

CAF Track 1: **Advancing Equitable Adaptation**

Workshop #2: **Actualizing Racial Equity in Climate Adaptation**

Monday, August 16 th • 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

[Main Session Recording](#)

Description

The first workshop explored how white supremacy shows up in the workplace and in adaptation work - and strategies for dismantling white supremacy to create a more equitable and inclusive culture. This workshop dove deeper into how adaptation practitioners can intentionally integrate equity principles and practices into climate adaptation processes to actualize racial equity goals. Participants heard case studies and engaged in breakout discussions to share their own ideas, strategies, resources, and lessons learned.

Track Facilitators

- **Hoi-Fei Mok** | Sustainability Manager, City of San Leandro
 - **Monica Palmeira** | Senior Analyst, California Public Utilities Commission
 - **Nick Tipon** | Member, Granton Rancheria; Board Member, Point Blue Conservation Science
 - **Julia Kim** | Climate & Energy Program Director, Local Government Commission
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Welcome

Code of Conduct and Group Norms

[CAF Code of Conduct & Track 1 Group Norms](#)

- All participants were asked to abide by the CAF Code of Conduct and Track 2 Group Norms
- No suggestions for improvement had been proposed since the track's first workshop

Workshop #1 Recap

- The track's first workshop was focused on dismantling white supremacy in the workplace.
- We heard a presentation from Ariel Guerrero who is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner OG Racial Equity Collaborative.
- Participants also discussed how white supremacy shows up in the workplace and in our work as adaptation practitioners.

Presentation 1: Equity Efforts in Providence, Rhode Island

Presentation from Leah Bamberger | Director of Sustainability, City of Providence, RI
Presentation | **contact:** Lbamberger@providenceri.gov

- The Legacy of the Industrial Revolution
 - As the world entered the Industrial Revolution, factories that processed cotton extracted by slave labor were established in and around the area of the City of Providence.
 - The legacy of these factories can be seen today as frontline communities living near these areas of high pollution continue to have increased levels of Asthma and elevated blood levels even after controlling for income.
- Equity in Sustainability Initiative
 - In order to ensure that the sustainability plan of Providence was equitably focused, staff hired the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee which was composed of frontline community members.
 - The Racially Equitable & Just Providence Framework
 - The Racial and Environmental Justice Committee established this framework to ensure that the city of Providence continued to center racial equity in its work moving forward.
 - More information on this framework can be found [here](#).
- Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership
 - There are steps that must be taken to build the capacity to allow for a community to move from the early stages of community engagement to community ownership.
- Targeted Universalism
 - When we continually design systems keeping in mind only the masses we are actively excluding and disadvantaging those communities living outside of those majority communities.
 - We should be designing all systems around those who have historically been most marginalized.
- Providence's Climate Justice Plan
 - This plan was developed with those historically marginalized communities at the center.
- Closing
 - The City of Providence has made meaningful progress in its equity work by continuously involving members of frontline communities in the decision making process.
 - Only through capacity building, not only within government but within frontline communities themselves, has real progress been made in Providence's equity efforts.

Presentation 2: Strategic Growth Council Racial Equity Action Plan

Presentation from Jessica (Jessie) Buendia | Deputy Director, Strategic Growth Council
Presentation | **contact:** Jessica.Buendia@sgc.ca.gov

- SGC's Racial Equity Action Plan:
https://sgc.ca.gov/about/docs/20200922-Updated_2019-2022_SGC_Racial_Equity_Action_Plan.pdf
- SGC's Racial Equity Resolution: <https://sgc.ca.gov/news/2020/08-26.html>
- SGC Vision
 - SGC strives to build a healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all
- SGC Mission
 - The mission of the Council is to coordinate and work collaboratively with public agencies, communities, and stakeholders to achieve sustainability, equity, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all Californians.
- SGC Leadership
 - The SGC Council is made up of 6 Cabinet Secretaries, and 3 public members that represent the agencies that oversee the planning and research work of SGC.
- Last summer SGC received a massive call-to-action
 - As a result SGC has doubled down on its commitment to build a healthy community for all
- Capitol Collaborative on Racial Equity (CCORE)
 - CCORE is a community of California State government entities learning about, planning for, and implementing activities that embed racial equity approaches into institutional culture, policies, and practices.
 - CCORE has worked closely with about 40 State organizations to develop Racial Equity Action Plans.
 - In 2020 SGC became the first state-level multi-level agency in the country to adopt a racial equity vision statement and racial equity action plan.
- How do we build a comprehensive Racial Equity plan that is then implemented and does not just sit on a shelf?
 - "The Great is the enemy of the Good."
 - It is important to publish something to the public in order to begin the process of furthering equity efforts. You do not necessarily need to wait for your plan to be perfect. Begin the work as soon as possible.
- SGC Racial Equity Vision and Action Plan
 - ISGC will advance equity by:
 - Council Leadership and Staff Training
 - Promoting fair access in hiring, greater opportunity in contracting, and targeted outreach and engagement
 - Distributing funding resources
 - Providing technical assistance and capacity-building opportunities

