

# State Coastal Conservancy

## DRAFT Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Guidelines

December 16, 2019

### Introduction

All Californians have the right to access the coast and should live in a healthy environment. However, the management of natural resources, including the California coast, has been fraught with exclusion, displacement, injustice, and extractive practices. The environmental burdens of development and industry are often borne by under-resourced communities, while environmental preservation and restoration primarily benefit the affluent.

The Coastal Conservancy is a state agency that funds planning and construction of projects that protect and restore natural resources, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, and coastal watersheds. The Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians.

The Coastal Conservancy recognizes its role in a history of inequity along the California Coast and commits to addressing injustices and moving forward in an equitable, inclusive manner. The Coastal Conservancy will:

- Improve its policies, programs, and practices to advance equitable access to the environmental, social, and economic benefits of California's coast and coastal watersheds.
- Regularly evaluate and modify program priorities, grant funding, contracting, hiring practices, communications, and community engagement practices, to address existing inequities.
- Increase the involvement and role of marginalized and indigenous communities in decision-making by the Conservancy.

### Nexus with Coastal Conservancy Programs

State legislation establishes the Coastal Conservancy's programs and guides funding criteria and priorities. Through these programs, the Coastal Conservancy can strive to promote equitable outcomes for all Californians, especially under-resourced, marginalized, and indigenous communities.

- **Explore the Coast:** Increase access to the coast for all Californians, reduce barriers to coastal access, and provide coastal experience for youth and adults that may face challenges getting to or enjoying the coast.
- **Protect and Restore the Coast:** Ensure the benefits of healthy ecosystems, clean water, wetlands, working lands, urban parks, and open space are provided to all Californians.
- **Climate Ready:** Increase both social and ecological resilience to climate change and reduce climate change impacts on communities within Coastal Conservancy jurisdiction.
- **Geographic Programs:** Increase public access and protect and restore natural resources in the Santa Ana River Watershed and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

## Guidelines

### **1. Partnerships**

- Build relationships with community-based organizations.
- Support people and organizations that are advocating for equity and environmental justice.
- Provide technical assistance to community-based organizations to build their capacity to plan, fund, and implement projects aligned with the Coastal Conservancy's program areas.
- Provide assistance to community-based organizations in applying for and managing grants.

### **2. Funding Programs**

- Fund programs and projects that increase equity and environmental justice throughout the Coastal Conservancy's geographic jurisdiction.
- Prioritize funding for projects that benefit under-resourced and marginalized communities.
- Develop grant programs with input from communities.
- Include funding for jobs, job training, and workforce development in grant programs.
- Reduce barriers to accessing and spending Coastal Conservancy grant funding.
- Remain flexible throughout the grant process to support the needs of grantees and communities.

### **3. Meaningful Community Engagement**

- Engage with communities with cultural humility to build mutual trust and relationships.
- Meet communities where they are, physically and in terms of their priorities.
- Ensure under-resourced communities have a decision-making role in the development of Coastal Conservancy-funded projects.
- Value and invest in community expertise. Ensure funds go to community-based organizations to lead community engagement to promote equitable project processes and outcomes.

### **4. Working with California's Tribes**

- Ensure consultation with tribes occurs early in project development and throughout project implementation.
- Ensure tribal concerns are respected and archaeological and cultural resources are protected.
- Seek solutions to state contracting issues that affect the sovereignty of tribes.
- Assist tribes to regain access to their ancestral lands on the coast through the Conservancy's land conservation or access programs.
- Work with tribes to enable traditional stewardship practices on ancestral land and co-management of their ancestral lands.
- Ensure programs include indigenous voices, leadership, and perspectives, including traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous stewardship, and educational programs.

## **5. Coastal Conservancy Staff and Board**

- Strive for workforce to reflect California's diversity across all departments and levels and cultivate an inclusive culture within the Coastal Conservancy.
- The Coastal Conservancy is governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Governor and California Legislature. To extent possible, support efforts for the Board to reflect California's diversity.
- Articulate equity and environmental justice values in the Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that Coastal Conservancy staff participate in ongoing workshops and dialogue about equity and environmental justice to improve cultural humility.
- Ensure Coastal Conservancy project staff prioritize equity and environmental justice in their work and are supported by management.

## **6. Accountability and Transparency**

- Include accountability metrics for equity and environmental justice objectives in the Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan; track and report on these metrics annually.
- Regularly assess where the Coastal Conservancy has and has not invested funding. Evaluate the impacts of our grant programs in advancing equity.

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## Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines

### Definitions of Terms

- Equity
  - Fairness of achieving outcomes for all groups and no one factor, such as race, can be used to predict outcomes. Equity is defined in the context of social and racial equity.
- Marginalized and/or under-resourced communities
  - Communities who have been historically and are still systematically excluded from political and policy-making processes.
  - Communities with low-income or low levels of educational attainment, communities of color, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, immigrants, tribes.
- Community engagement
  - The process of working collaboratively with groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations with respect to issues affecting their well-being.
- Environmental justice
  - The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
  - This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys: 1) the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and 2) equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.
- Fair treatment
  - No group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or policies.
- Meaningful involvement
  - (1) people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
  - (2) the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
  - (3) community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and

- (4) decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.
- Diversity
  - A range of differences in characteristics of people, such as socioeconomic status, race, culture, age, gender, physical ability, social identities, and lived experiences.
- Inclusion
  - Creation of a welcoming environment 1) where people's differences are represented and respected; 2) that embraces the multicultural and indigenous histories and presence of an area; and 3) cultivates community empowerment, lifelong stewardship, personal connections, and a sense of ownership.
- Cultural humility
  - The practice of self-reflection on how one's own background and expectations impact a situation, of openness to others' determining the relevance of their own identities to any given situation, and of committing to redress the effects of power imbalances.

#### Sources

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

American Library Association

California Coastal Commission

Coro Fellows Program

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency