



Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI)

Program Framework

September 2023

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01

Program Overview

Engage, Empower, Implement Program Introduction

Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI) is a new funding program that resulted from the SACOG 2020 Regional Funding Round Framework, currently allocated at \$3.8 million to support place-based planning and pre-construction project development activities in the region. This investment has a specific focus on community engagement around the issues of race, equity, and inclusion. EEI will provide funding and support to community-based planning processes that bring together community-based organizations, cities, and counties in the six-county SACOG Region. The investment in the region's planning process to be more community-led is a strategy for developing future projects that positively impact the region's most disinvested communities and that work to implement the 2025 Blueprint's triple bottom line initiatives of ***Equity, Environment, and Economy***.

SACOG intends to financially support community-led planning and provide technical assistance through capacity building for community-based organizations (CBOs), city, and county staff. EEI will establish principles of community-led planning and design to guide the identification of communities' priorities and development of projects that meet their needs. Through this collaborative planning process with CBOs and SACOG member cities and counties, the region will be able to create and identify community-driven and equitable projects that can more readily qualify for federal and state funding sources. Increasingly, these funding programs are favoring more meaningful engagement processes that benefit historically underserved and disinvested communities.

The desired outcomes of EEI are twofold. First, the development of specific projects or plans with and for historically disinvested communities, as will be defined in the application process. These can include specific projects or community/neighborhood specific plans, playbooks with policy recommendations, etc. Examples of these types of projects include [Community-Based Transportation Plans](#) by peer agency Metropolitan Transportation Commission; [Stockton Mobility Collective](#) as led by peer agency San Joaquin Council of Governments; and [Cambodia Town Thrives](#) in Long Beach. Second, an investment in meaningful community engagement processes, and reestablished trust and restored relationships between cities/counties and community organizations that are closely connected to the region's residents.

EEI will be funded through a few funding sources that include \$300,000 in SACOG Managed Funds; \$500,000 from a Congressional Earmark; and \$3 million in Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds.

Specific eligibility for EEI will be defined in the final guidelines. General eligibility under these funds are connected to the RSTP guidelines of surface transportation planning programs, highway and transit research and development and technology transfer programs, workforce development, training, and education, that allow some flexibility to go beyond exclusively transportation projects. Congressional Earmark guidelines are focused on air quality improvement.

Engage, Empower, Implement Program

The EEI program mission is to create a pipeline of equitable, safe, and sustainable projects throughout the greater Sacramento region that are community-led. The priorities of the EEI program are to:



FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Working closely with community-based organizations is critical to improving overall planning practices and creating more equitable outcomes. This program will help establish meaningful relationships and partnerships with CBOs that will last beyond the program.



INTEGRATE RACIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS MORE FULLY INTO REGIONAL INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Focusing on community engagement will create projects based in community priorities and build trust between communities and governments. Lessons learned from EEI projects will inform current and future SACOG programs to ensure equity is embedded throughout its mission.



ESTABLISH AUTHENTIC AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AS THE FIRST STEP IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Centering equitable engagement practices as the critical first step in planning for new projects, ensuring that true community needs are reflected in the end-results, and creating the necessary infrastructure to support a pipeline of equity-rooted projects.



MEET FEDERAL AND STATE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND ALIGN POLICY GOALS WITH EQUITY INITIATIVES

Following federal and state equity performance targets is a critical requirement SACOG has always met. EEI can elevate SACOG as a leader on these crucial measures.



PROVIDE THE TOOLS, BEST PRACTICES, AND INCENTIVES TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR MORE PUBLIC AGENCIES TO DELIVER EQUITABLE PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Allow for project implementation in the future, creating a pipeline of equity-based projects.



POSITION THE SACRAMENTO REGION FOR COMPETITIVE FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

Federal and state competitive programs are increasingly looking for equity-focused investments, informed by data collected through community engagement.

Framework Executive Summary

Project Funding Guidelines

Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

- Utilize flexible funding sources to fund CBO priority topic projects that typically fall outside of SACOG's federal funding restrictions.
- Use 5% of flexible funds to fund an EEI pilot program that allows CBOs to apply independently, without a city/county partner.
- EEI grant funding should be between \$150K-\$300K for CBO and governmental partnership, with allocation to the city/county being no more than 50%.

Pre-Application Process

Establish a pre-application process that fosters partnership development between CBOs and cities/counties and capacity building for both entities.

- Host multiple pre-application meetings to clarify application expectations, answer questions, and educate newer CBOs on the application process.
- Host trainings or workshops for counties/cities partnering with CBOs on EEI projects, including power mapping and power sharing exercises.
- During this pre-application process SACOG should also help CBOs make connections to potential city/county partners

Project Application Process

Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

- Connect with CBOs, faith-based institutions, and other community leaders to distribute grant application opportunities
- Appoint a dedicated staff member at SACOG to address questions and provide the technical assistance needed.
- Develop and share pre-made application forms and templates that can expedite the application process.
- Allow 2-3 months for application response windows.

