward because a viable funding source has not been identified.

ACTION 49

Purchase constituent relationship management (CRM) software to improve, focus, and monitor engagement with BIPOC communities and tribes.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation, in collaboration with the Division of Information and Technology, is working to identify funding for the software. The Office of Public Participation will work with the contractor to build the system architecture, develop guidance for the system’s data management, and train staff on utilizing the software.

ACTION 50

In consultation with BIPOC communities, non-governmental organizations, and tribes, expand press distribution lists with a racial equity lens and add media contacts who represent and are connected with BIPOC communities.

LEAD: Office of Public Affairs

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Affairs added 17 media representatives from media outlets reporting on issues affecting disadvantaged and/or Black, Indigenous, and other people of color communities to its press distribution lists.

**GOAL 3C:
Consult, collaborate, and partner with BIPOC communities
in decision-making processes**

ACTION 51

Implement Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) by developing guidance on using racial equity data to identify potential environmental justice water quality impacts, engage with communities potentially impacted, and develop findings based on data and outreach.

LEAD: Division of Water Quality

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

This project is being completed as part of the Racial Equity Data Action Plan under **Action 2**.

ACTION 52

Provide briefings for legislators who represent geographic areas with a high percentage of BIPOC communities to help inform them of Water Boards’ resources and community participation processes, and to better understand barriers to implementation and hear suggestions for how to overcome them.

LEAD: Office of Legislative Affairs

NOT STARTED

SCOPING

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

Progress Summary:

The Office of Legislative Affairs is actively working on this project.

ACTION 53

Update Tribal Affairs webpage to include a table of current tribal consultation opportunities for all Water Boards projects subject to AB 52.

LEAD: Office of Public Participation

NOT STARTED	SCOPING	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
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Progress Summary:

The Office of Public Participation is actively working on this project and plans on updating the Tribal Affairs webpage in 2024. This update will include a table of current tribal consultation opportunities.

Appendix A

REGIONAL WATER BOARD SUMMARY



While this annual report is focused on the State Water Board’s Racial Equity Action Plan, various efforts to advance racial equity and environmental justice are taking place across the nine regional water boards. Multiple regional water boards are currently developing or have completed their own racial equity resolutions and action plans. Several regional water boards also developed internal working groups, embedded equity considerations in existing programs, and have incorporated discussions about racial equity and environmental justice considerations into internal standing meetings.

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Appendix A includes updates on efforts to institutionalize racial equity within the regional water quality control boards and is not an exhaustive list of all efforts made to advance racial equity and environmental justice. In addition to these updates, many regions are taking the following actions:

- Expanding recruitment efforts to diversify applicant pools
- Building capacity to apply a racial equity and environmental justice lens to public engagement
- Building relationships with frontline communities and seeking partnership for future engagement
- Exploring leadership structures that support accountability and continued momentum towards equity goals. For example, assigning staff to serve as environmental justice or racial equity coordinators, establish environmental justice leadership teams or racial equity working groups.

REGION 1: North Coast Water Board

The North Coast Water Board adopted a [Racial Equity Resolution](#) on February 2, 2023. The internal working group has an 18-month schedule to develop and complete an action plan to advance the goals of the resolution. The North Coast Water Board has begun engagement activities to support the development of their action plan. More information can be found on the [North Coast Water Board's website](#).

REGION 2: San Francisco Bay

In March 2023, the San Francisco Bay Water Board presented the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Strategic Workplan to its Board, which identified addressing environmental justice and advancing racial equity as an organizational priority. In September 2023, the San Francisco Bay Water Board Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Action Plan was presented to the San Francisco Bay Water Board which identified actions to advance environmental justice and racial equity. Program activities were prioritized to protect water quality and beneficial water uses in communities that have experienced historical racism and environmental justice. The San Francisco Bay Water Board has been engaging with communities by showing up, listening, responding to community concerns and briefing them on topics of interest to them. A recruiting team has been formed that is working to identify and implement strategies to recruit a diverse pool of candidates for job openings. The San Francisco Bay Water Board is tracking their progress for each action identified in its Racial Equity Action Plan and updating its Board on progress. More information can be found on the [San Francisco Bay Water Board's website](#).

