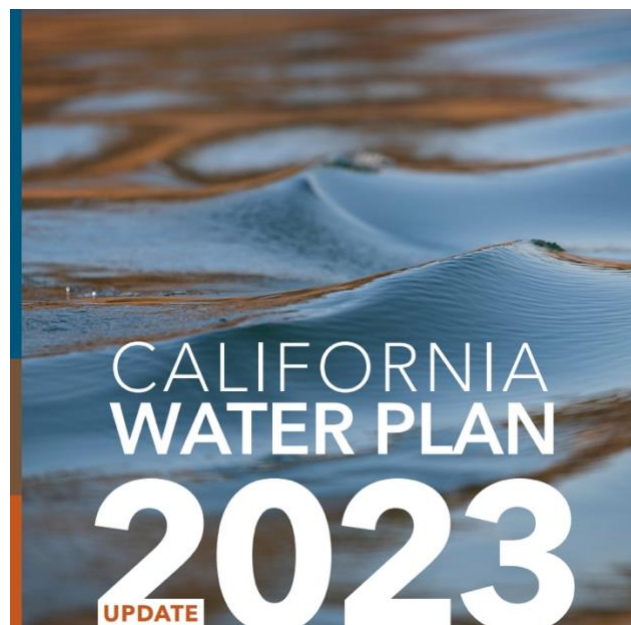


Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies and Districts in California for California Water Plan Update 2023

July 2024



**Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management
Agencies and Districts in California for
California Water Plan Update 2023**

July 2024

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIPOC	Black, indigenous, and people of color
DEI	diversity, equity, and inclusion
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
HR	hydrologic region
State Water Board	State Water Resources Control Board
Update 2023	California Water Plan Update 2023
Water Plan Team	California Water Plan Team
Workgroup	Equity Survey Workgroup

Executive Summary

As part of [California Water Plan Update 2023](#) (Update 2023), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted a voluntary survey of water and flood management agencies and districts in 2023 to assess local efforts to advance equity in their communities and to receive feedback on how the State can assist them in advancing equity. A 27-question survey was developed with input from a public workgroup that included representatives from water management agencies and districts and non-governmental organizations. The equity survey questions were grouped under four major areas: (1) general agency or district information, (2) agency or district efforts to advance equity, (3) feedback on State assistance to advance equity locally, and (4) agency or district representation participation. The survey was intended for all regional and local water and flood management agencies and districts in California. Water managers had the option to complete the survey anonymously.

The survey was distributed to approximately 1,000 water and flood management agencies and districts and was open over a three-week period in June 2023. In total, 59 responses were received from water and flood management agencies and districts. The summarized and detailed responses are included in this report. The survey results were used to inform Update 2023's Chapter 6, "Understanding and Addressing Equity in the Management of California's Water Resources." This chapter noted the following top equity actions that were reported by local agencies that completed the survey:

- Equity as part of agency or district mission statement and strategic plan.
- Formal equity policy or plan.
- Hire staff with expertise in equity.
- Have outreach representative(s) engage with frontline communities.
- Partner with local and community-based organizations to enhance outreach to frontline and Tribal communities.
- Provide equity-oriented staff training.

Overall, as stated in Update 2023 Chapter 6, it was challenging to infer a baseline of equity-related business practices across water and flood management agencies. Establishing a baseline is critical to assess gaps in understanding and to inform how the State can support the collective needs of water and flood agencies. Additional

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work is needed to determine effective metrics for measuring meaningful outreach and engagement, representation, and technical and financial assistance.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies and Districts

Introduction

As part of [California Water Plan Update 2023](#) (Update 2023), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted a voluntary survey of water and flood management agencies and districts in 2023 to assess local efforts to advance equity in their communities and to receive feedback on how the State can assist them in advancing equity. A 27-question survey was developed with input from a public workgroup that included representatives from water management agencies and districts and from non-governmental organizations. The survey was intended for all regional and local water and flood management agencies and districts in California. The survey results were used to inform Update 2023's Chapter 6, "Understanding and Addressing Equity in the Management of California's Water Resources." This report includes suggestions to improve participation in future equity surveys along with three appendices: (1) equity survey notice, (2) blank equity survey, and (3) results of the equity survey.

Equity Survey Workgroup

The California Water Plan Team (Water Plan Team) formed an Equity Survey Workgroup (Workgroup) with the primary task of developing a survey to collect equity information from regional and local water agencies and districts. The Workgroup consisted of 26 participants from organizations that included local and regional water agencies and districts, academia, non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, resource conservation districts, State agencies, Tribes, and counties. The names and affiliations of those who participated in the Workgroup are shown in Table 1.

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Table 1 Equity Survey Workgroup Members

Name	Organization
Aaron Fukuda	Tulare Irrigation District
Annyssa Interrante	Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Carlos Moran	Council for Watershed Health
Clarissa Maloney	California Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Elea Becker Lowe	California Governor's Office of Planning and Research
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Lynn Rodriguez	Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County
Melissa Matlock	Western Municipal Water District
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Soren Nelson	Association of California Water Agencies
Stephanie Anagnoson	Madera County
Stephanie Suess	Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me-Wuk Indians of California
Steve Haze	Sierra Resource Conservation District
Victor Griego	Water Education for Latino Leaders

Equity Survey Development and Distribution

The equity survey included 27 questions and was intended to take 20-30 minutes to complete. The equity survey questions were grouped into four categories:

- General Agency or District Information.
- Agency or District Efforts to Advance Equity.
- Feedback on State Assistance to Advance Equity Locally.
- Agency or District Representation Participation.

The Workgroup members assisted the Water Plan Team over a five-month period to develop and finalize the equity survey. The survey was distributed in June 2023 to approximately 1,000 water and flood management agencies. Their voluntary response was requested over a three-week period. The schedule for developing and distributing the equity survey is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Timeline of Major Equity Survey Development and Distribution Activities

Date	Activity
January 12, 2023	First Workgroup meeting held. Draft equity survey presented. Workgroup members provided feedback and suggestions to improve the survey.
March 23, 2023	Second Workgroup meeting held. Revised draft equity survey presented. Workgroup members provided feedback to help further refine and improve the survey.
May 2, 2023	Email sent to Workgroup members with latest revised draft equity survey for final review and comment.
June 8, 2023	Final version of equity survey and notice completed.
June 12, 2023	Equity survey distributed to water agencies and districts.
June 30, 2023	Equity survey voluntary responses due.

The goal was to distribute the equity survey to all water and flood management agencies in the State using mailing lists from DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), as shown in Table 3. A distribution plan was prepared that included identification of the appropriate DWR and State Water Board’s contact persons that oversee these email lists and could assist with distribution of the survey. All DWR programs listed in Table 3 participated in distribution of the equity survey and sent emails to water and flood management

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agencies that they work with. The State Water Board was unable to distribute the equity survey as planned.