Framework Executive Summary

Project Funding and Invoicing Process	Project Execution	Program Evaluation
Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs. • Publish a general EEI contract template, and samples of required documentation to ensure CBOs understand the documentation and formats expected in their application. • Host bi-annual contract language workshops to educate CBOs on contracting requirements and agreements. • Streamline contract execution where possible by having dedicated SACOG staff to process paperwork and follow up with CBOs on additional needs. • Utilize flexible local funds to ensure that EEI grant recipients can receive 5%-10% of their award upfront to cover project startup costs, proceeding with reimbursement of funds thereafter.	Define the parameters and provide adequate support for an engagement process that ensures community representation and buy-in. • Dedicate a point of contact at SACOG to address CBO questions and provide critical technical assistance. SACOG should connect CBOs and encourage city/county partners to connect CBOs to supportive resources such as potential engagement venues, translation services, childcare services, etc. • SACOG should facilitate introductions between CBOs and local government partner staff, and act as a mediator during project execution by providing support and helping address potential power dynamic challenges.	Developing quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program. • Ensure a diverse and balanced review board by including the types of representation recommended by CBOs in the focus group feedback. • Develop EEI project metrics that illustrate community representation, ability to shape the project outcomes, and ultimate buy-in from targeted stakeholders. Possible metrics could include: the types of stakeholders reached, attendance for focus groups and community meetings, knowledge of a community issue among participants before and after an engagement process, and clearly illustrating areas where community input was able to be applied and where it was not able to be applied and for what reason. • Measure share of funds serving historically marginalized and/or environmentally vulnerable communities such as SACOG Environmental Justice Areas, CalEnviroScreen high percentile communities, and/or Federal Justice40 communities.

02

Framework Development Methodology

EEl Framework Development Methodology

The EEl Program Framework outlines the guidelines, criteria, and procedures that will govern the allocation, distribution, and implementation of EEl grants. The framework provides design recommendations for the EEl program to effectively fulfill its mission while incorporating best practices for partnering with CBOs.

In developing the EEl Program Framework, SACOG collaborated with HR&A Advisors and AIM Consulting to implement an engagement process that included a series of touch points with CBOs and member cities/counties. The goal of this engagement process was to listen and learn from CBOs and cities/counties to understand the barriers and opportunities they face when partnering on funding applications and public agency-led projects.

The framework engagement process focused on discussing typical barriers and proposed recommendations for the funding program. The insights gained from these engagement initiatives directly shaped the content of the EEl Program Framework, specifically in identifying typical barriers and proposed recommendations.

Framework Development Process Overview



Engage CBOs and cities/counties to understand funding needs and challenges and opportunities for accessing grant funding.

Develop EEl program framework recommendations.

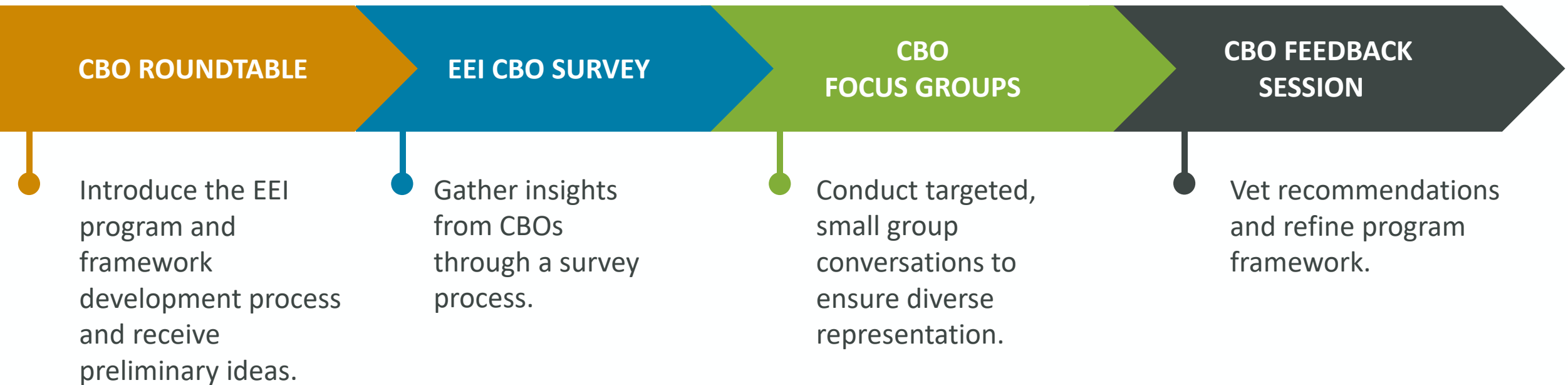
Share recommendations for CBO feedback and further refinement.

SACOG adopts EEl framework.

Launch EEl program and call for applicants.

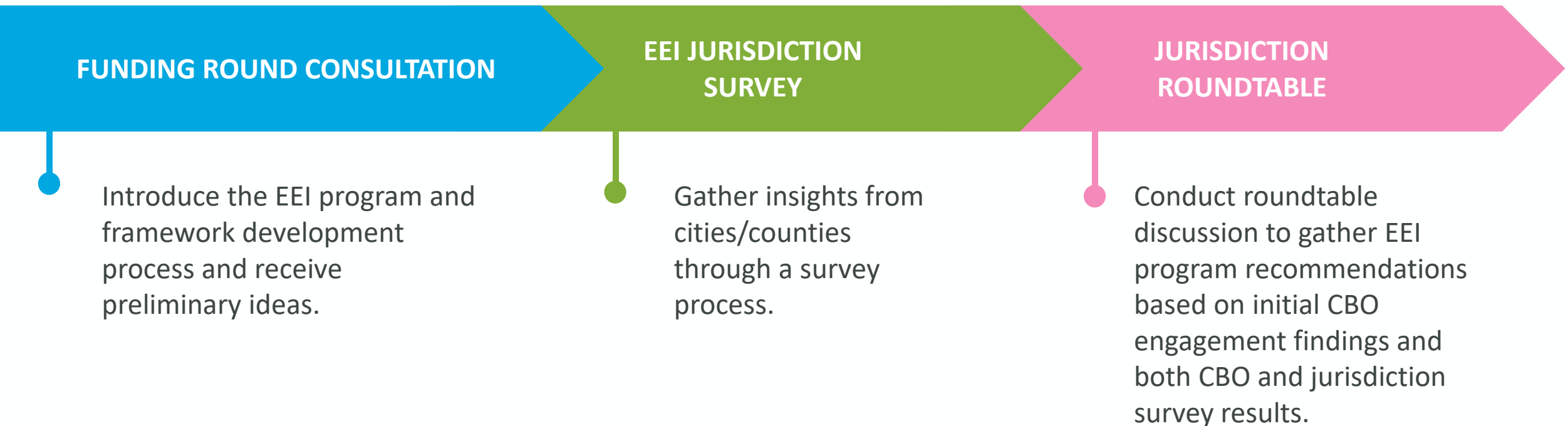
Community-Based Organization (CBO) Engagement Overview

Over the span of several months, the EEI Project Team actively collaborated with approximately 40 CBOs across the six-county SACOG region, spanning diverse topic areas such as transportation, housing, social service delivery, environmental justice, and beyond. The various components of this engagement are outlined below.