REGION 3: Central Coast

The Central Coast Water Board adopted a [Racial Equity Resolution](#) on February 16, 2023 and formed an environmental justice, racial equity, and tribal engagement leadership team to effectively integrate these areas into the organizational culture, water quality programs and projects, and external engagement with communities. The Central Coast Water Board is currently developing an action plan to advance the goals of the resolution and focus on program-specific opportunities for implementation and plans to provide an annual update at the Central Coast Water Board meeting in February 2024. As part of the action plan, the Central Coast Water Board maintains the expectation that every staff person review and implement environmental justice and racial equity policies, complete specific environmental justice training, and develop and implement an outreach plan to engage underrepresented communities and Tribes. Additionally, every Central Coast Water Board staff report includes information on how the project implements environmental justice and the human right to water. More information can be found on the [Central Coast Water Board's website](#).

REGION 4: Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Water Board established an internal racial equity and environmental justice working group that will develop a racial equity and environmental justice resolution and subsequent action plan. More information can be found on the [Los Angeles Water Board's website](#).

REGION 5: Central Valley

The Central Valley Water Board adopted a [Racial Equity Resolution](#) on December 14, 2022. Following the adoption of the Resolution, each of the Central Valley Water Board's 19 water quality programs incorporated racial equity goals in their annual workplans for FY 23/24. The group that developed the Racial Equity Resolution formed three groups to assist the implementation of the Regional Racial Equity Resolution:

- Accountability Group- tracks progress towards meeting racial equity goals and reports to the Central Valley Water Board every fiscal year.
- Inclusion Group- works with employee associations across the three offices to help integrate racial equity values into workplace culture.
- Equity Training/Assessment Group- provides trainings, analyzes survey results, and proposes additional measures to track progress towards creating a more equitable and inclusive workplace.

More information can be found on the [Central Valley Water Board's website](#).

REGION 6: Lahontan

The Lahontan Water Board established an internal racial equity working group that is developing a racial equity resolution. The working group developed a draft resolution that is being reviewed internally through internal engagement efforts. The Lahontan Water Board's core goals were updated to include racial equity considerations in Lahontan Water Board actions and work prioritizations. More information can be found on the [Lahontan Water Board's website](#).

REGION 7: Colorado River

The Colorado River Water Board's Strategic Plan includes objectives to strategically engage with underserved and underrepresented communities. Colorado River Water Board staff developed and issued programmatic fact sheets, fact sheets for cleanup and underground storage tank sites and have engaged with environmental justice and tribal interested parties in development of Total Maximum Daily Loads and the Integrated Report. More information can be found on the [Colorado River Water Board's website](#).

REGION 8: Santa Ana

The Santa Ana Water Board is currently developing a Racial Equity Resolution, with adoption by the Santa Ana Water Board scheduled for the first half of 2024. The Santa Ana Region's Executive Officer convened a racial equity workgroup composed of staff and managers volunteering to participate in the development of the region-specific resolution. Following the Resolution development, the Santa Ana Region will develop an Action Plan that will provide actions that will be incorporated in the Region's water quality programs to address racial inequities and environmental justice concerns. The workgroup also serves as a racial equity resource for internal staff and conducts self-education such as Tribal Allyship Training in March and May of 2023. In July 2023, the workgroup organized and facilitated internal staff listening sessions to inform the Resolution development. More information can be found on the [Santa Ana Water Board's website](#).

REGION 9: San Diego

In September 2023, the San Diego Water Board approved its 2023–24 Operation Plan which includes a new Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation project. The objective of the Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation Project is to implement racial equity and environmental justice projects annually that will help make progress towards achieving the goals of the San Diego Water Board Practical Vision (Chapter 4—Implement Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Measures), the State Water Board Racial Equity Resolution, and the State Board Racial Equity Action Plan. More information can be found on the [San Diego Water Board's website](#).

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Appendix B

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Racial Equity Action Plan published in January 2023, included performance indicators for each action. Performance indicators are quantitative performance measures and qualitative targets to assess progress and evaluate each action’s success. Due to the diversity of actions included in this plan, measurements of success include metrics, milestones, data, and other indicators that can be used to indicate successful completion of actions or to track progress toward actions over time.

During the first year of Action Plan implementation, Water Board staff discovered that the performance indicators identified when the actions were first developed were not the most meaningful for measuring progress. Many actions will require the collection of data over time to inform future development of meaningful performance targets. For those actions, quantifiable measurements (e.g., number of permits, percent of staff) have been included in the narrative progress summary section of the report to establish a baseline measure from which to evaluate the action’s success in future years. To ensure their utility, metrics may be added or changed over time. Knowledge gained from tracking these performance indicators may result in the development of additional indicators and inform future iterations of the action plan.