Table 3 Intended Equity Survey Recipients and Associated Email Lists

Intended Equity Survey Recipients	State Programs with Associated Email List
Urban Water Suppliers	DWR – Water Use Efficiency Program State Water Board – Drinking Water Program
Small Community Water Suppliers	DWR – Small Community Drought Relief Program State Water Board – Drinking Water Program
Agricultural Water Suppliers	DWR – Water Use Efficiency Program
Groundwater Sustainability Agencies	DWR – Sustainable Groundwater Management Office
Flood Management Agencies/Districts	DWR – Flood Management Program
Wastewater Agencies/Districts	State Water Board
Water Recycling Agencies/Districts	State Water Board
Stormwater Management Agencies/Districts	State Water Board

Summary of Equity Survey Results

The summary of survey results is organized around the four survey categories: (1) general agency or district information, (2) agency or district efforts to advance equity, (3) feedback on State assistance to advance equity locally, and (4) agency or district representation participation. A total of 59 responses were received from water and flood management agencies and districts, which represents a low response rate from all the agencies, districts, cities, counties, and private water companies that manage water in the state. More detailed survey results are presented in Appendix A.

The first major survey category focused on general agency or district information and included seven questions. Most respondents provided responses to this set of questions. A summary of responses for each question is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of General Agency/District Information (Questions 1-7)

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
1. Agency/District name	45 respondents provided their agency or district name. 14 respondents did not provide their agency or district name.
2. Name/Title	41 respondents provided their name and/or title. 18 respondents did not provide their name and/or title.
3. Water management sector(s)	Water management sectors most often identified were urban water supply, wastewater management, groundwater management, and municipal water recycling/reuse. Many agencies and districts identified more than one water management sector.
4. Entity type	Entity types most often identified were city, water district, public utility district, and sanitation/sewer agency/district. Many agencies and districts identified only one entity type, but some identified more than one entity type.
5. Number of employees	Approximately half the respondents indicated they have 25 or fewer employees.
6. Hydrologic region (HR)	Highest number of responses were received from agencies and districts in the South Coast HR, North Coast HR, Tulare Lake Basin HR, San Francisco Bay HR, and Sacramento River HR.
7. Number of permanent residents in the community you serve:	Many of the respondents indicated their agency or district serves more than 10,000 permanent residents.

The second survey category included nine questions that focused on agency and district efforts to advance equity. In general, for those that responded, equity-related internal practices appear to be further along than equity-related external practices. Questions with multiple-choice responses received a higher level of completion than questions that required text entry responses. Table 5 presents a summary of responses for each survey question.

In Table 5 and throughout this report, the term *frontline communities* refers to communities that experience the “first and worst” of environmental consequences. In other words, frontline communities are already living with the negative impacts of

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inequities in water management and thus are most susceptible to future negative changes. Residents are more exposed to existing water sector vulnerabilities (e.g., water shortages, water quality issues, or affordability challenges) and future ones, such as the impacts of climate change.

Table 5 Summary of Agency and District Efforts to Advance Equity (Questions 8-16)

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
<p>8. Equity related external practices (multiple choice response)</p>	<p>The following external practices were selected most often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities. • Partner with local organizations in their area to enhance outreach to frontline and Tribal communities. • Provide low-income financial assistance (drinking water and/or wastewater systems). <p>Some respondents indicated there were no external practices.</p> <p>47 of the 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.</p>
<p>9. Equity related internal practices (multiple choice response)</p>	<p>Close to half of the respondents indicated they consider equity in the decision-making process. Some have implemented equity-oriented staff training and/or equity as part of agency/district strategic plan. A few have a formal equity policy/plan, include equity as part of agency/district mission statement, include equity as part of job descriptions, and/or hire staff with expertise in equity. Some respondents indicated there were no internal practices. 58 of the 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.</p>
<p>10. Barriers faced implementing equity related internal and/or external practices (text entry response)</p>	<p>Some common responses included lack of funding, lack of training, lack of capacity, and unclear State policy requirements. All detailed responses are available in the appendix.</p> <p>41 of the 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.</p>

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Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
11. Language translation services provided for non-English speaking residents (multiple choice response)	Most respondents have staff that serve the public in language(s) other than English. Many respondents communicate in language(s) other than English and/or have outreach/education materials in languages other than English. Some respondents provide emergency alerts in language(s) other than English or have a website in language(s) other than English. A few respondents indicated there were no language translation services provided. All 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.
12. Type of staff used for equity-related internal practices, external practices and/or language translation services (multiple choice response)	Most respondents have staff that serve the public in language(s) other than English. Many respondents communicate in language(s) other than English and/or have outreach/education materials in languages other than English. Some respondents provide emergency alerts in language(s) other than English and/or have a website in language(s) other than English. A few respondents indicated there were no language translation services provided. All 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.
13. Technical assistance and other services provided to frontline and Tribal communities (text entry response)	Most respondents have full-time employee(s) for equity related work. Some respondents have part-time and/or contract employee(s) for equity related work. A few respondents indicated they did not use staff for equity-related work. All 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.
14. Examples of partnering with, engaging with, and including frontline and Tribal communities in water management planning efforts (text entry response)	Some common responses included translation, outreach, and education services. All detailed responses are available in the appendix. 18 of the 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.
15. Examples of programs, planning activities, and projects (completed or currently working on) that specifically benefit frontline and Tribal communities (text entry response)	Some common responses included outreach and meeting with Tribal and local communities. All detailed responses are available in the appendix. 22 of the 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
16. Challenges that hinder or impede implementation of programs, planning activities, and projects that would benefit frontline and Tribal communities. (text entry response)	Some common responses included lack of funding and lack of staff capacity. All detailed responses are available in the appendix. 20 of the 59 agencies/districts responded to this question.

The third survey category included two questions that focused on agency or district feedback on State assistance needed to advance equity locally. In general, the respondents ranked funding and technical assistance as the highest State actions needed to advance equity at the local level. Table 6 provides a summary of responses for each question.

Table 6 Summary of Feedback on State Assistance to Advance Equity Locally (Questions 17-18)

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
17. Ranking of State actions that can best support agency/district efforts to advance equity (ranking of multiple-choice actions)	Five multiple choice State actions were provided for respondents to rank. The following is the ranking order based on the respondent’s selection results. Additional details are in Appendix C. 1. State funding (such as long-term grant funding to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) positions/staff time). 2. State offering technical assistance/technical support (e.g., translation and interpretation services, meeting facilitation or virtual platform access services, water resource or water quality data interpretation). 3. State offering best practices, trainings, and other resource toolkits. 4. State support for coordination among state and local agencies, Tribes, non- governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and community members. 5. State policy changes to support equity. Rankings were provided by 50 of the 59 agencies and districts.

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
18. Additional details on State actions needed to support agency/district efforts to advance equity (text entry response)	Some common responses included the need for State funding, training, and education. All detailed responses are available in Appendix C. 15 of the 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.

The last survey category included nine questions focused on agency or district representation participation. Questions with multiple choice responses received a high level of completion compared to the one question that required a text entry response. Table 7 provides a summary of responses for each question.

Table 7 Agency/District Representation Participation (Questions 19-27)

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
19. Size of Governing Board (multiple choice response)	Most respondents indicated they have five board members. Some respondents indicated they have more than five board members. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
20. Selection of governing board members (multiple choice response)	Most respondents indicated they have a general public election. A few respondents indicated board members are either (1) appointed, (2) selected through a shareholder election, or (3) selected through a landowner election. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
21. Gender diversity of governing board (multiple choice response)	Many respondents indicated their board composition closely represents the gender diversity of the people they affect or serve. Some respondents indicated either (1) their board composition does not represent the gender diversity of the people they affect or serve, or (2) they preferred not to answer. A few respondents were unable to answer because they did not know the gender diversity of the people they affect or serve. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.