Jurisdiction Engagement Overview

SACOG staff met with public agency partners from the six-county region, including the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) and the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC). Engagement with public agencies began with the Funding Round Program Consultation meetings in 2022 and continued through: SACOG Board and Committee Meetings, regular Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) updates, Jurisdiction Roundtable, Jurisdiction Survey, and one-on-one jurisdiction consultations as requested.



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Key Elements of the EEI Program Framework

Understanding the Framework

The EEI Program Framework is organized by the key stages of a grant funding program. Building on SACOG’s Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP), the EEI framework explores opportunities to advance racial equity in the design of the grant funding process itself and within the discrete components of each stage. The framework elements embed equity across three core dimensions.

Racial Equity Action Plan equity definitions:

Equity Equity is defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To achieve and sustain equity, it needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.

Racial Equity When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

CORE EQUITY DIMENSIONS

Structural Equity	Addresses underlying structural factors and policies that uphold inequities and commits to correcting past harms and preventing future unintended consequences.
Procedural Equity	Designing decision-making processes that are transparent and inclusive for participants and acknowledges the imbalances in power and technical expertise that often exist when historically marginalized communities engage with public agencies in decision making.
Distributional Equity	Ensuring the fair distribution of services and resources, prioritizing distribution to support the communities with the greatest needs.

Key Stages of the EEI Framework

The following sections of the EEI Framework are organized by the key stages below and their respective critical process points. Within each critical process points, the framework addresses typical barriers for CBOs, identifies recommendations, and outlines implementation considerations.



Project Funding Guidelines	Pre-Application Process	Project Application Process	Project Funding and Invoicing Process	Project Execution	Program Evaluation
Define which types of groups and projects are eligible to apply for funding through SACOG and funding amounts.	Define the process for CBOs and cities/counties to engage in trainings and workshops that promote healthy and productive partnerships.	Define the process, materials, and resources needed to apply for funding and how applications will be evaluated.	Define the project funding and invoicing process as well as any contract or insurance requirements related to funding.	Define engagement process requirements for grantees as related to project execution and partnerships with cities/counties throughout the engagement process.	Define the process and metrics used for evaluating the overall impacts of the EEI program.

Navigating This Section

The framework includes the following elements for each key stage in the grant program life cycle:

- 1

Key Stage: Identifies the stage of designing a grant funding program.
- 2

EEI Equity Principle: Principles of an equitable grant funding informed by EEI framework engagement activities.
- 3

Critical Process Points: Decision points within each key stage.
- 4

Typical Barriers: Challenges that CBOs have historically faced informed by EEI framework engagement activities.
- 5

Framework Recommendations: Recommendations to address typical barriers informed by EEI framework engagement activities.
- 6

Implementation Considerations: Time and resource considerations to implement recommendations.

Page 1

1

Critical Process Point Title

2

EEI Equity Principle

3

Critical Process Point

Critical Process Point Title

Description of Critical Process Point

4

Typical Barriers

Description of typical barriers.

Page 2

1

Critical Process Point Title

2

EEI Equity Principle

5

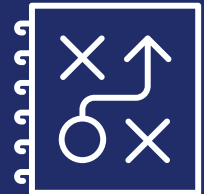
Framework Recommendations

Recommendation to address critical process point within program guidelines.

6

Implementation Considerations

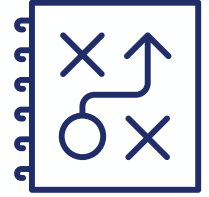
Overview of implementation details for SACOG to consider when preparing final program guidelines.



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Project Funding Guidelines

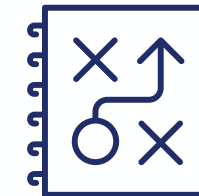
Determining Eligible Project Typologies



EI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Determining Eligible Project Typologies</i> <i>Ensuring that grant funding opportunities align with CBO mission and values and encompass the various needs of communities across the region.</i>	CBOs in SACOG’s six-county area have difficulty finding grant opportunities that align with their mission and areas of focus. Alignment of priorities for grant funding opportunities consistently ranked high on the list of typical barriers for CBOs. There are many CBOs in this area that focus on a plethora of topics including transportation, environmental justice, housing, and racial and social justice. Many CBOs are mainly aware of SACOG’s work around transportation issues and have not yet had the opportunity to engage with SACOG and other cities/counties on other topic areas.

Determining Eligible Project Typologies



EEI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Framework Recommendations

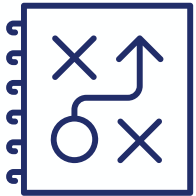
When utilizing federal funds, project typology may be restricted to those eligible in the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program Implementation Guidance.

EEI should prioritize funding other priority topics that fall outside of STBG eligibility when the program has access to more flexible funds to serve critical community needs surfaced by CBOs. Priority topics expressed by CBOs during focus group meetings include housing and homeless services, economic and workforce development, and parks and open space projects. Furthermore, in future iterations of this program SACOG should explore avenues for securing less restrictive funding that allows a wider range of access and greater alignment with CBO needs.