- Leveraging inter-agency partnerships
- Program Development and Design - Holistic Tribal Strategy
 - Tribal Set-aside in AHSC
 - Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grants
 - Tribal Engagement in climate Change research
 - Tribal Focus in TA Guidelines
- Implementation Best Practices: Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
 - SGC's Theory of Change at this stage in process was centered around:
 - Having an intentional focus on equity
 - A commitment to engaging with diverse voices
 - Hiring Staff and Consultants with Racial Equity Competencies
 - The deployment of Racial Equity Strategies which included listening tours, technical assistance, capacity building, and interagency coordination
- Interagency Coordination
 - SGC developed a Racial Equity Working Group which helped to administer the SGC Racial Equity Resolution
 - This working group meets once a month to ensure that these member agencies do not feel as though they are attempting to address any of these issues on their own.

Panel Discussion / Q&A

How did you build support within your organization and obtain buy-in from both decision-makers and staff to advance your racial equity work?

Bamberger: In previous years there have been far fewer individuals working in city governments that prioritized racial equity work. Do not be afraid to try new strategies and put time into figuring out what works. As long as you are persistent you will make progress towards the goals you are trying to achieve. What has worked best for the City of Providence is focusing on building those relationships with the communities so that individuals in decision making positions feel pressure from both their colleagues and the communities they represent. Support from both grassroots movements and political leadership is essential in driving change.

Buendia: One of the most important pieces is how these conversations are normalized at the highest level. Organizations should also develop transparent processes that people are able to observe and use to hold agencies accountable. A top-down approach is often necessary to successfully implement this work. While there is often a lot of passion around these issues, it is helpful to be able to hold those individuals at the highest level accountable. Middle management has been essential in implementing these practices and identifying middle management champions has been incredibly effective.

How is the mainstream green community incorporating these equity principles where budgets are tightened and equity priorities sidelined?

Bamberger: There has been some pushback from mainstream green organizations as they feel that they should have a seat at the table when, for instance, a city is developing a Climate Plan. In order to move past this initial pushback, these mainstream environmental organizations were brought to the table when the City of Providence began its Racial Equity Training.

What anti-displacement measures have been working?

Buendia: Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) hosts a variety of measures that have proven to be successful previously. Find that information [here](#).

How have organizations been able to track accountability?

Buendia: SGC has a commitment to report out through a public forum once a year the progress that has been made towards its equity efforts. If an agency has a public forum of any kind, that will certainly make the process of tracking this work accessible and transparent. This forum has been incredibly useful in highlighting best practices across agencies and these organizations generally tend to avoid being called out for doing something wrong in a public setting. The efforts of individuals should be highlighted and brought to the forefront of the conversation. Bureaucratic systems will always provide barriers to this work, but convincing leadership that the work you want to do is also being done by others can push them to take more risks and make efforts in this work that they historically had not.

Bamberger: Making information public is important but we must also go beyond that and ensure that the right people are in the decision-making positions and are able to receive this information. We should work to identify the systems changes that are necessary to create accountability in a meaningful way.

Report Outs from Breakout Session

Actualizing Racial Equity in Climate Adaptation

Breakout discussion notes captured by participants in [Jamboard](#)

- **Group 5**

Should organizations be developing a 2040-2050 vision similar to that of the City of Providence? This seems to be an effective way to engage the community while making efforts and intentions more transparent. Roadblocks to community engagement were also identified as a topic of high priority.

- **Group 4**

Organizations working on varying levels of governance encounter different barriers. Even in the face of bureaucratic barriers there are efforts that can be made to further equity goals.

Whether it is expanding language in job postings to be more inclusive or translating primary documents into languages other than English, there are always steps that can be taken by an individual or within a team.

- **Group 3**

Collaboration and partnerships are integral to supporting this work. How do we implement results-based accountability measures? How do we address market barriers that make these equity efforts difficult to achieve?

- **Group 2**

One equity effort that has proven to be impactful is offering internships for BIPOC community college students and then developing opportunities for employment for those individuals. How can we support BIPOC professionals while abiding by Prop 209? How can we develop pre-orientation or foundational trainings that share case studies in order to make equity work more accessible that might be more resistant to putting in the efforts for this equity work.

- **Group 1**

How do we effectively gauge how we engage with communities? How do we utilize the existing metrics and data to gauge this effectiveness? How do we develop cultural competency and acknowledge that it works in both ways? How do we ground top-down decision making in the experience of people on the ground? We must take advantage of the opportunity we have ahead of us and properly leverage federal funding to meet our larger equity goals.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps:

- We do not need to address or solve these issues by ourselves! We can and should be taking advantage of the networks that we are involved in. The more we collaborate the more effectively we can address these issues. These issues are likely not as unique as we tend to think they are and we can more effectively address them together.
- Facilitators will be incorporating the feedback of participants as they develop the next workshop which will be taking place on September 27th, 10am-12pm