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Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
22. Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) diversity of governing board (multiple choice response)	Many respondents indicated their board composition closely represents the BIPOC diversity of the people they affect or serve. Some respondents indicated either (1) their board composition under-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people they affect or serve, (2) were unable to answer because they did not know the BIPOC diversity of the people they affect or serve, or (3) preferred not to answer. A few respondents indicated their board composition over-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people they affect or serve. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
23. Age distribution of governing board (multiple choice response)	Some respondents indicated either (1) their board composition closely represents the age distribution of the people they affect or serve, (2) their board composition does not represent the age distribution of the people they affect or serve, (3) were unable to answer because they did not know the age distribution of the people they affect or serve, or (4) they preferred not to answer. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
24. Economic diversity of governing board (multiple choice response)	Many respondents indicated their board composition closely represents the economic diversity of the people they affect or serve. Some respondents indicated either (1) their board composition does not represent the economic diversity of the people they affect or serve, (2) were unable to answer because they did not know the economic diversity of the people they affect or serve, or (3) they preferred not to answer. 58 of the 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
25. Advertisement of public meetings (multiple choice response)	Many respondents indicated public meetings are advertised on (1) their agency or district website, (2) notification posted at meeting location, and (3) by emailing those on their agency's or district's email list. Some respondents indicated public meetings are advertised on social media and on community centers' websites and message boards. 58 of the 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.

Question Summary	Summary of Survey Responses
26. How public meetings are conducted (multiple choice response)	Many respondents indicated public meetings include virtual and hybrid options and are held during business hours, evening hours, or weekends. Some respondents indicated public meetings are (1) held in frontline communities, (2) include outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities, and (3) include options for translators in languages other than English. All 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.
27. Recruitment and development of people from frontline communities to become agency/district leaders (text entry response)	Some of the responses included general recruitment and outreach for jobs within their organization. All detailed responses are available in Appendix C. 9 of the 59 agencies and districts responded to this question.

How the Equity Survey informed California Water Plan Update 2023

The information collected in the equity survey helped inform Update 2023’s Chapter 6, “Understanding and Addressing Equity in the Management of California’s Water Resources.” Specifically, the information in the “Local Efforts to Advance Water Equity” section (page 6-24) was derived from the survey results, which highlighted the top equity actions reported by local agencies and included information related to planning, programs, projects, demographics, language translation, interpretation services, and public meetings.

The top equity actions reported by local agencies that completed the survey included:

- Equity as part of agency or district mission statement and strategic plan.
- Formal equity policy or plan.
- Hire staff with expertise in equity.
- Have outreach representative(s) engage with frontline communities.
- Partner with local and community-based organizations to enhance outreach to frontline and Tribal communities.
- Provide equity-oriented staff training.

Overall, as stated in Update 2023 Chapter 6, it was challenging to infer a baseline of equity-related business practices across water and flood management agencies.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Establishing a baseline is critical to assess gaps in understanding and to inform how the State can support the collective needs of water and flood agencies. Additional work is needed to determine effective metrics for measuring meaningful outreach and engagement, representation, and technical and financial assistance.

Improving Participation in Future Equity Surveys

Update 2023, Chapter 8, “Roadmap to Resilience,” includes Action 4.2.7, “Survey Water Agencies and Districts on Their Progress in Advancing Environmental Justice and Equity.” It recommends an equity survey for California Water Plan Update 2028, and the results to be used to inform resource and policy needs. Because participation by water agencies and districts to complete the survey was low, the following are a few suggestions on how the Water Plan Team can improve future survey participation.

- Engage the environmental justice and equity advisory group described in Update 2023 Action 4.1.2 to discuss and develop a plan to improve participation in the Update 2028 equity survey.
- Work with the State Water Board at the start of each California Water Plan update cycle to obtain email contact lists for water management sectors such as small community water suppliers (those not required to submit an urban water management plan), wastewater agencies, water recycling agencies, and stormwater management agencies. DWR does not have complete or current email contact lists for these sectors.
- Consider obtaining all water agency and district email contact lists and use the [Water Plan Team email address](#) to send out the survey. For this survey, some DWR programs distributed the survey on behalf of the Water Plan Team. In this way, recipients can directly respond to the Water Plan Team email if they have questions and any duplicate email addresses can be removed.
- Send out a courtesy reminder during the final week of the survey. The Update 2023 equity survey was available for a three-week period and after the first two weeks, 22 responses were received. A courtesy reminder notice was sent during the last week, and an additional 37 responses were received after the reminder notice was sent.

Appendix A. Notice of Equity Survey to Regional and Local Water and Flood Management Agencies and Districts in California

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is responsible for updating the California Water Plan every five years. In *California Water Plan Update 2023*, DWR is seeking information and ideas from regional and local water and flood management agencies and districts to advance equity in water management. DWR is collecting feedback on how State government can assist water agencies/districts in these efforts.

In collaboration with representatives from regional and local water and flood management agencies/districts and non-governmental organizations, an equity survey was developed to gather important best practices, understand resource gaps, and highlight equity actions underway. DWR will use the information collected from this survey to inform Water Plan Update 2023 that is scheduled to be released later this year for public comment.

Please complete this online survey by Friday, June 30, 2023, close of business. If necessary, please forward this email to the appropriate person within your organization. Your participation will help DWR and the State understand how water and flood managers are advancing equity in their communities and how State government can support their efforts.

The [Equity Survey](#) can be accessed online or by scanning the following QR code with your phone.



For additional information about this survey, please contact the [California Water Plan Team](#).

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Appendix B. Blank Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies and Districts in California

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is inviting you to complete this voluntary survey that will be used to inform the *California Water Plan Update 2023*. Information provided in this survey will improve DWR's and the State's understanding of how regional and local water managers are advancing equity in their communities. The survey also provides an opportunity for water managers to communicate on how State government can assist them in advancing equity.

This 27-question survey should take approximately 20–30 minutes to complete. It was developed with input from a public workgroup that included representatives from water management agencies/districts and non-governmental organizations.

This survey uses the following key terms. Please refer to these definitions when providing responses.

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Frontline communities are communities that experience the “first and worst” of environmental consequences. These communities are more exposed to existing and future water sector vulnerabilities (e.g., water shortages, poor water quality, and/or affordability challenges).

Technical assistance is the process of providing targeted support to an agency, organization, or community with a development need or resource gap. Technical Assistance may be delivered in many ways, such as one-on-one consultation, small group facilitation, technical resources and analysis, or through a web-based clearinghouse. Technical Assistance is one of the most effective methods for building the capacity of an organization (as defined by the California Strategic Growth Council).

For any questions about this survey, please email the California [Water Plan Team](#).

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Please note:

- This survey is intended for all regional and local water and flood management agencies/districts in California.
- Survey respondents should be authorized to submit a response on behalf of their organization.
- All data gathered for this survey will be aggregated to inform broader policy recommendations in the *California Water Plan Update 2023*.
- The term Agency/District is used throughout the survey and is intended to represent any entity as described in Question #4.
- Water and flood management agencies/districts have the option to complete this survey anonymously by leaving the first two questions blank.

General Description of Your Agency/District

1. Agency/District name:

(Please note: You may leave this question blank if you wish to remain anonymous.)

2. Name and title of person completing this survey:

(Please note: You may leave this question blank if you wish to remain anonymous.)