Implementation Considerations

When funds for the first round of EEI are finalized, SACOG should conduct an inventory review of funds, indicating which are flexible for multiple types of uses and which are restrictive to a specific use. Depending on the project typologies represented in specific use funds, SACOG could consider creating a set aside of flexible funds for underrepresented project types of the priority topic areas identified by CBOs.

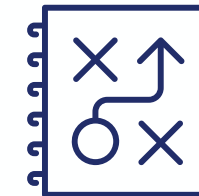
Determining Eligible Applicants



EEI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Determining Eligible Applicants</i> <i>Applicants from smaller organizations and those that represent historically marginalized groups should be encouraged to apply. Applications should be representative of the diverse communities in the Sacramento region.</i>	Grant funding opportunities may require CBOs to have a specific tax status in order to access funds. Furthermore, EEI federal funds require CBOs to partner with a governmental entity. Many CBOs may not have existing relationships with a potential city or county partner.

Determining Eligible Applicants



EI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Framework Recommendations

Approximately 80% of the program is federally funded. As a result, in the initial round of EEI, recipients of the bulk of current available dollars must be federal aid recipient eligible. EEI funds will have to go through a city or county partner to manage the dollars. CBOs must apply with a city or county partner partner to be eligible. CBOs will also need to be nonprofit organizations or legal entities to be eligible for a partnership in this round of funding.

SACOG should use 10% of the program's 20% flexible funds to fund an EEI pilot program that allows CBOs to apply independently, without a city/county partner. Though there will be a limited number of independent CBO awardees in this initial round of EEI funding, this will allow for SACOG to pilot and evaluate the success of an EEI program where CBOs can run an engagement process without a city/county partner.

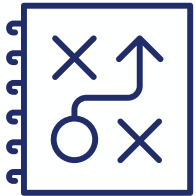
In future iterations of EEI, SACOG should explore less restrictive funding sources that allow CBOs to apply for grant funding on their own without a city or county partner. The EEI program should also explore methods to expand eligibility to potential applicants that have not obtained legal nonprofit status or offer technical assistance programs that help CBOs obtain legal nonprofit status.

Implementation Considerations

In scenarios where a CBO intends to seek EEI funding but lacks a partnering city or county for the application, SACOG should play a proactive role in facilitating connections between the CBO and potential city/county partners. This support ensures that even CBOs without established partnerships can effectively participate in the funding opportunity and foster collaborative opportunities that align with the program's mission and objectives.

SACOG should closely monitor and evaluate the performance of the EEI pilot program, where CBOs are awarded a grant without a city/county partner, against the goals and objectives of EEI to consider the potential of funding more independent CBO projects in the future.

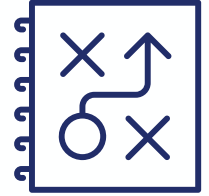
Establishing Grant Funding Amounts and Allocations



EI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Establishing Grant Funding Amounts and Allocations</i> <i>Ensuring CBOs are granted the appropriate amount of funding to conduct a robust and inclusive engagement process as a part of the EEI program.</i>	Funding for engagement processes is often too small to motivate and support CBOs. Inclusive engagement processes may require renting out venues, providing translation services, childcare, etc. The engagement grant should account for these expenses as well as overhead and indirect costs a CBO may incur. CBOs are often reliant on grant funding to hire staff members to complete projects. Providing competitive and supportive grant funding amounts supports the overall capacity and fiscal health of a CBO.

Establishing Grant Funding Amounts and Allocations



EI Equity Principle: Ensure funding opportunities are aligned with community needs and encourage diverse and inclusive participation.

Framework Recommendations

For projects with a CBO and city/county partnership, EEI grant funding should be between \$150K - \$300K, with a max of up to \$500K. The allocation of funds between CBOs and city/county partners should allocate no more than 50% to the government partner. The typical recommended allocation between applicant partners is 70-80% awarded to the CBO and 20-30% awarded to the city/county.

For the EEI pilot program for independent CBO projects without a governmental partner, grant funding should be \$50K - \$80K.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG should consider the tradeoffs between funding fewer awardees with more substantial funding versus more awardees with smaller projects who need less funding. Additionally, as funding allows, SACOG should consider flexibility in the amount of grant funding that can be used to support administrative costs of grants.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

“ If a grant is outside of the scope of our organization’s mission and values, we will pass on funding opportunities. ”

“ What has kept us from applying in the past is that award amounts are not enough to fully fund the proposal. ”

“ Administration costs are always a challenge for us, considering we are a small organization. ”





05

Pre-Application Process

Designing and Hosting Pre-Application Workshops and Training Materials



EEl Equity Principle: Establish a pre-application process that fosters partnership development between CBOs and governmental partners and capacity building for both entities.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Designing and Hosting Pre-application Workshops and Training Materials</i> <i>By investing time and resources before the application process, SACOG should ensure a comprehensive grasp of the EEl's premise and mission by both CBOs and cities/counties. This proactive approach facilitates the establishment of robust and productive partnerships, wherein CBOs are empowered to assume leadership roles within the parameters of the program's objectives and cities/counties are linked directly to community needs.</i>	CBOs often encounter various challenges when entering a partnership with a city/county partner. Key challenges expressed in CBO focus groups include situations where cities/counties inadvertently dominate decision-making processes, potentially stifling the collaborative spirit and impeding CBOs' autonomy. Additionally, acknowledging past instances where government agencies have caused harm to communities highlights the importance of nurturing trust between cities/counties and CBOs, creating a basis for a constructive and fruitful partnership.



Designing and Hosting Pre-Application Workshops and Training Materials

EEl Equity Principle: Establish a pre-application process that fosters partnership development between CBOs and governmental partners and capacity building for both entities.