Table 2: Performance Indicators for Actions in the 2023–2025 Racial Equity Action Plan.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
1	Update the State Water Board’s racial equity webpage to include a page for tracking and measuring progress on the Racial Equity Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage updated

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
2	<p>Develop and implement a Racial Equity Data Action Plan (REDAP). At a minimum, the REDAP must do the following: (1) Develop training and best practices guidance for Water Boards staff on incorporating racial equity concepts into the planning and design of data collection methods and visualizations (e.g., maps, factsheets, etc.) projects. (2) Identify and expand existing opportunities for public participation in science and community data gathering programs to develop new data collection methods, support existing programs, and incorporate community datasets into the database. (3) Create a publicly accessible data catalog tool / interface that includes existing demographic data, Water Boards program data, and other available data (such as heat maps or flood hazard maps) to inform the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate draft REDAP to Water Board organizations by January 2023. • Develop REDAP best practices draft guidance by February 2023. • Deliver beta version REDAP best practices training online by March 2023. • Build online platform for public access to REDAP priority data catalog and visualization tools by February 2023.
3	<p>Incorporate racial equity analysis into the 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report to identify impacted waters in BIPOC and disadvantaged communities, starting by identifying data gaps. The Integrated Report is a document with a comprehensive review of surface water quality and includes a list of currently impaired water bodies by pollutant type.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly identified or prioritized waters in BIPOC and disadvantaged communities in the Integrated Report
4	<p>Identify and assess available data to identify racial equity data gaps related to water quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWQ units/programs that have completed data needs assessments • Types and # of datasets assessed • Process for ground truthing data sets developed
5	<p>Include a Racial Equity Action Plan progress update at a State Water Board meeting. The update should include any barriers, such as funding or legislation, encountered as the plan is implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial Equity Action Plan update held at a State Water Board meeting in 2024

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
6	Incorporate racial equity analysis into the annual Drinking Water Needs Assessment, including a measurement of the number of BIPOC communities impacted by primary and secondary contaminants in drinking water and water unaffordability. Work with U.S. EPA to implement a similar analysis to federally regulated tribal water systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each future Needs Assessment will include the evaluation. • Types of data incorporated into the Needs Assessment.
7	Assess race/ethnicity data and other relevant demographic data, associated with the communities that benefit from funding administered by DFA. Existing annual funding reports and plans will be the primary mechanism to report these data on a project specific basis, where appropriate. In addition, summaries for the funding program will be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Funding program reports/plans that include racial, ethnic, and other demographic information
8	Deputy directors and directors should regularly discuss their division’s or office’s progress with their staff on actions identified in the Racial Equity Action Plan and gauge where more support is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division and office senior leaders meet regularly with program leaders to discuss racial equity progress and resource needs to complete actions.
9	Develop a racial equity toolkit for all Water Boards staff to consider racial equity in their day-to-day work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit developed
10	Develop training and guidance for how to implement the racial equity toolkit to examine potential disproportionate impacts of policies and programs on BIPOC communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training developed • # Staff trained • # Programs that have piloted the toolkit
11	Select, train, and support a second cohort of Water Boards staff to deliver “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” trainings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Water Boards staff trained

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
12	Develop a racial equity training plan for staff that will guide efforts to develop and coordinate a racial equity curriculum through the Training Academy. Elements may include analysis of what trainings are effective; what trainings should be required; how often people should get training; which current courses could be modified to incorporate more content related to racial equity; how racial equity goals should inform the selection, onboarding, and evaluation of instructors and vendors providing materials or courses; and what educational content could be developed or made available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed
13	As appropriate, ensure that priorities and actions within the State Water Board’s annual Strategic Work Plan reflect this action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Strategic Work Plan actions that reflect use of a racial equity lens
14	Develop a plan to identify climate change impacts (related to State Water Board authorities) and how they may potentially disproportionately impact BIPOC communities or interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed
15	In basins where State Water Board intervention into groundwater management (through SGMA authorities) is likely, engage with BIPOC communities that may be affected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and # of engagement efforts made to engage with BIPOC communities and groups • # Meetings or workshops in communities where residents are predominantly BIPOC
16	Assess potential equity impacts of the proposed urban water use efficiency regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the degree data allows, consider equity in analyses done related to the rulemaking