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3. Identify the water management sector(s) your agency/district is involved in:
(Please select all that apply)

- Urban Water Supply (those required to submit urban water management plans)
- Small Community Water Supply (those not required to submit urban water management plans)
- Agricultural Water Supply
- Groundwater Management
- Flood Management
- Stormwater Management
- Wastewater Management
- Municipal Water Recycling/Reuse
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

4. Identify your entity type (Please select all that apply)

- Water Agency
- Water District
- Public Utility District
- Investor-Owned Utility
- Mutual Water Company
- Community Service District
- Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- Flood Management or Reclamation Agency/District
- Sanitation or Sewer Agency/District
- Joint Powers Authority
- Irrigation District
- Water Conservation District
- City
- County
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

5. Number of employees

- Fewer than 5 employees
- 6 to 25 employees
- 25 to 50 employees
- 51 to 100 employees
- 101 to 500 employees
- 501 to 1,000 employees
- More than 1,000 employees

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

6. Which Hydrologic Region (HR) are you located in? (Please select all that apply)

Information on identifying your HR can be found on the [California State Geoportal website](#).

- North Coast HR
- San Francisco Bay HR
- Central Coast HR
- South Coast HR
- Sacramento River HR
- San Joaquin River HR
- Tulare Lake Basin HR
- North Lahontan HR
- South Lahontan HR
- Colorado River HR

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

7. Number of permanent residents (including seasonal workers) in the community you serve:

- Fewer than 100
- 101 to 1,000
- 1,001 to 5,000
- 5,001 to 10,000
- 10,001 to 100,000
- Greater than 100,000

Agency and District Efforts to Advance Equity

Collecting data on equity actions by water management agencies/districts will help establish a base-line to measure local outreach and engagement, technical assistance, and other best practices that agencies/districts provide to their community members.

8. Which of these external practices related to equity does your agency/district implement? (Please select all that apply.)

- Provide technical assistance/grant writing to frontline communities
- Partner with local organizations in your area to enhance outreach to frontline and/or Tribal communities
- Have outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities
- Have outreach representative(s) to engage with Tribal communities
- No-shutoff policy for non-payment (intended for drinking water systems)
- Provide water to people experiencing homelessness (intended for drinking water systems)
- Provide low-income financial assistance (intended for drinking water and wastewater systems)
- None
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

9. Which of these internal practices related to equity does your agency/district implement? (Please select all that apply.)

- Equity as part of agency/district mission statement
- Equity as part of agency/district strategic plan
- Formal equity policy and/or plan
- Equity is considered in decision-making process
- Equity-oriented staff training
- Hire staff with expertise in equity
- Equity as part of job descriptions
- None
- Other

10. Please briefly explain any barriers faced to implement any Internal and/or External practices related to equity (e.g., lack of capacity, lack of training, unclear State policy requirements).

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

11. Which of these language translation services does your agency/district provide for non-English speaking residents? (Please select all that apply.)

- Staff that serves the public in language(s) other than English
- Communication in language(s) other than English
- Website in language(s) other than English
- Emergency alerts in language(s) other than English
- Outreach/education materials in languages other than English
- None
- Other

12. What type of staff do you use for equity related to internal practices, external practices and/or language translation services described earlier? (Please select all that apply.)

- Full-time employee(s)
- Part-time employee(s)
- Contract employee(s)
- Volunteer(s)
- None
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

13. Please give examples of technical assistance and/or other services your agency/district provides to frontline and/or Tribal communities (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

14. Please give examples of how your agency/district partners with, engages with and/or includes frontline and/or Tribal communities in your water management planning efforts (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

15. Please give examples of programs, planning activities, and/or projects your agency/district has completed or is currently working on that specifically benefit frontline and/or Tribal communities (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

16. Please list challenges that hinder or impede your agency's/district's ability to implement programs, planning activities, and/or projects that would benefit frontline and/or Tribal communities. If none, leave blank.

Feedback on State Assistance to Advance Equity Locally

Please provide detailed information on how State government can assist your agency/district to advance equity.

17. Please rank the following State actions that can best support your agency/district in advancing equity. (rank most important first)

___ State offering technical assistance/technical support (e.g., translation and interpretation services, meeting facilitation or virtual platform access services, water resource or water quality data interpretation)

___ State policy changes to support equity

___ State funding (such as long-term grant funding to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) positions/staff time)

___ State support for coordination among state and local agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and community members

___ State offering best practices, trainings, and other resource toolkits.

18. Please provide additional details on State actions needed to support your agency/district in advancing equity.

Agency and District Representation and Participation

Water management decisions are largely made at the local level. With hundreds of water management agencies/districts in California, there is great variation in services delivered, governance structures, and financing mechanisms that determine their level of influence on their community. The following questions are intended to gather important context to the various management approaches and organizational structures of water management agencies/districts.

19. Size of Governing Board

- Fewer than five board members
- Five board members
- More than five board members
- Does not apply

20. How are governing board members selected?

- General public election
- Landowner election
- Shareholder election
- Agency/District-appointed
- Court-appointed
- Does not apply
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

21. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the gender diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

- The board composition closely represents the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- The board composition does not represent the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Unable to answer, we do not know the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Does not apply, we do not have a governing board
- Prefer not to answer

22. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the black, indigenous, & people of color (BIPOC) diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

- The board composition closely represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- The board composition under-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- The board composition over-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Unable to answer, we do not know the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Does not apply, we do not have a governing board.
- Prefer not to answer

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

23. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the age distribution of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

- The board composition closely represents the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.
- The board composition does not represent the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.
- Unable to answer, we do not know the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.
- Does not apply, we do not have a governing board.
- Prefer not to answer

24. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the economic diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

- The board composition closely represents the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- The board composition does not represent the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Unable to answer, we do not know the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.
- Does not apply, we do not have a governing board.
- Prefer not to answer

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

25. How are agency/district public meetings advertised? (Please select all that apply.)

- Notification posted at meeting location
- Agency/District website
- Social media
- Physical flyers
- Radio
- Community Centers' websites/message boards
- Email sent to agency/district email list
- Advertise meetings in multiple languages
- Not advertised
- Do not hold public meetings
- Other

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

26. How does your agency/district conduct agency/district public meetings?
(Please select all that apply.)

- During business hours
- During evening hours and/or weekends
- Include options for virtual/hybrid meetings
- Hold meetings in frontline communities
- Have outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities
- Have outreach representative(s) to engage with Tribal communities
- Include options for translators in languages other than English
- Include options for translators in American Sign Language
- Provide food
- Provide childcare
- Other

27. Please give examples of how your agency/district recruits and develops people from frontline communities to become agency/district leaders (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

**The California Water Plan Team thanks you for taking
the time to complete this survey!**

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Appendix C. Results of the Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies and Districts in California

General Agency and District Information

(Questions 1-7)

Questions 1 and 2. Agency/District Name and Name/Title of persons completing survey

Of those who responded, 45 provided their agency or district name, and 41 provided their name and/or title. Fourteen did not provide their agency or district name, and 18 did not provide their name or title.

Question 3. Identify the water management sector(s) your agency/district is involved in: (Please select all that apply)

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response.