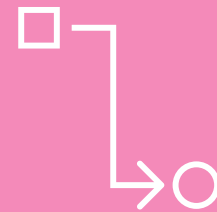
Framework Recommendations	Implementation Considerations
<i>SACOG staff should host multiple pre-application meetings to clarify application expectations, answer applicant questions, and educate newer CBOs on the application process. These meetings and associated questions and answers should be documented and regularly posted on the program website and/or circulated to potential applicants.</i> <i>SACOG should host trainings or workshops for government agencies partnering with CBOs on EEl projects, including power mapping and power sharing exercises. During these meetings, SACOG could also ask that CBOs present initial project ideas and interests.</i> <i>During this pre-application process SACOG should also help CBOs make connections to potential city/county partners. SACOG could consider developing an intake form for CBOs that need assistance finding a partner to apply. In addition to this, having an “on-call” list of interested and available governmental partners would enable SACOG to make quicker connections between CBOs and cities/counties.</i>	SACOG staff time to develop and administer pre-application workshops, respond to intake forms, and leverage existing relationships with cities/counties to connect CBOs to potential application partners.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

“For CBOs who may have an idea, but not a jurisdiction partner, it would be helpful to host pitch sessions to share ideas and potential partners.”

“An effective jurisdiction and CBO partnership relies on the CBO to be the local expert on the area.”

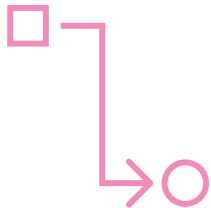




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Project Application Process

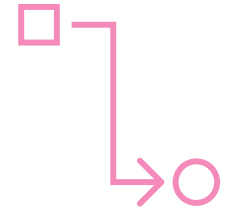
Promoting Grant Application Opportunities



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Promoting Grant Application Opportunities</i> <i>Engage in proactive outreach through diverse communication channels to all SACOG's service counties to ensure CBOs are aware of and can access grant opportunities.</i>	CBOs usually only hear about grant opportunities within their immediate network.

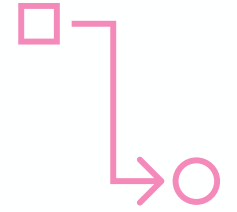
Promoting Grant Application Opportunities



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Framework Recommendations	Implementation Considerations
<i>Connect with CBOs, faith-based institutions, and other community leaders to distribute grant application opportunities. Attend existing community meetings and in person events to promote SACOG's presence in the community and build ongoing relationships to advertise grant opportunities when they become available.</i>	SACOG staff time allocation for engagement and outreach events and continued relationship development with CBOs across the six-county region. The External Relations team are already engaged in this work and should be tapped to promote EEI application opportunities.

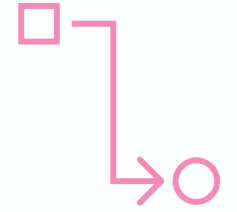
Determining Application Requirements



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Determining Application Requirements</i> <i>Develop clear and concise application guidelines that are easily understandable for applicants from diverse backgrounds and avoid unnecessary barriers or burdensome requirements that may disproportionately affect smaller CBOs with less capacity.</i>	Smaller staffed or volunteer-based CBOs may not have the capacity, bandwidth, or technical expertise to go through a long and complex application process.

Determining Application Requirements



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

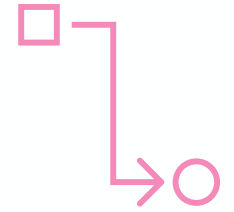
Framework Recommendations

There should be a dedicated point of contact at SACOG to address questions and provide the technical assistance needed. SACOG should develop and share pre-made application forms and templates that can expedite the application process and ensure the correct information is given. This can reduce instances of CBOs having to re-submit applications or missing materials.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG staff time allocation to provide technical assistance and produce templates. These templates and tools should be shared on SACOG's website.

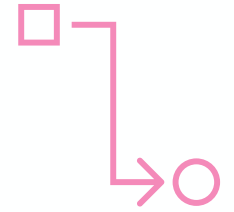
Establishing Applicant Response Time Windows



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Establishing Applicant Response Time Windows</i> <i>Allow sufficient time for applicants to prepare their applications to ensure that all potential respondents can successfully submit.</i>	Insufficient advance notice of grant opportunities or inadequate time to complete application requirements can serve as significant barriers for CBOs. These time-related constraints may impede CBOs' ability to fully explore and take advantage of funding prospects.

Establishing Applicant Response Time Windows



EEl Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

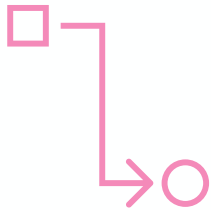
Framework Recommendations

As described in a previous section, SACOG should do appropriate outreach once EEl grant funding applications open to make CBOs aware of the opportunity. Furthermore, SACOG should keep applications open for enough time for CBOs to secure a city/county partner, gather materials, and develop an application. The typical reasonable application window duration, as advised by CBO focus groups, is approximately 2-3 months.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG should build out enough time in the overall EEl funding timeline to give CBOs sufficient time to respond.

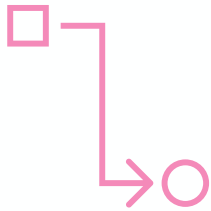
Determining Application Scoring and Evaluation Metrics



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Determining Application Scoring and Evaluation Metrics</i> <i>Develop evaluation criteria that are fair, transparent, and aligned with the EEI's program objectives and ensure that evaluation panels or committees represent a range of perspectives and expertise.</i>	Some CBOs may be better equipped to develop a strong application based on capacity and staffing resources than others. Smaller and rural CBOs typically have difficulty competing with CBOs in Sacramento for funding opportunities.

