

September 24, 2026



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

How to Strengthen Systems, Use Data, and Deliver Effective Services with Limited Resources

Moderator: Randi Johl
Director of Legislative Affairs/ City Clerk, City of Temecula

GARE: Leveraging Relationship Building, Learning, and Data to Transform Systems and Support Communities





GARE is a network of racial equity practitioners who work to strengthen and steward our public infrastructure so that individuals, families, and communities can live long, healthy, and joyful lives no matter their race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, migration status or zip code.

GARE members utilize racial equity tools to improve systems that serve residents

Makes limited resources more strategic.

When resources are constrained, governments need to know where investments will have the greatest impact. Disaggregated data can reveal where needs and barriers are concentrated.

Improves the quality of data-driven decisions.

Overall averages can hide significant differences among communities. Looking at data by race, geography, income, age, disability, and other relevant factors provides a more complete picture of who is being served—and who isn't.

Strengthens service design.

Examining how different residents experience a government program can reveal barriers that aren't visible from an agency's perspective, such as eligibility requirements, language access, transportation, technology, or administrative burdens.

Supports continuous improvement.

GARE Race Equity Tool isn't a one-time assessment. It's a process that poses questions and uses measures that cities can incorporate into ongoing performance management: Who is benefiting? Who isn't? What changed? What should we adjust?