Table C-3a Water Management Sectors Identified

Identified Sectors	Number of Agencies/Districts
Urban Water Supply	38
Small Community Water Supply	9
Agricultural Water Supply	6
Groundwater Management	18
Flood Management	10
Stormwater Management	14
Wastewater Management	33
Municipal Water Recycling/Reuse	16

Table C-3b Number of Water Management Sectors Identified

Number of Identified Sectors	Number of Agencies/Districts
One Water Management Sector Identified	21
Two Water Management Sectors Identified	13
Three Water Management Sectors identified	13
Four Water Management Sectors Identified	6
Five Water Management Sectors Identified	2
Six Water Management Sectors Identified	4
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	59

Question 4. Identify your entity type: (Please select all that apply)

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 58 provided a response to Question 4.

Table C-4a Entity Types Identified

Entity Type	Number of Agencies/Districts
Water Agency	6
Water District	18
Public Utility District	10
Investor-Owned Utility	0
Mutual Water Company	2
Community Service District	7
Groundwater Sustainability Agency	3
Flood Management or Reclamation Agency/District	2
Sanitation or Sewer Agency/District	10
Joint Powers Authority	3
Irrigation District	1
Water Conservation District	1
City	19
County	1
Other	0

Table C-4b Number of Entity Types Identified

Number of Identity Types	Number of Agencies/Districts
One Entity Identified	43
Two Entities Identified	8
Three Entities Identified	4
Four Entities Identified	3
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	58

Question 5. Number of Employees

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 58 provided a response to Question 5.

Table C-5 Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Number of Agencies/Districts
Fewer than 5 employees	10
6 to 25 employees	20
26 to 50 employees	6
51 to 100 employees	8
101 to 500 employees	13
501 to 1,000 employees	0
More than 1,000 employees	1
Total Water Agencies/ Districts Responding	58

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 6. Which Hydrologic Region (HR) are you located in? (Please select all that apply)

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 6.

Table C-6 Number of Agencies and Districts Reporting They Are in a Single Hydrologic Region

Hydrologic Region	Number of Agencies/Districts
North Coast	7
San Francisco Bay	6
Central Coast	4
South Coast	18
Sacramento River	6
San Joaquin River	4
Tulare Lake Basin	7
North Lahontan	0
South Lahontan	3
Colorado River	2
Total Water Agencies/ Districts Responding	57

Table C-6 Note: In addition, two agencies/districts reported they are located in two hydrologic regions. One is in the South Coast and Central Coast hydrologic regions. The other is in the Tulare Lake and San Joaquin River hydrologic regions.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 7. Number of permanent residents (including seasonal workers) in the community you serve:

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 7.

Table C-7 Number of Permanent Residents

Number of Permanent Residents	Number of Agencies/Districts
Fewer than 100	2
101 to 1,000	4
1,001 to 5,000	3
5,001 to 10,000	6
10,001 to 100,000	32
Greater than 100,000	12
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	59

Agency/District Efforts to Advance Equity

(Questions 8-16)

Question 8. Which of these external practices related to equity does your agency/district implement? (Please select all that apply.)

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 47 provided a response to Question 8.

Table C-8 External Equity Related Practices Implemented

External Practices	Number of Agencies/Districts
Provide technical assistance/grant writing to frontline communities	1
Partner with local organizations in your area to enhance outreach to frontline and/or Tribal communities	19
Have outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities	17
Have outreach representative(s) to engage with Tribal communities	4
No-shutoff policy for non-payment (intended for drinking water systems)	4
Provide water to people experiencing homelessness (intended for drinking water systems)	0
Provide low-income financial assistance (intended for drinking water and wastewater systems)	18
Other – Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)	1
Other - Customers may contact Agency representative to discuss options for averting termination of residential service for nonpayment. Options include a deferred or reduced payment plan, an alternative payment schedule, or an agreement to amortize the delinquent amounts.	1
Other - Many on this list do not apply because the Inland Empire Utilities Agency is a wholesale water/wastewater agency. Please note there are no Tribes in our service area.	1
None	16

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 9. Which of these internal practices related to equity does your agency/district implement? (Please select all that apply.)

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 58 provided a response to Question 9.

Table C-9 Internal Equity Related Practices Implemented

Internal Practices	Number of Agencies/Districts
Equity as part of agency/district mission statement	8
Equity as part of agency/district strategic plan	14
Formal equity policy and/or plan	12
Equity is considered in decision-making process	26
Equity-oriented staff training	16
Hire staff with expertise in equity	8
Equity as part of job descriptions	12
Other - We are all volunteer agency	1
Other - Interview questions	1
Other - Some of the item indicated as yes are pending implementation	1
Other - We are hiring a consultant to analyze and recommend how Inland Empire Utilities Agency can best promote equity	1
None	17

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 10. Please briefly explain any barriers faced to implement any Internal and/or External practices related to equity (e.g., lack of capacity, lack of training, unclear State policy requirements).

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 41 provided a response to Question 6.

Table C-10 Barriers Faced to Implement Equity Practices

Common Responses	Number of Agencies/Districts
Lack of Training	9
Lack of Capacity	9
Lack of Funding	9
Unclear on State Policy Requirements	6
Lack of Qualified Applicants	3
Need for Board Direction/Priorities	3
Potential Conflicts with Prop 218	3
None or NA	6
Not sure or unclear	2

Additional detailed responses to Question 10:

- Lack of qualified candidate pool, especially for engineering and hydrology. I suggest a strategy to prioritize education from an early age, especially related to math/science/water-treatment/utilities.
- Knowledge of the industry as a career choice in minority communities.
- Clearly identifying equity issues, as systemic problems. Taking the time to not just problem solve identified issues, but to engage most impacted communities or audiences to find meaningful ways to engage them in identifying and implementing solutions, especially when those audiences do not have technical expertise in complex projects.
- Lack of political support for such initiatives
- Lack of precedent and lack of technical advisory
- West Basin does not currently have equity included in its district mission statement, although the Board of Directors is considering doing so in the future. Likewise, the Board is expected to discuss and put new policies into place with regard to equity issues as part of the next iteration of its strategic plan.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

- While staff has undergone some DEI training in recent years, additional opportunities to have further training and engagement at the internal level would benefit the organization.
- Being a small agency, West Basin does not currently have a dedicated DEI specialist, however the district does have a staff-led DEI committee that meets somewhat regularly to discuss DEI issues and plan out equity-focused events.
- In general, at this time, there is limited funding for equity-based opportunities, but again, this could change once the new strategic plan is considered and implemented.
- Hasn't been a priority but upcoming master plan will include equity issues
- External: We are a (joint powers authority) and don't directly interact with customers.
- District has no employees/staff. Total purpose is to supply ag water to 18 landowners - none would be considered a frontline community
- Very small agency that is supported by portions of Tehama County staff as a whole including translation. Most policies are taken from County policies set by the larger Government. Internally a staff of just 2 does not allow any significant effort put towards equity.
- Who is claiming that there is an equity issue facing our community?

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 11. Which of these language translation services does your agency/district provide for non-English speaking residents? (Please select all that apply.)

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 11.

Table C-11 Language Translation Services

Language Translation Service Offered	Number of Agencies/Districts
Staff that serves the public in language(s) other than English	50
Communication in language(s) other than English	39
Website in language(s) other than English	19
Emergency alerts in language(s) other than English	23
Outreach/education materials in languages other than English	38
Other - All press releases are in English and Spanish. Spanish is a threshold language in the City of San Luis Obispo.	1
None	5

Question 12. What type of staff do you use for equity related to internal practices, external practices and/or language translation services described earlier? (Please select all that apply.)