Determining Application Scoring and Evaluation Metrics



EI Equity Principle: Promote accessibility and distributional equity by removing burdensome application requirements and increasing transparency.

Framework Recommendations

Providing technical assistance to smaller and rural CBOs can help level the playing ground between less and more resourced CBOs. SACOG could consider establishing a set aside or attributing more points to CBOs working with rural communities.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG staff time allocation to provide technical assistance. SACOG should evaluate the tradeoffs of weighing applications differently or establishing set asides funding to increase inclusivity.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

“

I never hear about grant opportunities outside of my immediate network.

”

“

Application requirements are too complex and take too much time to complete.

”

“

Short turnaround times for applications are limiting.

”





07

Project Funding & Invoicing Process

Determining Contract and Insurance Requirements



EI Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Critical Process Point

Determining Contract and Insurance Requirements

Establish clear contractual and insurance requirements upfront and avoid imposing unnecessary requirements that may disproportionately disadvantage smaller CBOs.

Typical Barriers

Grant requirements are often unclear, or CBOs are unfamiliar with contract language, required forms, or with the documentation needed for execution of a contract.

Similarly, insurance requirements are not clearly understood or coverage is too costly for a smaller CBO to attain.

Determining Contract and Insurance Requirements



EI Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Framework Recommendations

Along with the application materials, SACOG should publish a general EEI contract template and samples of required documentation to ensure CBOs understand the documentation and formats expected if they are awarded funds. These templates should be annotated with plain-language instructions that explain what information is required and how it typically is captured or reported by awardees. SACOG should host bi-annual contracting workshops to brief CBOs on contracting requirements and agreements.

Insurance requirements for CBO awardees should be reduced where possible, especially where EEI funds incorporate non-federal monies. SACOG should describe insurance requirements and potential avenues for acquiring that coverage in its bi-annual contracting workshops.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG's finance team should be engaged early to develop materials that will mirror final documents required of CBOs.

SACOG can also seek a partnership with their organizational insurance vendor to examine ways for EEI-funded CBOs to minimize their insurance requirements or whether the city/county partner can take on a greater share of the risk for insurance purposes.

Executing Contracts



EI Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Executing Contracts</i> <i>Streamline contract execution processes to avoid any unnecessary lags or delays.</i>	Funders are often slow to execute contracts.

Executing Contracts



EI Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Framework Recommendations

Streamline contract execution where possible by having dedicated SACOG staff to process paperwork and follow up with CBOs on additional needs.

Implementation Considerations

Partner with SACOG's finance team to examine where expediting and streamlining is possible, or identify typical points where bottlenecks occur. This may be different for different types of funding (federal funds vs. local funds).

Establishing Project Funding and Invoicing Process



EI Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Establishing Project Funding and Invoicing Process</i> <i>Establish timely and efficient processes for disbursing funds to minimize financial burdens on grantees.</i>	Reimbursement grants require CBOs to have enough cashflow to cover initial costs, which can be exclusionary to many CBOs with smaller budgets, especially when factoring the often-delayed time between award and contract execution. Grant management and reporting is also labor intensive, especially when there are changes in invoicing requirements throughout the process, resulting in CBOs having to resubmit billing and reports.

Establishing Project Funding and Invoicing Process



EEl Equity Principle: Establish a clear and timely funding and invoicing process that reduces financial and administrative burden on CBOs.

Framework Recommendations

SACOG should utilize flexible local funds to ensure that EEl grant recipients can receive 5%-10% of their award as an advance to cover project startup costs, proceeding with reimbursement of funds thereafter.

The percentage of advance funds available will be dependent on the uptake of flexible funds used for the CBO-only (non-partnership) pilot program.

Implementation Considerations

Ensuring the EEl program allocates sufficient flexible funds to cover 5% (minimum) to 10% (recommended) of all project costs upfront for each awardee and the finance team is equipped to distribute these funds immediately upon contract execution.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

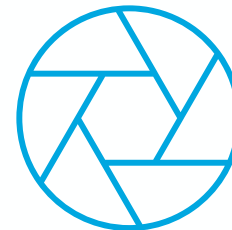
- “There are a lot of forms that were way new to us, maybe because they’re federal dollars etc. There are a lot of other side forms at the very end before you finally get to your contract that is not written in...I felt like I needed a lot of handholding to help work through the correct information in the contract.”
- “It’s helpful to have a specific person at the agency assigned to our grant as the first point of contact.”
- “Having funding upfront would be fantastic! Where we then provide invoices for all deliverables.”





08

Project Execution



Determining Grant Execution Engagement Requirements

EEI Equity Principle: Define the parameters and provide adequate support for an engagement process that ensures community representation and buy-in.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Determining Grant Execution Engagement Requirements</i> <i>Determine what a CBO needs to accomplish as a part of the EEI grant funding. Provide guidelines for inclusive and representative engagement practices— types of engagement, strategies for building stakeholder awareness, etc.—and ensure that these practices are included in a project’s scope of work.</i> <i>Ensure CBOs have the appropriate training and access to supportive resources to conduct a successful engagement process.</i>	CBOs often have trouble executing engagement processes when they are not adequately resourced or supported during the execution process.



Determining Grant Execution Engagement Requirements

EI Equity Principle: Define the parameters and provide adequate support for an engagement process that ensures community representation and buy-in.

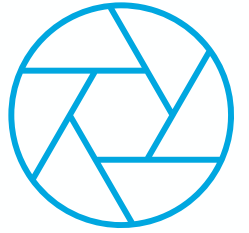
Framework Recommendations

Dedicate a point of contact at SACOG to address CBO questions and provide critical technical assistance. SACOG should direct CBOs to the appropriate channels to access engagement venues, translation services, childcare services, etc., and encourage city/county partners to connect CBO partners with these resources as well.