GARE Region Map

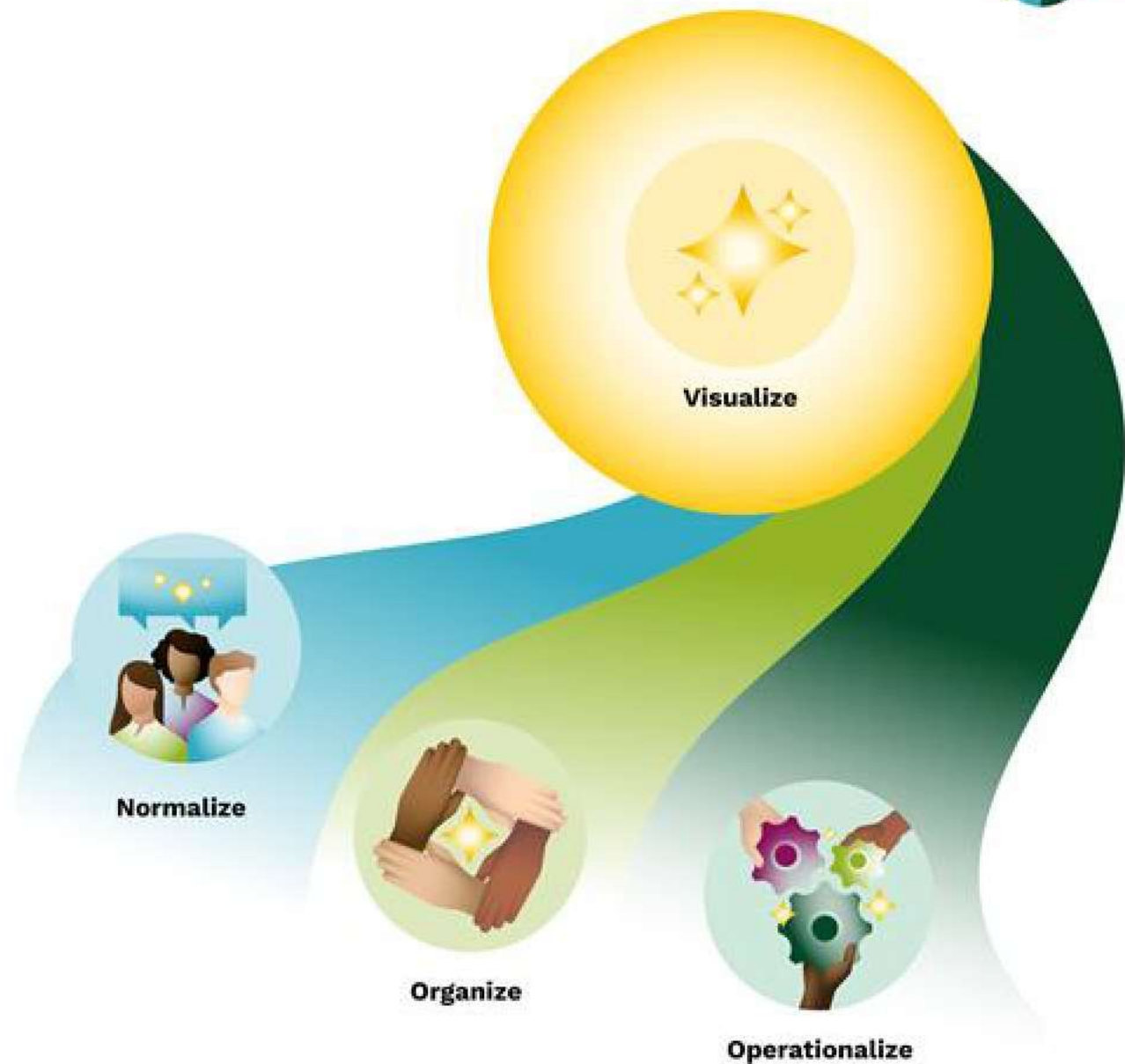


- G)** Steering Committee: Raill Gondlez
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 12 (3.5%)
- 2** Steering Committee: Wit.ma Alvar-ado•Little
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 8 (2.3%)
- 3** Steering Committee: Samia Byrd
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 26 (7.6%)
- @** Steering Committee: Shenekia Weeks Parrish
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 26 (7.6%)
- 5** Steering Committee: Kristy Kumar, Kimberly Richardson
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 70 (20.4%)
- ©** Steering Committee: Or. Farris Muhammad
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 13 (3.8%)
- 7** Steering Committee: Or. Melia Johnson
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 12 (3.5%)
- ©** Steering Committee: Jamahl Greer
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 26 (7.6%)
- 9** Steering Committee: Alex Gibilisco
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 67 (19.5%)
- ☐ Steering Committee: Shireen Malekafzali Taidi
GARE Member Jurisdictions: 83 (24%)

The GARE Approach

The GARE Approach is an **organizational change model** for achieving racial equity within government jurisdictions.

By connecting practitioners applying this approach across municipalities, regions, and states, GARE supports the transformation of systems and creates community-level impact.



Ways to Engage

GARE network practitioners are the heart of our network and its driving force.

We encourage participation, exchange, and leadership across a broad range of network activities geared toward practitioners at every stage of their work.