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 12.

Table C-12 Staff Used for Equity-Related Work

Staff Used for Equity-Related Work	Number of Agencies/Districts
Full-time employee(s)	48
Part-time employee(s)	12
Contract employee(s)	11
Volunteer(s)	2
Other - Consultants	1
Other - Companies that offer translation services	1
Other - Obtain outreach materials translated from regional agency	1
None	8

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 13. Please give examples of technical assistance and/or other services your agency/district provides to frontline and/or Tribal communities (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 18 provided a response to Question 13.

Table C-13 Examples of Assistance to Frontline or Tribal Communities

Common Responses	Number of Agencies/Districts
Translation Services	6
Outreach and Education Services	7
Applied for Financial Assistance	1
Internship Program	1
None	1

Additional detailed responses to Question 13:

- An elected supervisor is the liaison with Tribal governance including attending meetings and bringing forth desired interactions.
- We contract for programs like (Low Income Household Water Assistance Program) and help customers make contact with the resources that can help them keep access to drinking water when it is not affordable for them.
- Committee United for Racial Equity Committee
- West Basin has several employees who are bilingual, and who provide technical assistance to frontline communities.
 - [West Basin's website](#) has a feature on the home page where visitors can select any language they prefer, and which the website will convert to that language.
 - West Basin has Program Managers that can assist frontline communities in Spanish, and can work with outside agencies to provide translation into other languages, including Tagalog.
 - West Basin partners with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, a local JPIA, who helps promote West Basin's programs to frontline communities.
 - West Basin has an ongoing budget to produce collateral pieces in other languages (primarily Spanish, but also Tagalog and Mandarin).

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- For several of the district's conservation programs, staff provides concierge-level service to frontline communities to help them overcome barriers to participation in district programs.
- [Roundtables/task forces.](#)
- [Inland Empire Brine Line.](#)
- Historically we address water use issues in predominately Spanish-speaking neighborhoods with similar levels of service and with Spanish speaking staff when available. We have also done tabling/outreach for City services at public events within those Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. It's not much, but something given that we are not a large City and have limited resources ourselves.
- Responding 24/7/365 to sewer emergency calls made by residents of our service area, public outreach presentations at public community events (street fairs, farmers markets etc.) and local high school internship programs.
- The City provides services to its customers without bias.
- AB 52 and Cultural Resources studies
- As a wholesale water agency, we provide turnkey water use efficiency programs via local retail water agencies to help frontline communities with saving water, including funding a low-income leak detection and repair pilot program. We also work with community programs such as IE Works for talent acquisition and workforce development. Again, there are no tribes in our service area.
- Only as mandated consultation per (California Environmental Quality Act)

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 14. Please give examples of how your agency/district partners with, engages with and/or includes frontline and/or Tribal communities in your water management planning efforts (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 22 provided a response to Question 14.

Table C-14 Examples of Engaging with Frontline or Tribal Communities

Common Responses	Number of Agencies/Districts
AB 52 Tribal Consultation	3
Outreach and meeting with Tribal communities	6
Outreach and meeting with local community	7
Secure grants to keep water affordable	2

Additional detailed responses to Question 14:

- We are planning to provide more local sources of water in these communities where possible.
- We reach out to tribal communities as part of the (California Environmental Quality Act) process with project implementation; we have also begun the process to include the tribal communities as our stakeholders in the development of our Drought Contingency Plan and Climate Action Plan.
- The Board of Supervisors has government-to-government meetings with all local Tribes on a regular basis. They are referred to as 2 by 2 meetings with two members representing the Board/Council of each entity. The County also has a Natural Resources and Environmental Coordination Technical Advisory Committee which has frequent participation by one local Tribe.
- Local GSA and Water Resources Association meetings include Tribes in the process.
- Regular meetings held in tribal areas.
- We communicate with local non-profits trying to make a better community.
- [Equity, Diversity, and Including Update: City Council Presentation – June 20, 2023.](#)
- [Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority: One Water One Watershed.](#)
- Daily contact with communities
- We secure grants as a severely disadvantaged community for planning projects so that we can help keep the cost of water service affordable for our low income customers

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

- Approximately 40% of West Basin's service area includes communities that are considered disadvantaged or underserved. West Basin engages these communities directly and through its customer agencies that includes cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Residents from all of West Basin's communities are able to attend and provide input at the district's various committee and board meetings where water management planning issues are discussed. These meetings are free and open to the public.
 - In addition, as part of its Urban Water Management Plan update process, West Basin sends draft copies to all of its cities and other community stakeholders. Again, West Basin hosts public hearings prior to adoption of these planning documents, where all community input and feedback is welcomed, including from residents in frontline communities.
 - Demand management continues to be a significant priority for West Basin as part of its overall water supply portfolio. To achieve its demand management goals, West Basin has invested in programs that specifically cater to underserved areas, and has plans to offer even more programs of this nature in the future.
- As a wholesale water agency/regional sewer provider, it is incumbent on our retail water/sewer agencies to engage with frontline communities (there are no tribes in our service area) and integrate their interests into a synthesized representation of community planning priorities.
- The district partners with its wholesaler to offer rebates on water conserving devices indoors and outdoors. We also offer landscaping water audits.
- Incorporated in IRWM planning on regionwide scale.
- The City provides services and conducts management planning efforts to its customers without bias.
- Only as mandated consultation per (California Environmental Quality Act).

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

Question 15. Please give examples of programs, planning activities, and/or projects your agency/district has completed or is currently working on that specifically benefit frontline and/or Tribal communities (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 21 provided a response to Question 15.

Table C-15 Examples of Activities Benefitting Frontline or Tribal Communities

Common Responses	Number of Agencies/Districts
Work with frontline communities on water management projects	3
Work with Tribes on water management projects	2
Low-income assistance program	5
Drought Planning	2
Equity indicators report	1
Turf replacement and other rebates	2
Solar project to provide energy savings	1
High School Internship Program	1
Public education campaign	1
Participated in Together Bay Area's Right Relations Program to build alliances with local Tribal communities	1

Additional detailed responses to Question 15:

- We are attempting to upgrade the water system in a frontline community that has been plagued with natural and manmade disasters but we are having challenges getting feedback from the community.
- initial work on joint groundwater recharge project on Nomalaki Tribal lands.
- Within the last 10 years, we partnered with one local Tribe to make improvements to the wastewater collection system within the boundary of the Rancheria and in other areas of the County with Tribe membership. Currently, we are in preliminary conversations with another local Tribe to partner on grant applications to make improvements to a levee that protects a community within the Reservation.
- West Basin has a program called, Grass Replacement + that targets the priority underserved areas of the service area. West Basin utilizes the EPA's

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 tool to identify priority communities. West Basin's Project Manager and the project consultant offer bilingual English/Spanish technical assistance to the frontline communities. Translated program materials are considered in the outreach for this program. www.westbasin.org/grass-plus