Implementation Considerations

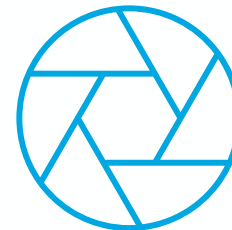
Appropriate staff time should be dedicated to assisting project awardees and providing technical assistance and directing them to other resources to ensure CBOs have what they need to successfully implement their proposed engagement processes.

Establishing Parameters for CBO and Government Partnerships



EEI Equity Principle: Define the parameters and provide adequate support for an engagement process that ensures community representation and buy-in.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Establishing Parameters for CBO and Government Partnerships</i> <i>Frame expectations and roles between CBOs and government agencies to respect and leverage the expertise of community leaders.</i>	For grants or programs that require a partnership with a governmental agency, it is easy for the balance of power to favor the governmental partner. This could be challenging for CBOs whose goals for the community may sometimes be at odds with current or historical government policies.



Establishing Parameters for CBO and Government Partnerships

EI Equity Principle: Define the parameters and provide adequate support for an engagement process that ensures community representation and buy-in.

Framework Recommendations

SACOG should act as a mediator during project execution by providing support and helping address potential power dynamic challenges. Clear expectations should be set by SACOG to ensure community needs from the CBO's perspective are centered, including when at odds with related government plans or policies.

SACOG should require partnerships to craft a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that explicitly defines the roles of each partner pertaining to management of project elements, administrative responsibilities, and reporting on outcomes.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG should prime government entities for potential partnerships with CBOs - creating an "on-call" list of agencies. SACOG will need to leverage existing relationships with cities and counties to promote active partnerships with CBOs during project execution.

SACOG should plan for a path for CBOs to participate without a governmental partner in future grant funding rounds.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

“Allow sufficient time to involve the community. What is significant time? Probably at least 2 months. First, inform and educate. Then follow up. Getting a cross-section takes time to gather.”

“[Robust and inclusive engagement process occurs when] alternative communication styles are planned for and included so that people with different disabilities can learn about the options and provide input.”





08

Program Evaluation

Forming an EEI Review Board



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Critical Process Point	Typical Barriers
<i>Forming an EEI Review Board</i> <i>Ensure that the EEI Review Board is representative of community voices and holds the expertise to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of the EEI program.</i>	Grant review boards often are overrepresented by internal staff members or elected officials and may be less representative of community leaders and grassroots organizations.

Forming an EEI Review Board



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Framework Recommendations

Ensure a diverse and balanced EEI Review Board by including the types of representation recommended by CBOs in the focus group feedback, including leaders from underrepresented groups, or from backgrounds outside of the traditional transportation, housing, or land use fields.

Include a pre-review session to onboard community members and prep the full board for reviewing the success of EEI projects in achieving stated project and program goals.

Implementation Considerations

SACOG leveraging relationships to ensure a balanced representation on the EEI Review Board and to ensure appointees are willing and able to fully participate.

Determining Metrics of Success For EEI Projects



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Critical Process Point

Determining Metrics of Success For EEI Projects

Develop EEI project metrics that illustrate community representation, ability to shape the project outcomes, and ultimate buy-in from targeted stakeholders.

Typical Barriers

Grant programs that lack clear and quantifiable metrics are difficult to evaluate and determine whether or not the program is successful.

Determining Metrics of Success For EEI Projects



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Framework Recommendations	Implementation Considerations
<i>Possible metrics could include: the types of stakeholders reached, attendance for focus groups and community meetings, knowledge of a community issue among participants before and after an engagement process, and clearly illustrating areas where community input was able to be applied and where it was not able to be applied and for what reason.</i>	Ensure that CBOs define the metrics they will capture during the project execution process.

Determining EEI Grant Access Metrics



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Critical Process Point

Determining EEI Grant Access Metrics

Develop EEI access metrics that measures the diversity of grantees by geography, type of organization, size of the organization, and how well the program is reaching populations who are typically excluded from traditional engagement processes.

Typical Barriers

Typically, larger CBOs from Sacramento are more frequently awarded grant funding compared to their smaller, rural counterparts.

Determining EEI Grant Access Metrics



EEI Equity Principle: Develop quantifiable metrics that track impact and promote ongoing growth and evaluation of the EEI program.

Framework Recommendations	Implementation Considerations
<i>Measure the share of EEI grantees who serve communities that serve historically marginalized communities or who are disproportionately impacted by environmental burdens. An example of this could be that SACOG sets a goal to fund a percentage of grantees serving populations within its Environmental Justice Areas, are in high percentile categories under CalEnviroScreen indicators, and/or have Federal Justice40 designation.</i> <i>Another example would be to set a goal for awards to CBOs led by women of color, who often lead organizations that are less resourced.</i>	SACOG staff time allocation to track grantee information.

CBO Stakeholder Experiences

- “Circle back to the community in which you tried to engage. Ask the community how they perceived the project! Yes, new voices matter!”
- “[EEI projects should ensure] a large number of community members are aware of SACOG.”
- “The community needs to see their input in the final project, so they know³ their input was valued.”
- “[SACOG should measure] amount of contacts, but more importantly, a deeper understanding of the project’s goals and workplan.”