Monthly Online
Programs

Conferences &
Convenings

GARE Online
Community &
Learning Center

Learning Exchanges

Reports &
Resources

Strategic Projects &
Partnerships

Measurement
& Evaluation

Narrative &
Communications

2026



Membership Meeting

RALEIGH

North Carolina

NOVEMBER 12-14

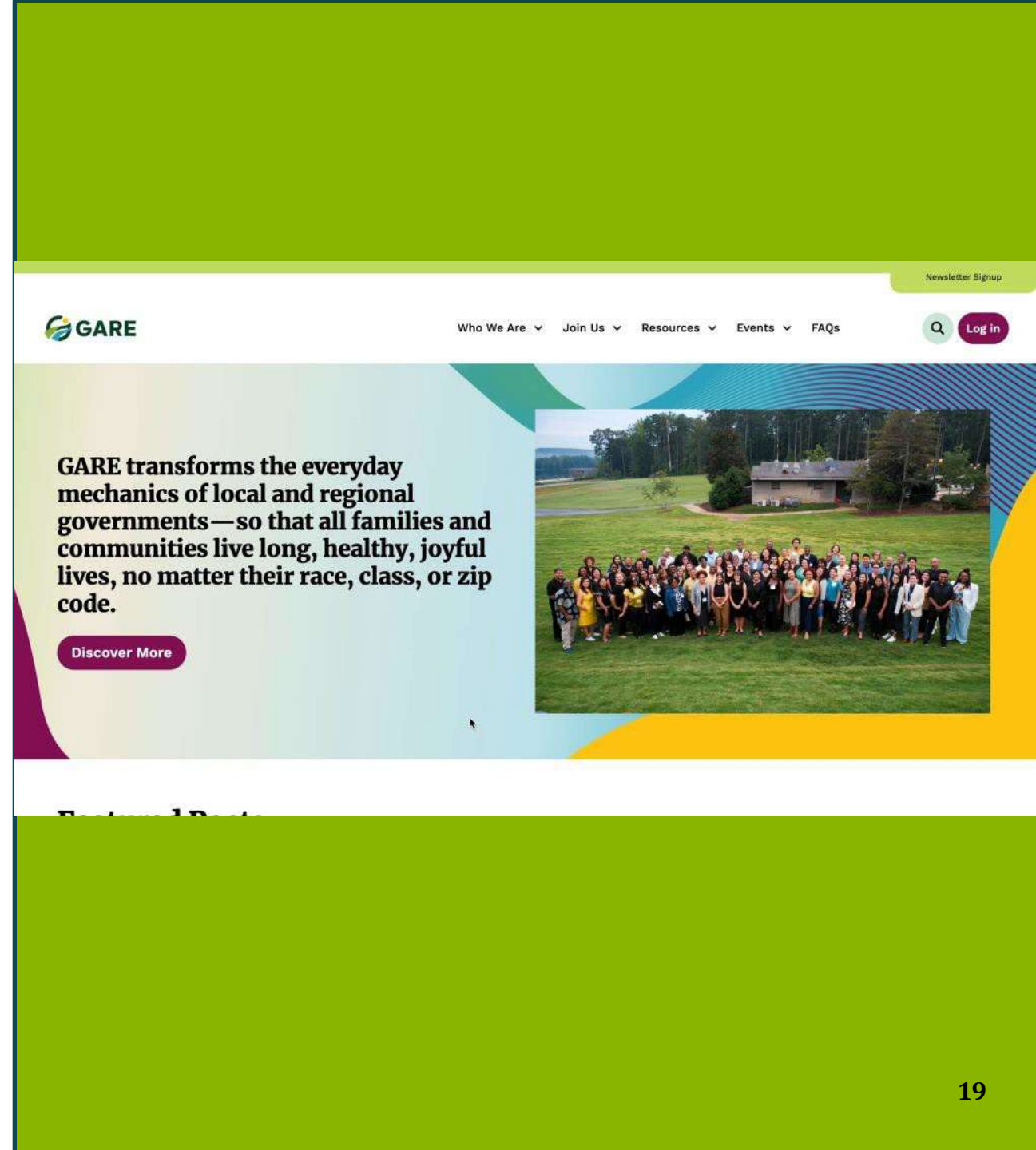


race forward
FACING RACE
A NATIONAL CONVENING

Join the Community!



[Log in](#) to access the GARE Online Community & Learning Center or complete the form to request an account.



Transportation, Infrastructure & Effective Service Delivery

How to Strengthen Systems, Use Data, and Deliver Effective Services with Limited Resources

Presenter: Jinnae Looney
Equity Strategy Manager, Director's Office of Equity & Tribal
Affairs
California Department of Transportation



TRANSPORTATION CONNECTS CALIFORNIANS TO:

- WORK • SCHOOL • FOOD • HEALTHCARE • FAMILY •
COMMUNITY • OPPORTUNITY
- Driving • Transit • Walking • Biking • Rolling • Paratransit •
Rail • Freight
- Our transportation needs may be different, but transportation
connects all of us.



GOOD PUBLIC SERVICE IS REFLECTED IN HOW WE:

- PLAN
- USE DATA
- LISTEN
- MAKE DECISIONS
- INVEST
- MEASURE RESULTS
- Bottom Line
- Serving people and communities is everyone's work.



PEOPLE & COMMUNITY FIRST ACTION PLAN - PC1AP WORK UNDERWAY - PENDING FINAL APPROVAL

- Commitment → Action → Reporting → Learning → Improvement
- Helping Us Ask:
- What are we doing?
- What's working?
- Where are the barriers?
- What resources are needed?
- What can we learn?
- What can we improve?



2025–2028

The People & Community First Action Plan



CALTRANS TRANSPORTATION EQUITY INDEX – EQI

DATA HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHERE TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY

TRANSPORTATION-BASED PRIORITY POPULATIONS

TRAFFIC EXPOSURE

ACCESS TO DESTINATIONS

DATA → UNDERSTANDING → DECISIONS → RESULTS

DATA TELLS US WHERE. PEOPLE HELP US UNDERSTAND WHY.

Bring Together:

- Technical Information + Lived
 - Experience + Community
 - Knowledge
 - To Better Understand:
 - Transportation barriers
- Accessibility
 - Local conditions
 - Community priorities
 - Historical context
 - Potential solutions





