



## Equity Guidelines

### Introduction

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) is a regional agency created to fund shoreline projects that will protect, restore, and enhance San Francisco Bay. The Authority achieves this purpose through the allocation of funds raised by Measure AA, a 20-year parcel tax that passed in 2016. The Authority is committed to advancing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) through its grant programs and throughout its operations.

We recognize that past practices by government agencies have contributed to the marginalization of economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs), as defined by the Authority<sup>1</sup>, California Native American tribes, people of color, and people with disabilities, resulting in inequitable access to a clean, healthy Bay shoreline. There has not been adequate consultation and co-management of natural areas along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay by EDC residents who live there now or by tribes who stewarded the shoreline for generations prior to colonialization.

These Guidelines build upon the foundational work achieved by the Authority's equity consultant, Advisory Committee, and Governing Board in developing and adopting Resolution 70, Recommendations for Implementing Measure AA in a Manner that Benefits Economically Disadvantaged Communities. Adopted in 2020, the Equity Recommendations provided guidance for a 6-month to 5-year period, with the majority of the recommendations intended to be carried out within two years. Work that has been accomplished to this point can be found in the [Equity Guidelines in Action](#) document.

By adopting these Equity Guidelines, we wish to establish guidance that extends the full length of the Measure AA timeframe, until 2036. The Guidelines were developed by staff in partnership with the Authority Advisory Committee's Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Equity and informed by feedback from representatives from local community-based organizations, which can be found in the [Summary of Feedback from 2023 Community Outreach and Listening Sessions](#) document.

Striving to move forward in an equitable, inclusive manner, the Authority will:

- Improve its policies, programs, and practices to advance equitable access to the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the Bay shoreline.
- Regularly evaluate and modify program priorities, grant funding, contracting, hiring practices, communications, and community and Tribal engagement practices to address existing inequities and prevent additional inequities.
- Increase the involvement and role of representatives of environmental justice and tribal communities, tribes, people of color, and people with disabilities in decision-making by the Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> [Economically Disadvantaged Communities](#) are defined in the Authority's [Request for Proposals](#) and the [Economically Disadvantaged Communities Reference Sheet](#).

### **Nexus with the Authority’s Authorizing Legislation and Measure AA**

State legislation establishes the Authority's work and Measure AA guides funding criteria and priorities. Through its work, the Authority can strive to promote equitable outcomes for all Bay Area residents.

**San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act.** An eligible project shall do at least one of the following:

1. Restore, protect, or enhance tidal wetlands, managed ponds, or natural habitats on the shoreline in the San Francisco Bay area, excluding the Delta primary zone.
2. Build or enhance shoreline levees or other flood management features that are part of a project to restore, enhance, or protect tidal wetlands, managed ponds, or natural habitats identified in paragraph (1).
3. Provide or improve public access or recreational amenities that are part of a project to restore, enhance, or protect tidal wetlands, managed ponds, or natural habitats identified in paragraph (1).

**Measure AA.** The purpose of the San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA) is to protect and restore San Francisco Bay to benefit future generations by reducing trash, pollution, and harmful toxins, improving water quality, restoring habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife, protecting communities from flood and increasing shoreline public access and recreational areas.

The prioritization criteria most relevant to the Equity Guidelines include:

- Benefit economically disadvantaged communities.
- Benefit the region’s economy, including local workforce development, employment opportunities for Bay Area residents, and nature-based flood protection for critical infrastructure and existing shoreline communities.
- Work with local organizations and businesses to engage youth and young adults and assist them in gaining skills related to natural resource protection.

In addition, in Measure AA, the Shoreline Public Access Program description states, “The purpose of this program to be funded under the Measure is to enhance the quality of life of Bay Area residents, including those with disabilities, through safer and improved public access, as part of and compatible with wildlife habitat restoration projects in and around the Bay.”

Under the legal authority of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act and Measure AA, the Equity Guidelines will provide the basis for staff to develop five-year equity work plans, which will include desired outcomes, strategies to achieve the outcomes, interim tasks and milestones, and performance measures that can be used to evaluate progress on an annual basis. The Equity Guidelines identify actions to further equitable outcomes in the following six areas.

## **Guidelines**

### **1. Representation**

- a. Strive for representation on staff, Advisory Committee, Oversight Committee, and Governing Board that reflects the diversity of the Bay Area and cultivate an inclusive culture.
- b. Recruit Authority interns from a diverse pool that includes residents of economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs), tribes, people of color, and people with disabilities.
- c. Support environmental workforce development and career guidance to support increased diversity in the conservation field.

### **2. Outreach and Partnerships**

- a. Build relationships with community-based organizations in EDCs and tribes.
- b. Conduct more and better outreach to known community groups and expand outreach beyond known groups to others who may be interested. This includes doing joint outreach where appropriate with partners.
- c. Work with workforce development organizations to identify opportunities for Authority projects to provide a pipeline to jobs in the environmental and conservation fields.

### **3. Applications and Grants**

- a. Expand both the number of applications and awards in the Community Grant Program.
- b. Support Community Grant Program grantees in building capacity to apply to the Authority's competitive grant rounds, including providing feedback before and after grant rounds.
- c. Provide more funding to community-based organizations and tribes through grants to established restoration partners.
- d. Improve application and grant processes to reduce barriers to participation and highlight equity and community engagement in grant program materials.
- e. Remain flexible throughout the grant process to support the needs of grantees and communities.
- f. Improve the Authority website to ensure accessibility.
- g. Regularly review and revise application scoring criteria to ensure consistency with these Equity Guidelines.
- h. Expand and improve technical assistance provided to applicants in areas such as defining project scope, meeting grant requirements, and preparing invoicing documentation.
- i. Connect applicants and grantees with private foundations and external funding sources to address funding gaps.
- j. Provide networking opportunities for community-based organizations with landowners, restoration practitioners, and other potential partners.

#### **4. Meaningful Engagement**

- a. Meet communities where they are, physically and in terms of their priorities.
- b. Increase Authority staff interactions with community-based organizations to learn more about their interests, needs, and community engagement methods.
- c. Encourage grant applicants to include community engagement in the scope of work for their project, and to include funding for community engagement tasks, such as food and childcare, in grant budgets.
- d. Support inclusion of California Native American voices, leadership, and perspectives, including traditional ecological knowledge and tribal stewardship.
- e. Track changes made to project design and implementation as a result of community and tribal engagement.

#### **5. Project Benefits**

Prioritize projects that:

- a. Achieve more restoration in areas accessible to EDCs.
- b. Provide more public access amenities (trails, picnic areas, bathrooms, culturally relevant interpretative areas, and signs) in or near EDCs.
- c. Provide flood protection to EDCs.
- d. Provide opportunities for jobs and job training to EDC residents, tribes, people of color, and people with disabilities.
- e. Ensure that public access elements of projects consider accessibility for people with disabilities.
- f. Enable tribes to conduct traditional stewardship and cultural practices on ancestral land and co-manage these lands and natural resources.
- g. Ensure tribal concerns are respected and archaeological and cultural resources are protected.
- h. Assist tribes to regain access to their ancestral lands along the Bay shoreline through the Authority's grant programs.
- i. Are community-driven, create a sense of ownership, and tap into community knowledge.
- j. Incorporate culturally relevant images and multilingual text when working with communities to develop meaningful and approachable signage at public access points.

#### **6. Accountability and Transparency**

- a. Include additional equity metrics among the Authority's performance measures; continue to track and report on these performance measures annually.
- b. Collect and analyze data on types of organizations, geographies, and programs where the Authority has made investments in order to identify potential gaps.