Appendix

Engagement Participants

Community Focus Group Participants

This Engage, Empower, Implement Program Framework was largely built from the feedback collected during our engagement activities. SACOG would like to thank the following organizations for participating in our focus groups and other engagements:

Agency on Aging
Barahona Consulting
Breathe California
California Rural Legal Assistance
California State University
Auburn Design Group
El Dorado Community Health Center
Everyday Impact Consulting
Gardenland Northgate Neighborhood
Association
Hands of Hope
Harris Mathews Consulting
Health Education Council

Interfaith Council of Sacramento
Latino Leadership Council
Placer Community Foundation
Placer Independent Resource Services
Placer Land Trust
Placer People of Faith Together
Putah Creek Council
Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
Sac Breathe
Sacramento ACT
Sacramento Community Foundation
Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of
Commerce

Sacramento Housing Alliance
Sacramento Valley Conservancy
Sierra Native Alliance
Sutter County Community Action
Agency
United Latinos
Unseen Heroes
Yolo Land Trust

EEl Engagement Activity and Survey Audience

In an effort to keep all our community partners engaged in the EEl framework process, SACOG ensured the following stakeholders were included in updates and invited to our engagement activities:

350 Sacramento - Sacramento County	Elk Grove Disability Advisory Committee - Sacramento County	Northern Valley Catholic Social Services (NVCSS) - Sacramento County	Sacramento LGBT Center - Sacramento County
A Touch of Understanding - Placer County	Elk Grove Diversity and Inclusion Commission - Sacramento County	Opening Doors - Sacramento County	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) - Sacramento County
Agency on Aging Area 4 - Sacramento County	Elk Grove Trails Committee - Sacramento County	Organize Sacramento - Sacramento County	Sacramento Native American Health Center - Sacramento County
Arab Community Center - Sacramento County	Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) - Sacramento County	Parks, Recreation, Wildlife Advisory Commission - Sacramento County	Sacramento Regional Community Foundation - Sacramento County
Asian Resources - Sacramento County	Everyday Impact Consulting - Sacramento County	Placer Community Foundation - Placer County	Sacramento Transit Riders Association (Sac TRU) - Sacramento County
Assistance League of Sierra Foothills - Sacramento County	Explorit - Sacramento County	Placer County Parks Division - Placer County	Sacramento Valley Conservancy - Sacramento County
Bach Viet Association - Sacramento County	Folsom Auburn Trail Riders Action Coalition - Sacramento County	Placer County Public Health/Human Services - Placer County	Sacramento Wheelmen Bicycle Group - Sacramento County
Bhagat Puran Singh Health Initiative - Yolo County	Food Bank of Yolo County - Yolo County	Placer Food Bank - Placer County	Safe Ground - Sacramento County
Bike Davis - Yolo County	Food Literacy Center - Sacramento County	Placer Independent Resource Services - Placer County	Save the American River Association - Sacramento County
Bike Lab - Sacramento County	Franklin Boulevard Association - Sacramento County	Placer Land Trust - Placer County	Seniors First - Placer County
Black Girls Do Bike: Sacramento - Sacramento County	Friends of El Dorado Trail - El Dorado County	Pro Youth & Families - Sacramento County	Sierra Club Sacramento Group - Sacramento County
Black Womxn United - Sacramento County	Friends of Light Rail & Transit - Sacramento County	Public Health Advocates (PHA) - Yolo County	Sierra Native Alliance - Placer County
Breathe Sacramento - Sacramento County	Fruitridge Community Collaborative - Sacramento County	Putah Creek Council - Sacramento County	Society for the Blind - Sacramento County
Brown Issues - Sacramento County	Greater Sacramento Urban League - Sacramento County	Red, Black, & Green Environment Justice Coalition (RBG-EJC) - Sacramento County	Southeast Asian Assistance Center - Sacramento County
Building Healthy Communities (BHC) - Sacramento County	Green Tech Edu - Sacramento County	Resources for Independent Living (RIL) - Sacramento County	Sutter County Community Action Agency - Sutter County
California Coalition for Rural Housing - Sacramento County	Hands of Hope - Yuba County	River Valley Community Outreach Center - Yuba County	Train Riders Association of California - Sacramento County
California Endowment - Sacramento County	Health Education Council - Sacramento County	Robertson Community Center - Sacramento County	Transcultural Wellness Center - Sacramento County
California Transit Association - Sacramento County	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce - Sacramento County	Sac ACT - Sacramento County	Tuleyome - Yolo County
Civic Thread - Sacramento County	Hmong Innovating Politics - Sacramento County	Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates - Sacramento County	United Auburn Indian Community - Placer County
Cool Davis - Yolo County	Hmong Youth & Parents United - Sacramento County	Sacramento Bike Hikers - Sacramento County	United Latinos - Sacramento County
Davis Bike Club - Yolo County	Independent Living Resources - Sacramento County	Sacramento Center for Fathers and Families - Sacramento County	United Lu-Mien Community Services - Sacramento County
Davis Community Network - Yolo County	La Familia Counseling Center - Sacramento County	Sacramento County Commission on Aging & Older Adults - Sacramento County	VG Consulting - Sacramento County
Delta Protection Commission - Sacramento County	Lao Family Community Development - Sacramento County	Sacramento Environmental Justice Coalition (Sac EJ) - Sacramento County	Yolo Basin Foundation - Yolo County
Disabilities Rights California - Sacramento County	Latino Leadership Council - Sacramento County	Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) - Sacramento County	Yolo Habitat Conservancy - Yolo County
Diversability Advocacy Network (DAN) - Sacramento County	Modern Transit Society - Sacramento County	Sacramento Housing Alliance - Sacramento County	Yolo Land Trust - Yolo County
El Dorado Community Foundation - El Dorado County	Mutual Assistance Network - Sacramento County		Yuba Sutter Food Bank - Yuba County
El Dorado County Food Bank - El Dorado County	Mutual Housing - Sacramento County		Yuba-Sutter-Colusa United Way - Yuba County
El Dorado County Public Health/Human Services - El Dorado County	NorCal United Way - Shasta County		
Elk Grove Cycling Club - Sacramento County			

Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI)

Program Framework

Produced for SACOG by HR&A Advisors and AIM Consulting