**Don't Just Tell Staff to Engage.
Give Them the Tools to Do It Well.**

Advancing Community Engagement — ACE

GUIDANCE

Community Engagement Playbook

TOOLS

Equitable Engagement Toolbox

PLANNING

Public Engagement Plan Templates

ACCESS

Caltrans Engagement Portal

CAPACITY

Training + Technical Assistance

TOOLS → CAPACITY → BETTER SERVICE

Resource

Helps Us

Community Engagement Playbook

Follow consistent practices

Equitable Engagement Toolbox

Find practical approaches

Public Engagement Plan

Plan before engaging

Engagement Portal

Connect with Californians

EQI

Better understand community conditions

Training & Support

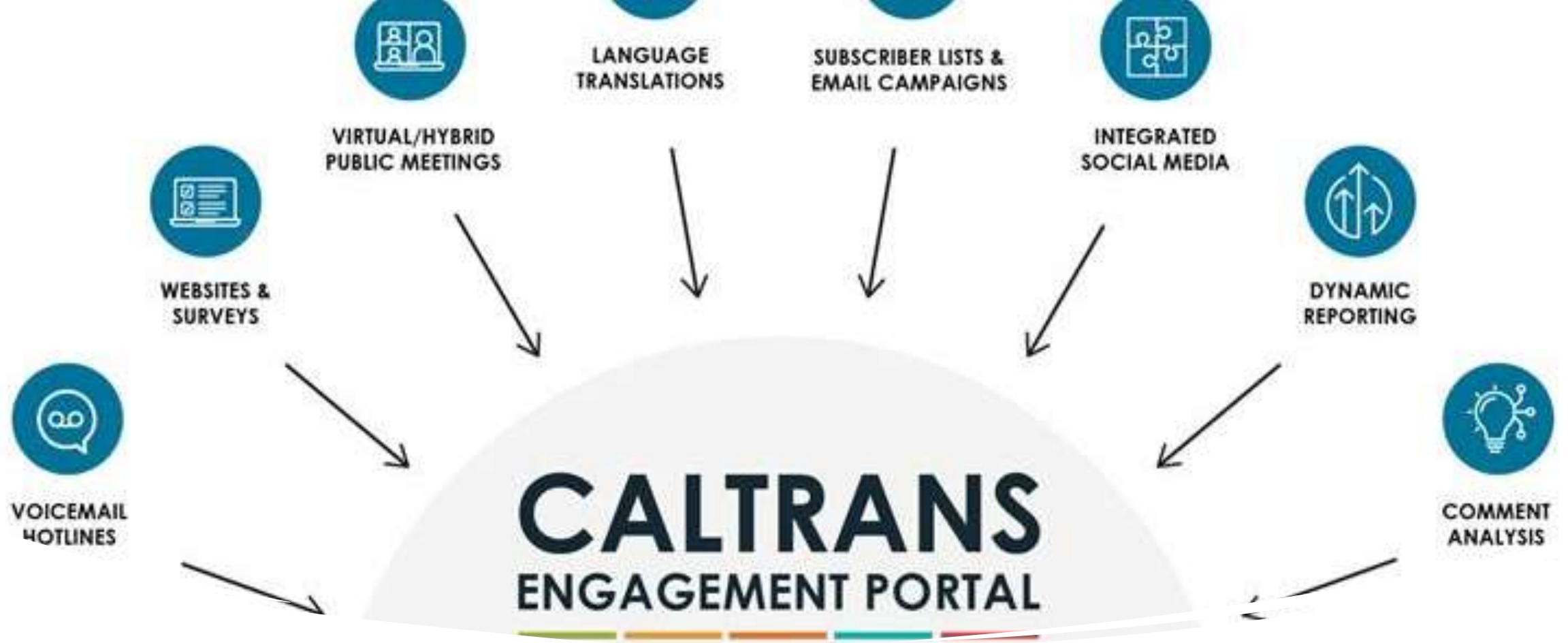
Build staff capacity



WHEN ARE PEOPLE INVITED INTO THE PROCESS?

- Transportation Need
- ↓
- Concept
- ↓
- Planning
- ↓

- Engagement
- ↓
- Decision
- ↓
- Delivery



Californians Can:

- LEARN
- SEARCH

- LOCATE
- PARTICIPATE
- SHARE

WE DON'T HAVE TO SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM ALONE.

Rosa Parks Day - "Sit With Us"

- Community Members • CBOs • Advocacy Groups
- MPOs • RTPAs • Government Partners
- Transportation Practitioners • Decision-Makers

GARE → SAREPN

- Sacramento Area Racial Equity Practitioners Network
- SHARE KNOWLEDGE • SHARE TOOLS • BUILD RELATIONSHIPS • SOLVE PROBLEMS



LIMITED RESOURCES REQUIRE BETTER QUESTIONS

When We Can't Do Everything at Once...

Ask:

WHERE is the greatest need?

WHAT does the data tell us?

WHAT are people telling us?

WHO will benefit?

WHAT barriers exist?

WHERE can we make the greatest difference?

HOW will we know it worked?



FROM TOOLS TO BETTER RESULTS FOR CALIFORNIANS HOW IT ALL CONNECTS

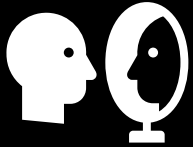
- HOW WE WORK
- PC1AP • Policies • Guidance
- ↓
- WHAT WE KNOW
- Data • EQI • Reporting • Community Knowledge
- ↓
- WHAT WE PROVIDE
- Playbook • Toolbox • Templates • Training
- ↓
- HOW WE CONNECT
- ↓
- Engagement Portal • Project Portal • Rosa Parks Day • Partnerships
- ↓
- HOW WE DECIDE
- Priorities • Investments • Limited Resources
- ↓
- WHAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE
- ACCESS • SAFETY • MOBILITY • OPPORTUNITY • CONNECTION • QUALITY OF LIFE



Strengthening Systems, Leveraging Data, and Delivering Effective Services with Limited Resources: Sacramento County's Equitable Funding Approach