- West Basin also partners with the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) to provide residents in underserved areas with free installations of water and energy saving devices. To participate, residents contact SoCalGas's program vendor, which provides bilingual technical assistance. The program is also promoted utilizing English/Spanish marketing collateral.
- Previously, West Basin offered a "Change & Save" program, which provided frontline communities with access to in-house water use surveys and free water-efficient device installation at their homes.
- In 2020, West Basin conducted a study on potential programs that would be targeted to disadvantaged communities. A report was produced that provided a ranked list of program alternatives. These alternatives have and will continue to help inform West Basin efforts to provide programs that benefit frontline communities.
- The District just completed the Arsenic Mitigation Project Phase II giving clean drinking water to the community of Arvin and surrounding areas. The District is working on a solar project that would free up about \$500k in energy savings allowing the District to provide safe and affordable drinking water.
- Local high school student internship program and public information on keeping their sewer free of grease, wipes and other items that may cause service interruption.
- [City of San Luis Obispo – Customer Assistance Programs](#).. Other partnerships and funding with nonprofit organizations that help unserved and underrepresented communities, spanning utilities assistance and other ancillary services.
- In addition to the response to Question 14, WCW operates a Public Incentive Program for Efficiency of Sewers (PIPES) to provide rebates to residential and commercial property owners who repair or replace damaged sewer laterals.
- Some of our DEI and Natural Resources staff participated in a nine-month experiential cohort with [Together Bay Area's Right Relations Program](#). The program was designed to take the cohort through a series of field trips, online trainings, and expert conversations with local native and tribal leaders to discuss their work to strengthen sovereignty, culture, and shared ecosystems.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

- The City provides services and conducts management planning efforts to its customers without bias.
- The projects undertaken by our agency offer regional benefits.
- Only as mandated consultation per (California Environmental Quality Act).

Question 16. Please list challenges that hinder or impede your agency's/district's ability to implement programs, planning activities, and/or projects that would benefit frontline and/or Tribal communities. If none, leave blank.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 20 provided a response to Question 16.

Table C-16 Challenges to Implementing Activities that Benefit Frontline or Tribal Communities

Common Responses	Number of Agencies/Districts
Lack of funding	6
Lack of staff capacity	5
Unfunded mandates from state	1
Lack of executive interest/support or training to prioritize equity	1
Distrust of government by disadvantaged communities	1
No nearby Tribal communities	2
Conflict with Prop 218 requirements	2
Lack of Strategic Planning	1
Understanding the desires and needs of tribal communities while balancing our organizational mission.	1

Additional detailed responses to Question 16:

- Engagement is difficult because our disadvantaged communities don't trust government agencies.
- Limited funding and resources due to restrictions on use of water rate revenues
- Our District, especially our watershed lands, are former lands of multiple tribal communities. Our challenge is most significant with understanding the desires and needs of those unique communities and finding the most meaningful methods for engagement, while balancing our organizational mission.

Equity Survey of Water and Flood Management Agencies

- We are required to treat all of our customers equally under Proposition 218 and do not have the means to fully subsidize frontline communities specifically since this requires use of non-sewer-service charge revenues.
- Lack of management training in equity practices; lack of political support for such initiatives; potential conflict with other state requirements, e.g. Prop 218 water rate establishment process.
- Staff. We are a small district with a large service area, public outreach is one of multiple tasks staff has to deal with. If we have a public health emergency public outreach will be put on the back burner until fixed.
- Our customers can't afford to pay current rates, and all of the efforts to implement more programs and reports costs staff time which equates to \$\$ that the district can't afford to pay while trying to avoid increasing our water rates
- Communication avenues with customers/public. We are working through some trial and error to find best practices for communicating information.
- Strategic planning would help provide direction and prioritization to staff on what kinds of actions and programs could be utilized to help West Basin make further progress on DEI priorities. Other challenges include the need for internal and external funding for program planning (e.g., market research to identify who and what is needed), and program implementation (including support services to outreach and maintain customer support considering limited staff size). Without funding, West Basin's efforts to achieve goals that are set forth in a strategic plan will be impeded.
- Our water agency doesn't really have any tribal grounds within it.
- There are not nearby tribal communities with which we may engage.
- We are a (joint powers authority) and do not engage directly with residents/customers.
- The City provides services and conducts management planning efforts to its customers without bias. What exactly is your definition of a frontline community?

Feedback on State Assistance to Advance Equity Locally

(Questions 17-18)

Question 17. Please rank the following State actions that can best support your agency/district in advancing equity. (rank most important first)

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 50 provided a response to Question 17.

Table C-17 Ranking and Selection of Needed State Actions to Support Advancing Equity

State Actions Needed	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
State funding (such as long-term grant funding to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) positions/staff time)	22	12	4	9	3
State offering technical assistance/technical support (e.g., translation and interpretation services, meeting facilitation or virtual platform access services, water resource or water quality data interpretation)	12	18	14	4	2
State offering best practices, trainings, and other resource toolkits.	7	10	13	11	9
State support for coordination among state and local agencies, Tribes, non- governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and community members	6	5	11	14	14
State policy changes to support equity	3	5	8	12	22

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Question 18. Please provide additional details on State actions needed to support your agency/district in advancing equity.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 15 provided a response to Question 18.

Table C-18 State Actions Needed to Support Advancing Equity

Common Response	Number of Agencies/Districts
Funding	5
Training & Education	4
Translation Services	1
Technical support and BMPs/case studies	1
Updated Policies	1
Consolidate Data Reporting	1

Additional detailed responses to Question 18:

- Translating and providing web links in various languages would assist in getting program information to more residents in our County.
- Public education, especially for low-income neighborhoods, in math and science.
- Additional low/no interest infrastructure financing options or grant opportunities for areas inhabited by frontline communities, tribal communities, or other unserved or underrepresented groups.
- For us the answer is to consolidate reporting so that we don't spend dozens of hours every month creating data to put into a website that provides NO benefit to our customers or to provide monthly or annual funding to agencies providing services in small disadvantaged communities to augment staffing needed to prepare and manage the data and reporting required by the State
- We, as a special district, have conducted ourselves to be professional in that we attract talented, local employees who want to enjoy their work and want to work closely as a team. We've found that the applicant pools are limited so we've adjusted some job descriptions to recruit equitably and in the best interest of the customers of which we serve. State funding would allow us to offer competitive salaries and benefits for such diverse and talented individuals.

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- District must treat all customers equally, which in a sense is equity in the community. No group of customers, seniors, low income, or handicapped class of customer can be treated different than any other class of custom when it comes to services or the cost of services in the current environment.
- Dedicated state funding, ongoing technical support, and open sharing of ideas/resources all would help West Basin to further advance DEI objectives in the region. Organizations benefit from learning from other organizations, so offering case studies and/or best practices would also provide good ideas from which to take and adapt into an equity-focused program or policy.
- Wastewater is a very niche field of training. Students and the public need to know this is a career that is an option. We can only hire staff with licenses due to our SWRCB permit, this is a problem at all wastewater agencies. Some colleges offer water classes and we try to reach out to as many students as possible. This industry desperately needs trained professionals, especially in the next 5 years when most senior staff will be retiring.
- As a wastewater-only District, we are dependent upon water supply agencies to advance equity initiatives. We would like to advance water equity issues and provide recycled water to help support overall water supply, but need assistance in coordination and incentives to use recycled water for those purposes.
- In a diverse community as ours, I am struggling to see where we fit into this, so called, inequity/equity battle that is being perpetuated. We provide services to our customers in a non-bias fashion and comply with applicable State law and regulations to provide safe quality water to all our customer base without bias or prejudice. Question #17 above is non-applicable.
- We are currently an all volunteer agency.