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
17	Pilot the racial equity toolkit to identify program-specific actions, priorities, and metrics, and realign programs and practices to advance racial equity, and assess the effectiveness of programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desired outcomes and accountability metrics are developed using results-based accountability approach for each DWQ program • Type and # of metrics developed by engaging with U.S. EPA to implement the Justice 40 initiative for federally funded programs (e.g., nonpoint source grants, ocean beach monitoring grants, water quality management planning). The Justice 40 initiative includes distributing 40% of federal funds to disadvantaged communities. • Process established for ground truthing data sets
18	Provide guidance to Regional Water Boards on the consideration of impacts to BIPOC communities and environmental justice when addressing impaired waters through development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or other actions to restore clean water. Use prioritization to inform allocation of funding for environmental cleanup projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised guidance to Regional Water Boards on setting priorities to address impaired waters through the development of TMDLs or other restoration actions. Prioritization factors should include impacts to BIPOC communities and consider environmental justice. • Revised TMDL program guidance for the development of TMDL implementation plans to include consideration of BIPOC communities and environmental justice. Consider revising the implementation plan guidance in A Process for Addressing Impaired Waters in California (adopted by SWB Resolution 2005-0050).
19	Participate as partners in implementing the Environmental Justice Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participation in EJ community listening sessions • Staff participation in EJ Enforcement Rapid Response Team • Participation in community outreach training for enforcement staff • # Multimedia inspections in overburdened communities

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
20	Consider impacts to BIPOC communities, tribal beneficial uses and cultural resources, and related ecosystems when developing, implementing, and enforcing instream flow requirements, consistent with all applicable laws and requirements, including those related to water rights, basin planning, public trust resources, and endangered species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and update a webpage that identifies streams with ongoing instream flow development activities.
21	Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Water Rights to serve as a coordinator on Bay-Delta tribal and BIPOC engagement to improve communication and outreach and conduct tribal outreach under AB 52 and B-10-11 for the Bay-Delta Plan implementation regulation for Lower San Joaquin River flows and Southern Delta Salinity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Division coordinator • Number of consultation requests and engagements related to development of the Sacramento River watershed and interior Delta (Sac/Delta) Bay-Delta Plan Staff Report • Include a chapter in the Sacramento/Delta Staff report focused on BIPOC and disadvantaged community issues
22	Incorporate racial equity analysis when developing maximum contaminant levels using available data and as data and methods allow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each future maximum contaminant level will include a racial equity analysis when data and methods allow.
23	Review existing data, and new data to be collected and produced by CalHR, on demographics of Water Boards staff. Disaggregate data by Region, Division, Office, position classification, etc. and publish findings to the Racial Equity Webpage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate Action Plan is revised and distributed to all Water Boards hiring managers.
24	Review and revise the “Immediate Action Plan for Advancing Workforce Diversity” to improve long-term effectiveness of strategies to recruit, promote, and retain BIPOC staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the number and type of recruitments, such as in-person job fairs and visits.

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
25	Increase recruitment for job openings and internship opportunities at high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, workforce development networks, and community-based groups that serve BIPOC communities in California. Collaborate with Regional Water Boards on future recruitment efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the number and type of recruitments, such as in-person job fairs and visits.
26	Update the Water Boards’ website to include additional guidance for prospective applicants on how to navigate the state’s hiring process, with a focus on successfully applying for Water Board positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to provide and require implicit bias and racial equity training for staff by January 2024.
27	Require implicit bias and racial equity training for all hiring panelists, supervisors, and State and Regional Board Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to provide and require implicit bias and racial equity training for staff by January 2024.
28	Develop a mentorship program that allows employees, including BIPOC staff, to connect with others who may have similar experiences and to provide coaching on career growth and advancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on the Water Board’s internal mentoring program is finalized.
29	Update roundtable charters or workplans to include racial equity and include racial equity discussions as a standing agenda item on roundtables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of roundtables with updated charters and/or workplans to include racial equity
30	Distribute the second, biannual racial equity survey to the Water Boards to measure staff understanding of racial equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey response rate above 60%
31	Develop educational materials for staff to improve understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) processes for submitting racial discrimination/harassment complaints and following up after a complaint has been submitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials developed