Innovative strategies for equitable
resource allocation

Five Ps of Equitable Stewardship



Purpose



Proof



**Place
Based
Strategy**



Provision

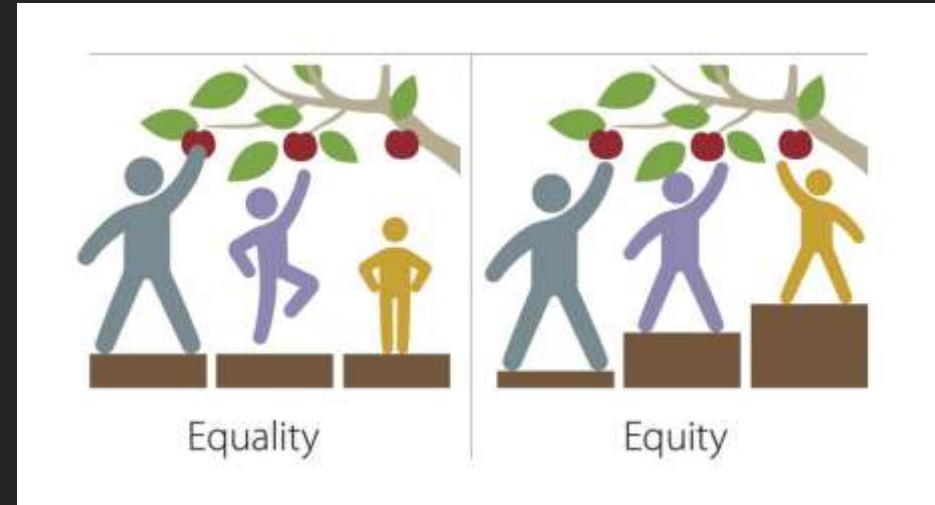


Prove

Purpose

Grounded in Values, Moving at the Speed of Equity

- Health is wealth: Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) shape outcomes and drive our priorities.
- CBOs are essential partners, bridging gaps and serving high-need communities.
- Equity means not everyone gets the same, but everyone gets what they need to thrive.



Proof

Centering Community Voices, Using Evidence

- We commissioned a landscape study of 292 CBOs to understand barriers and opportunities.
- Key findings: Lack of clarity in contracting, inconsistent policies, and small CBOs feeling invisible.
- Recommendations: Targeted technical assistance, fair compensation, simplified reporting, and centralized contracting support.