Agency/District Representation Participation

(Questions 19-27)

Question 19. Size of Governing Board?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 19.

Table C-19 Sizes of Governing Boards

Number of Board Members	Number of Agencies/Districts
Fewer than five board members	1
Five board members	50
More than five board members	7
Does not apply	1

Question 20. How are governing board members selected?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 20.

Table C-20 Selection of Governing Boards

Selection Process	Number of Agencies/Districts
General public election	46
General public election and agency/district appointed	3
General public election and those elected to city council serve on district board	1
Landowner election	2
Landowner election and agency/district appointed	1
Shareholder election	2
Agency/district-appointed	2
Court-appointed	0
Other: Cities in service area appoint a board member. Usually, the mayor or person selected by mayor.	1
Other: City council appointed	1
Does not apply	0
Total agencies/districts responding	59

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Question 21. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the gender diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 21.

Table C-21 Gender Diversity of Governing Board

Board Diversity	Number of Agencies/Districts
The board composition closely represents the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.	31
The board composition does not represent the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.	15
Unable to answer, we do not know the gender diversity of the people we affect or serve.	5
Does not apply, we do not have a governing board	0
Prefer not to answer	8
Total water agencies/districts responding	59

Question 22. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the black, indigenous, & people of color (BIPOC) diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 22.

Table C-22 BIPOC Diversity of Governing Board

BIPOC Diversity	Number of Agencies/Districts
The board composition closely represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.	24
The board composition under-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.	12
The board composition over-represents the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.	2
Unable to answer, we do not know the BIPOC diversity of the people we affect or serve.	10
Does not apply, we do not have a governing board	2
Prefer not to answer	9
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	59

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Question 23. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the age distribution of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 23.

Table C-23 Age Distribution of Board Compared to Population Being Served

Age Distribution of Board	Number of Agencies/Districts
The board composition closely represents the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.	22
The board composition does not represent the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.	14
Unable to answer, we do not know the age distribution of the people we affect or serve.	15
Does not apply, we do not have a governing board	0
Prefer not to answer	8
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	59

Question 24. How well does the composition of your agency/district board match the economic diversity of the people affected or served by your agency/district?

Of 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 58 provided a response to Question 24.

Table C-24 Economic Diversity of Governing Board

Economic Diversity	Number of Agencies/Districts
The board composition closely represents the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.	22
The board composition does not represent the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.	8
Unable to answer, we do not know the economic diversity of the people we affect or serve.	16
Does not apply, we do not have a governing board	0
Prefer not to answer	12
Total Water Agencies/Districts Responding	58

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Question 25. How are agency/district public meetings advertised?

Of 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, 58 provided a response to Question 25.

Table C-25 Advertising for Public Meetings

Type of Advertising	Number of Agencies/Districts
Notification posted at meeting location	49
Agency/District website	52
Social media	22
Physical flyers	6
Radio	3
Community Centers' websites/message boards	10
Email sent to agency/district email list	30
Advertise meetings in multiple languages	5
Not advertised	0
Do not hold public meetings	0
Other: Newspaper	1
Other: Word of mouth	1
Other: Public Hearings are advertised in multiple languages and expanded media lists	1
Other: Posted at district office	1

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Question 26. How does your agency/district conduct agency/district public meetings?

All 59 agencies and districts provided a response to Question 26.

Table C-26 How Public Meetings are Conducted

How Public Meetings are Conducted	Number of Agencies/Districts
During business hours	26
During evening hours and/or weekends	37
Include options for virtual/hybrid meetings	32
Hold meetings in frontline communities	8
Have outreach representative(s) to engage with frontline communities	8
Have outreach representative(s) to engage with Tribal communities	2
Include options for translators in languages other than English	13
Include options for translators in American Sign Language	2
Provide food	3
Provide childcare	0
Other: Assistive listening system	1

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Question 27. Please give examples of how your agency/district recruits and develops people from frontline communities to become agency/district leaders (include weblinks where appropriate). If none, leave blank.

Of the 59 agencies and districts that responded to the survey, nine provided a response to Question 27.

Detailed responses for Question 27:

- Community job fairs
- Most of our job applicants are from front line communities
- We encourage anyone that is interested in serving their community as a Board member to come in and take a tour of our office and/or facilities and to engage in a discussion of what the duties of a board member are. We have had staff participate in radio interviews to get information out to the community regarding board openings. We have difficulty in keeping a full 5 person board.
- The District recruits by posting jobs on a variety of websites i.e. BC water jobs, Government Jobs, Water District Jobs, Diversity Jobs, and Handshake (a website for various local colleges in our area), some of which target frontline community residents.
 - West Basin also partners with local high schools, colleges, career centers, and other entities within local frontline communities to educate future members of the workforce about career opportunities within the water industry.
 - Another example is West Basin's construction grant management projects, which require training and hires from frontline communities.
- We have Community Relations staff that represent each of our seven wards. Those individuals seek out key community leaders in those communities and seeks to engage them in both our [Customer Assistance Program](#), public participation processes (construction and capital projects), [internship/training programs](#) , and [public education programs](#) like our Community Water Academy and our Water Conservation programs.
- Intentional advertisement of openings in City advisory bodies.
- (Jurupa Community Services District) has a robust recruitment process and places a high priority on developing the skills of its staff. JCSD incentivizes training and education for staff in conjunction with internal development

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programs. While these programs are available to all, they are not explicitly oriented toward frontline communities.

- Jobs are advertised on the City's website and through the use of other headhunter establishments. This is opened to the entire public.
- It is the mission of (Inland Empire Utilities Agency's) Human Resources Department to serve as a strategic and collaborative partner in the development, implementation and support of initiatives that maximize individual and organizational potential. The Human Resources Department is committed to delivering human resources programs that are equitable, informed, efficient and compliant and that positively contribute to the workplace experience of the Agency's most valued asset - it's employees. We work closely with [IEWorks](#) to implement this mission.

Useful Web Links

California State Geoportal

https://gis.data.ca.gov/datasets/2a572a181e094020bdaeb5203162de15_0/explore?location=30.770983%2C-115.144121%2C5.66

California Water Plan Update 2023

<https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/California-Water-Plan/Docs/Update2023/Final/California-Water-Plan-Update-2023.pdf>

City of San Luis Obispo – Customer Assistance Programs

<https://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/utilities-department/utility-billing/customer-assistance-programs>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Update

https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/2025034/Equity_Diversity_and_Inclusion_Update.pdf

East Bay Municipal Utility District Customer Assistance Program

<https://www.ebmud.com/customers/customer-assistance-program>

East Bay Municipal Utility District Internship and Training programs

<https://www.ebmud.com/jobs/internship-and-training-programs>

East Bay Municipal Utility District public education programs

<https://www.ebmud.com/about-us/education-resources>

Equity Survey - California Water Plan Update 2023

<https://forms.office.com/g/0v6nrkGeHE>

IEWorks

<https://ieworks.org/>

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority: Inland Empire Brine Line

<https://sawpa.org/inland-empire-brine-line/>

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority: One Water, One Watershed

<https://sawpa.gov/owow/>

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Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority: Roundtables/Task Forces

<https://sawpa.org/task-forces/>

Together Bay Area Right Relations Program

<https://togetherbayarea.org/right-relations/>

West Basin Municipal Water District

www.westbasin.org

Email Address

California Water Plan Team

cwpcom@water.ca.gov