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
32	Cultivate relationships with ethnic and multi-language media in BIPOC communities and provide opportunities for them to understand and contextualize water policy information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Direct conversations with ethnic and multi-language media professionals in BIPOC communities • # Articles published in new multi-language media outlets
33	Review and evaluate existing photo library inventory and identify gaps to diversify photos so that our communications material better reflect California’s people. Create guidance for staff on use of culturally sensitive imagery, such as for Native American ceremonies, and avoiding images that reinforce racial stereotypes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a baseline by counting the number of photos featuring people of color posted on social media in 2022. In 2023, compare progress to the baseline. • Diversify photos used on social media to better reflect the demographics of California (25% increase in people of color photos used).
34	Add racial equity, diversity, and inclusion guidance to the Water Boards’ existing editorial style guide, including plain language writing, using acronyms, a racial equity glossary of terms, and culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive language, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to the editorial style guide completed • In 2023, create a rollout plan for distributing and explaining the style guide to all Water Boards staff by January 2024.
35	Revise the Water Boards’ public comment webpages and instructions to better describe the process and improve access to participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage revisions completed
36	Create a new public notice template to be used by Water Boards staff. The template will use plain language, have an intuitive layout, communicate potential racial equity impacts, and explain how participant input will be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notice template completed
37	Finalize language access guidance document and deliver training to Water Boards staff on language access laws and best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance completed
38	Implement a form that the public can use to request language services. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form published

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
39	Expand the Spanish language glossary to include more terminology related to water. Use glossary to ensure consistent and accessible use of terminology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New terms added every quarter
40	Improve Water Board participation in community-based environmental violations monitoring meetings (IVAN meetings).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and track participation in IVAN meetings and training by Water Boards staff.
41	Develop guidance document for improving/streamlining enforcement complaint process to improve responsiveness to community complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplicate complaint pathways eliminated, outdated complaint links removed, and email addresses from Water Board web pages are updated • Guidance document disseminated and implemented
42	Develop a form for members of the public to submit questions or requests. Distribute the form via public notices, the Water Boards website, and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form published
43	Continue to update the external contact list on a quarterly basis and expand curated lists for groups and leaders working on racial and environmental justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New contacts added to list per quarter
44	Coordinate the second cohort of the Facilitation and Training Pool to train Water Boards staff on how to engage with communities effectively, how to design and manage engagement processes, and how to navigate challenging conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Staff members trained and certified as Water Boards facilitators • # Meetings, workshops, and trainings facilitated by Facilitation and Training pool members
45	Develop guidance and templates for developing outreach and engagement plans that support equitable public participation, engagement, and community and tribal partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed best practices guidance document

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
46	Develop a template and guidance for creating and using community profiles to inform engagement strategies, for planning equitable and accessible meetings, and for using plain language in document development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed pilot strategy document
47	Create a local workforce development pilot through the SAFER drinking water program to address barriers to maintaining sustainable drinking water solutions in small, disadvantaged communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed pilot strategy document
48	Develop a community capacity building pilot fund to: 1) compensate tribal and BIPOC community partners for their time and expertise; and 2) support tribal- and community-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed funding pilot charter presented to the Board
49	Purchase constituent relationship management (CRM) software to improve, focus, and monitor engagement with BIPOC communities and tribes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed procedures for inputting data and using tool
50	In consultation with BIPOC communities, non-governmental organizations, and tribes, expand press distribution lists with a racial equity lens and add media contacts who represent and are connected with BIPOC communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New media contacts that represent and are connected with BIPOC communities
51	Implement Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) by developing guidance on using racial equity data to identify potential environmental justice water quality impacts, engage with communities potentially impacted, and develop findings based on data and outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # New resources developed providing guidance on implementation of Assembly Bill 2108 • Type and # of DWQ templates updated (e.g., project charters, outreach plans) to include racial equity and environmental justice data considerations

Action #	Action	Performance Indicator
52	Provide briefings for legislators who represent geographic areas with a high percentage of BIPOC communities to help inform them of Water Boards' resources and community participation processes, and to better understand barriers to implementation and hear suggestions for how to overcome them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Briefings held • Geographic diversity of participants' elective office included in briefings • Diversity of type of elective offices contacted
53	Update Tribal Affairs webpage to include a table of current tribal consultation opportunities for all Water Boards projects subject to AB 52.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage completed