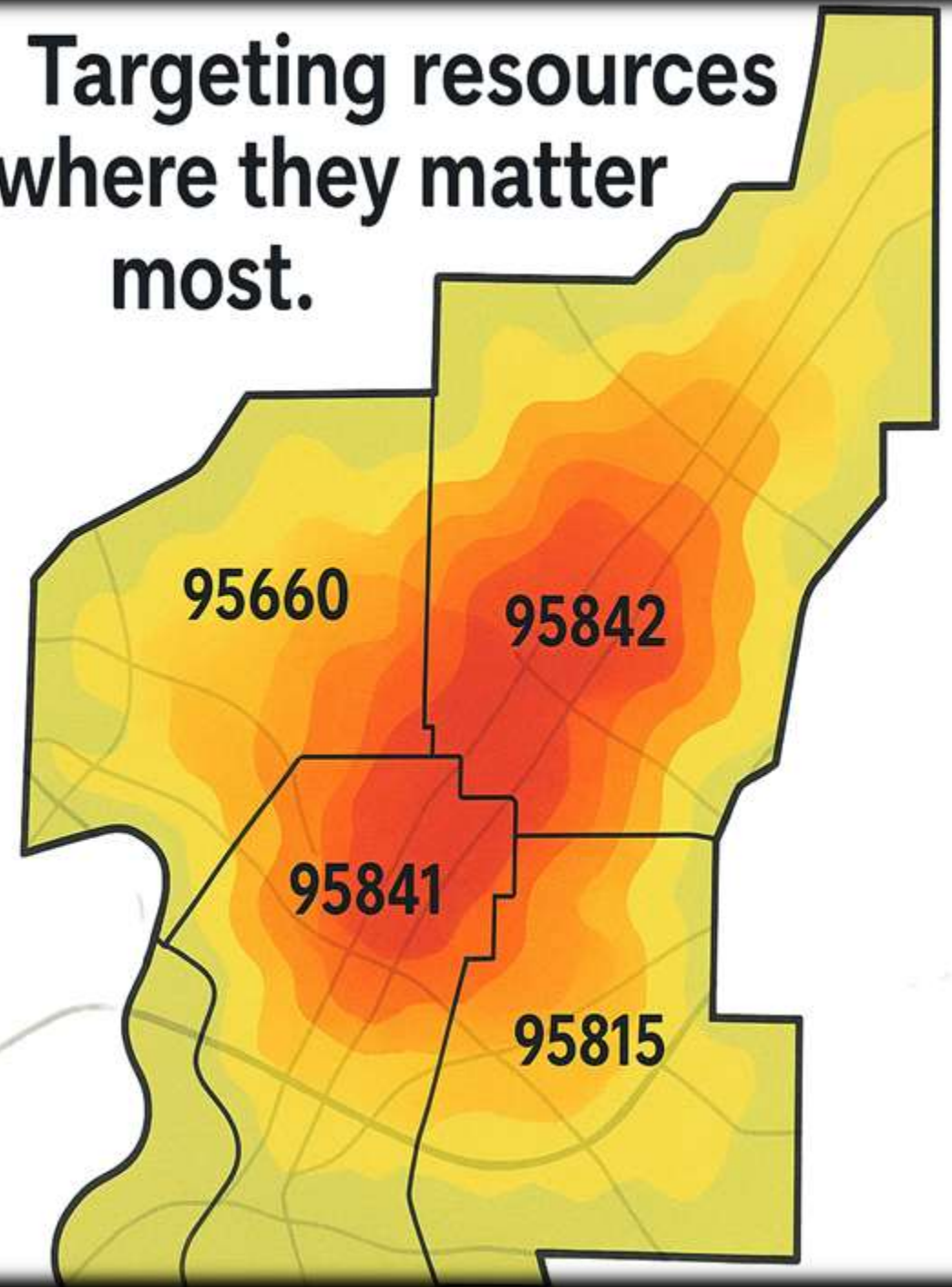


Place Based Strategy

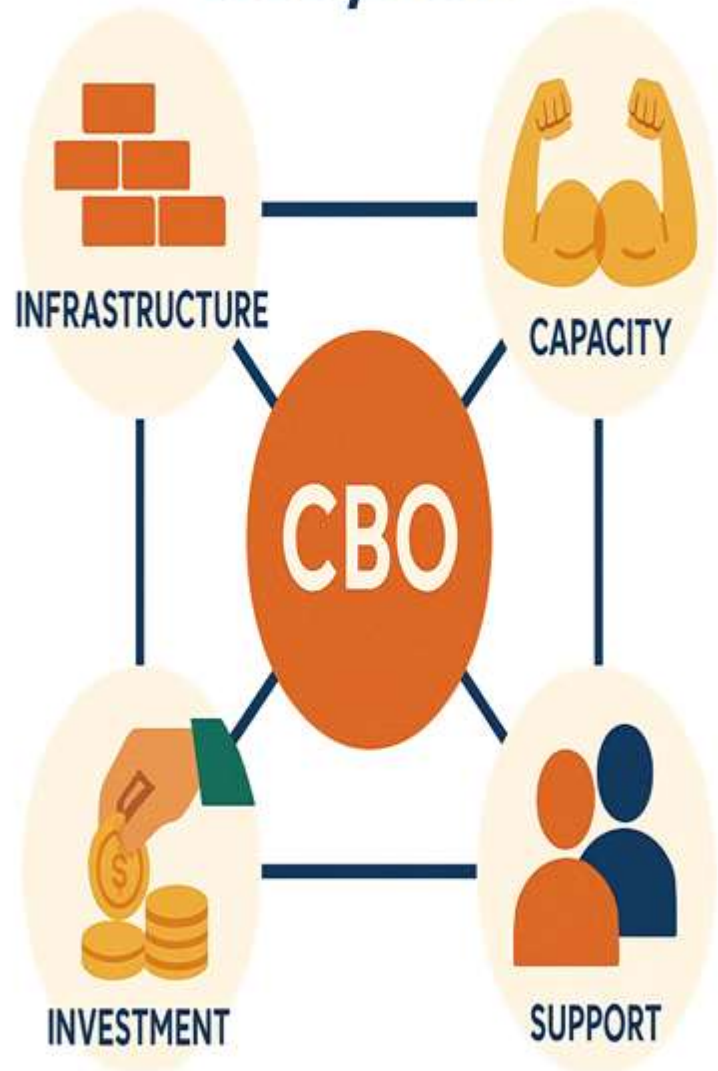
Ensuring Fair Resource Allocation

- Developed clear, transparent criteria for funding:
 - Geographic focus: High-need zip codes
 - Organizational capacity: staff engagement and budget alignment (\$500K - \$2M)
 - Programmatic focus: Homelessness/Housing and food access
 - Growth opportunities: Leadership commitment and strategic alignment
- Selected a backbone organization to manage a 20-month capacity-building program for 10 CBOs

Targeting resources
where they matter
most.



Building a resilient CBO ecosystem



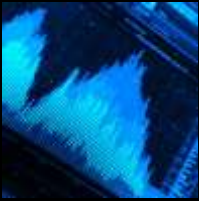
Provision

Strategic Fund Allocation and Capacity Building

- Each CBO awarded receives \$80,000 for discretionary operational needs
- Capacity-building program modules include:
 - ❖ Financial Management
 - ❖ Staffing Management
 - ❖ Board Management
 - ❖ Funder & Stakeholder Engagement
 - ❖ Public Partnership & Sustainability
 - ❖ Grant Management & Relations
 - ❖ Organization Narrative & Marketing
- Investing in CBOs strengthen the ecosystem and elevates community support.

Prove

Measuring Impact and Informing Future Decisions



Tracking Performance Indicators

Track key performance indicators to assess effectiveness.



Strengthening CBO Ecosystem

Midpoint and endpoint assessments focuses on how capacity building improved the function and impact of the CBO. SWOT analyses and post-surveys guide ongoing improvement.



Informing Future Decisions

Data-driven insights guide future resource allocation to maximize impact and service delivery.

Key Takeaways

North Star

Who we serve. Why we serve them. How will we improve their lives?

Equitable Funding Approach

Quality over quantity – focus on closing gaps and decreasing disparities.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Transparency helps optimize resource use and builds trust in government processes.

Community Partnerships

Strong partnerships drive effective, fair service delivery.

Results Based Analysis

Accountability for outcomes ensures people are better off because of what we did.

Purpose

Place Based
Strategy

Proof

Provision

Prove

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

Arts, Equity, Recreation & Community Access

Megan Morgan | megan.morgan@arts.ca.gov





- 30+ Full-time staff
- 9 Gubernatorial Appointed Council Members
- 2 Speaker Appointed Council Members
- Staff are programmatically, outreach and operationally focused, serving all 58 counties across California.
- Council members participate in whole and committee body meetings that are policy, funding allocation and voting body focused.

Mission & Vision

California Arts Council Mission

Strengthening arts, culture, and creative expression as the tools to cultivate a better California for all.

California Arts Council Vision

A California where all people flourish with universal access to and participation in the arts.

Values

Community – Authentic intergenerational and intersectional connections

Accessibility – Inclusion, simplicity and ease, resulting in equitable participation

Aesthetics – Recognizing all art forms and artistic traditions that enable full and meaningful creative expression

Autonomy with Accountability – Empowered, responsible generation and allocation of resources

Relevance – Broad influence, bold leadership and synergizing collaboration for the present, with a sharp eye toward emerging developments and needs of the future

Equity – Service according to need to prioritize racial injustice, representation and visibility of all groups

Sustainability – Wise, impactful and responsive growth

Racial Equity Statement

Our **policies** reflect democratic principles of equity and justice.

We identify and work to **dismantle discrimination, implicit bias and barriers** to access our programs and funding.

We bring together those with **different backgrounds and life experiences to increase opportunities for all.**

We are **accountable** to our grantees, and we are committed to the just and equitable **disbursement of resources.**

We use **data** to evaluate the **impact** of our equity goals.

Racial Equity requires **intention and effort** and we invite **collaboration, public will and public input.**

50 Years of Creative Impact

In 2026 the California Arts Council Celebrated 50 Years of Creativity

The California Arts Council was created in 1976 on the basis that the arts are central to the lives of Californians. Over five decades we have awarded thousands of grants — a total investment of more than \$400 million.

Currently we provide funding support for five diverse arts program initiatives delivered by administering arts organizations in their communities:

- Arts and Youth
- General Operating Support
- Impact Projects
- Individual Artist Fellowship
- Arts in Corrections





STATE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

58 PARTNERS ACROSS CALIFORNIA

A unique state funded partnership program which also contains a State-Local Partner Mentorship Program – so that every county and region in California has arts representation and funding.

In 2027 the Council is considering adding a new Native American Artist Program and potential other additions - pending California State Budget and Council voting.



“

We envision a future where California Native Artists are widely seen, heard, and celebrated with support from intergenerational membership, regional cultural hubs, and investments that allow artists to focus on their crafts.

”



American Indian Cultural District Tour, San Francisco | Yelamu

More Equity Considerations

DECISION SUPPORT TOOL

- 20 questions that require equity, data and unintended consequences considerations
- Two full-time positions dedicated to equity
- Annual review of grant and contract application criteria, reporting requirements and data findings

Cultural Districts

- Launched 14 in 2017
- Gap Analysis
 - Additional 10 in 2026
 - Significant additional state funding proposed in early September of 2026



“

In this future, Native artists gain greater visibility and recognition as keepers of tradition and innovation, with expanded platforms to share their stories, creative expression, and cultural knowledge across communities and institutions.

”

Balboa Park, Barrio Logan, Oceanside (San Diego County)
The BLVD (Lancaster/LA County)
Calle 24 & SOMA Pilipinas (San Francisco)

Downtown San Rafael (Marin County)
Eureka (Humboldt County)
Grass Valley-Nevada City & Truckee (Nevada County)

Little Tokyo & San Pedro (LA County)
Redding (Shasta County)
Rotten City-Emeryville (Alameda County)

American Indian & SOMA Pilipinas (San Francisco)
Arts and Culture District (Riverside)
Arts District Liberty Station (San Diego)

Black Arts Movement Business District (Oakland)
Dos Rios Arts and Culture District (Modesto)
Downtown Merced (Merced)

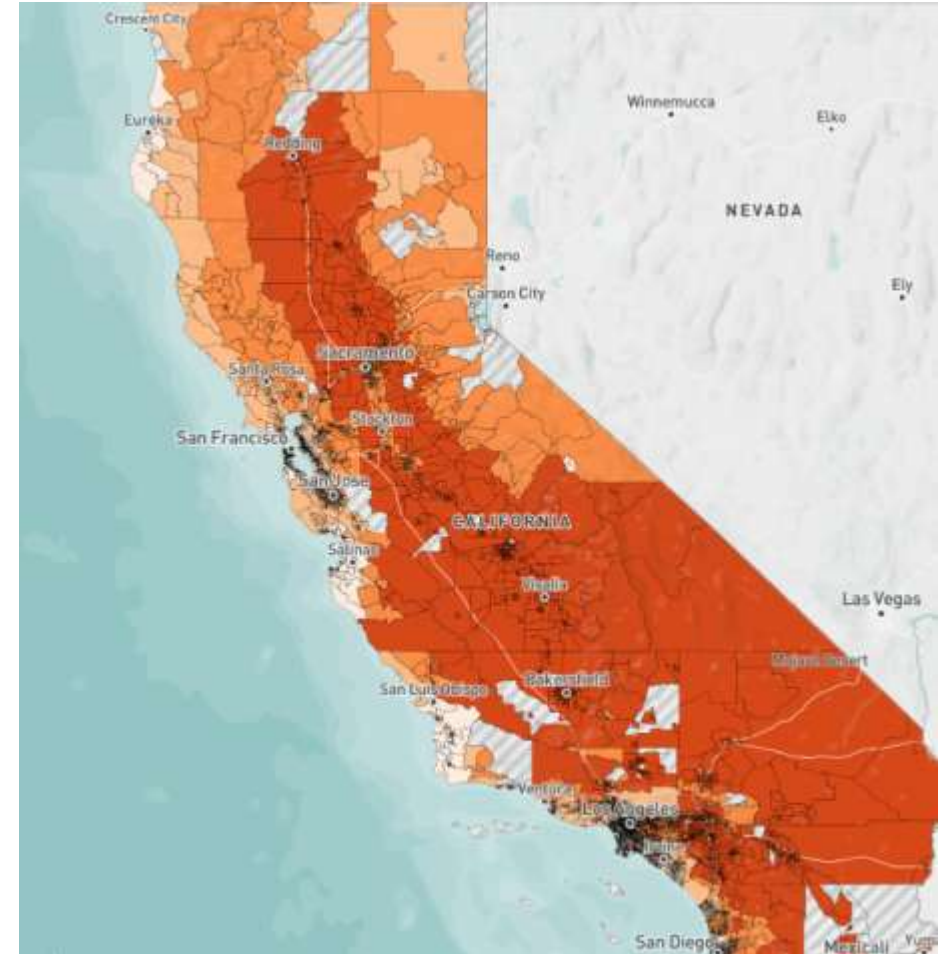
Downtown Oxnard (Ventura)
Historic South Los Angeles Black Cultural District (LA County)
San Jose Japantown (Santa Clara)
Watsonville (Santa Cruz)

Healthy Places Index (HPI)

An equity resource developed by the Public Health Alliance.

Neighborhood-by-neighborhood, the HPI maps data on social conditions that drive health — like education, job opportunities, clean air and water, and other indicators that are positively associated with life expectancy at birth. Community leaders, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders use the HPI to compare the health and well-being of communities, identify health inequities and quantify the factors that shape health.

Healthyplacesindex.org



Extreme Heat map from 9.8.2026 via
heat.healthyplacesindex.org

Data & Community Feedback



California's First Ever Creative Economy Plan

- 30-member industry leader workgroup
- Future forces leaning consultant
- Numerous interviews, sessions and in-depth research
- 28 listening sessions across California
- Need for data collection, analysis and implementation
- Addendum report in progress
- Equity considerations prioritized

Practical Barriers



Creative Economy Workgroup Members in front of CAC funded underpass mural in San Juan Bautista, 2025

Location

How geography and urban, rural and suburban identity impacts artists and artistic practice.

Cost

Awareness of and ease of access to resources.

Scheduling

How does our grant/contract cycle impact those wanting to apply?

Transportation

City, county and regional infrastructure.

Program Design

What elements unnecessarily restrict access and who benefits from funding the most, and the least?

Narrative

Responding to attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that incorrectly accuse arts organizations of awarding lesser quality work if it doesn't reflect the classical canon of historical art types, practices and performances.

Top Three Council Funding Priorities



Creative Economy Workgroup Members and attendees at a Public Listening Session in Oakland, December 2025

Location

Underserved Communities

Cost

Small Organizations \$250K or less

Program Design

First time grantees

Top Three Staff Priorities

- **Technical Assistance & Outreach**
- **Building & Maintaining Relationships**
- **Operational Effectiveness**



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Q & A

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