

RACIAL JUSTICE PLAN OF THE REDWOOD COAST ENERGY AUTHORITY

Adopted by the RCEA Board of Directors on 10/27/2022

Energy is a necessity in modern life. RCEA recognizes persistent racial disparities among communities in accessing energy services. Owing to both past and ongoing racial discrimination, many people have been left out of energy infrastructure decisions, program benefits, professional careers, and policy design. Humboldt County has a history of racial injustice that continues through the present day, dating back to 19th century, when white European settlers forcibly removed Indigenous peoples from their land through government-sanctioned murder and violence. The entire Chinese immigrant population was expelled from the region. Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, and other people of color have been subjected to structural economic racism resulting in substantial disparities in household wealth as compared to white families. RCEA recognizes that access to energy, energy efficiency, freedom from pollution and a role in the renewable energy transition intimately affect economic and personal health outcomes. RCEA strives to serve everyone in the Humboldt County community more equitably. To that end, RCEA has adopted this Racial Justice Plan and commits to the following actions:

Internal Operations

1. Equity actions in job descriptions, staff work plans, and regular staff trainings:

RCEA is committed to creating a supportive and affirming space for staff across all identities, particularly Black, Indigenous and People of Color and other marginalized groups. We will continue to look for ways that our agency can support authentic engagement.

- a) Current job descriptions will be revised to include equity actions as follows:
 - Department Director position descriptions: *“Lead the ongoing implementation of RCEA’s Racial Justice Plan within the [Director’s Department] and actively champion and support justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts across the organization.”*
 - Promote regular staff training opportunities on the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - Promote outreach and service to historically disadvantaged community groups in design and implementation of customer programs.
 - Excellent written and verbal communication skills, and ability to present to diverse audiences, specifically racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities.
 - Experience considering the impacts of the work on multiple communities, including communities of color, in technical analysis.
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 - All other position descriptions: *“Support the ongoing implementation of RCEA’s Racial Justice Plan and actively engage in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts within the organization.”*

- As an individual staff member or part of a team, assist in efforts to promote customer programs that serve racially diverse communities.
- b) Human resources staff will explicitly include equity actions in new job descriptions as appropriate to the position.
- c) Staff supervisors will add equity actions to yearly staff work plans. These additions will document any equity work that staff is already doing in work plans and add new tasks appropriate to the position as dictated by this Plan.
- d) RCEA staff will participate in regular trainings on implicit bias.

2. Diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring and promotion:

RCEA recognizes the benefits of building a diverse team, and how equitability and diversity can increase engagement and performance.

- a) RCEA will survey staff every two years to track staff demographics, equity and diversity in hiring and promotion and, to the extent feasible, compare and evaluate internal data to county-wide demographics.
- b) All participants in hiring committees will receive refresher training on implicit bias before the recruitment process begins.
- c) Human resources will actively promote open positions to historically underserved affinity groups, on local campuses in the community, and affinity trade groups.
- d) Recruitment will include skills testing as appropriate for the position in conjunction with a traditional oral interview to reduce likelihood for bias in applicant review.
- e) At least one question relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will be included in oral interviews in recruitments. This will allow the hiring committee to assess the candidate's ability to succeed in DEI responsibilities of the position as well as signaling to all candidates that this is a core RCEA value.

External Partnerships and Programs

1. Tribal engagement:

Humboldt County is home to many Tribes. The Wiyot, Hupa, Yurok, Karuk, as well as the Bear River Rancheria, the Blue Lake Rancheria, Trinidad Rancheria, and Big Lagoon Rancheria are several of them. Many of the programs RCEA implements in the community are on Tribal land, and, as such, seeks Tribal engagement.

- a) RCEA staff will continue and expand work with local Tribes on program development, customer outreach, and policy setting.
- b) RCEA staff will continue and expand efforts to identify opportunities to collaborate with local Tribes as partners on sustainable energy initiatives.
- c) The RCEA Board of Directors will strive to include Tribal representation on the RCEA Community Advisory Committee.
- d) RCEA will establish a formal "Tribal Liaison" position within the organization by either assigning the role to an appropriate staff member or engaging a qualified outside consultant. The Tribal Liaison will be responsible for fostering ongoing communication and collaboration with local Tribes as well as supporting internal compliance with the Tribal-engagement elements of this Plan.

- e) RCEA leadership will attend local Tribal Chairman’s meetings as invited to better understand local energy-related priorities and needs.
- f) RCEA leadership will seek to meet with individual Tribal governments to determine interest in participation in RCEA’s programs and governance.

2. Diversity, equity and inclusion in program selection design and implementation:

- a) To provide a baseline for how RCEA is serving all segments of our local community, when possible RCEA will issue a voluntary demographics survey to customers receiving program benefits such as rebates, technology or professional services.
- b) Using customer surveys that have been collected, RCEA will annually evaluate the distribution equity of RCEA’s programmatic dollars using standard statistical methods to the extent feasible. If RCEA programs are found to underserve some segment of the population, staff will reach out to community-based organizations to learn how to connect with and support those communities.
- c) Every two years RCEA staff leadership will conduct a diversity, equity and inclusion review of all RCEA programs, which will include an evaluation of aggregated demographic survey results along with overall program design and implementation strategies. With input from the RCEA Community Advisory Committee, programmatic goals and strategies will be adjusted or reset as necessary to ensure that RCEA is equitably serving the entire community.

3. Energy justice in power procurement and energy resource development:

- a) RCEA staff will incorporate [energy justice best practices](#)¹ and affordability into renewable development and power purchase solicitations and resource planning.
- b) RCEA will continue to include project location and community benefit in its evaluation criteria for power solicitations, in an effort to contract for projects that benefit racially diverse communities and to avoid projects that are detrimental to those communities.
- c) RCEA will continue to participate in the California Public Utilities Commission’s Supplier Diversity Program, which seeks to promote participation of Diverse Business Enterprises in the power industry, including encouraging qualified energy suppliers to register themselves in the CPUC’s [Supplier Clearinghouse](#)².
- d) For energy projects in which RCEA takes an active role in inception, development, ownership and/or operation, staff will work with private partners to collaborate and inclusively engage with with local communities throughout the development process, rather than a “decide-announce-defend” approach.
- e) RCEA will seek partnerships with expert consultants on racially diverse community engagement, especially for large-scale projects such as offshore wind.

4. Collaboration with the CalCCA Environmental Justice and Equity Committee, and other external equity organizations:

¹ <https://iejusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/The-Energy-Justice-Workbook-2019-web.pdf>

² <https://sch.thesupplierclearinghouse.com/>

As a member of CalCCA, who “share a commitment to inclusion and representation of our diverse communities through democratic governance and intensive community engagement,” RCEA will represent Humboldt County in these endeavors.

- a) RCEA staff will continue to be active members of the CalCCA Environmental Justice and Equity Committee.
- b) RCEA staff will learn how other CCAs develop programs and policies to reach historically underserved community members in order to incorporate successful practices in RCEA’s regular operations.
- c) Staff will share RCEA’s successes in community engagement with other CCAs to promote improved practices throughout California.
- d) As of June 2021, RCEA is now a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). RCEA will utilize GARE’s member resources for opportunities related to staff training, assessment tools and discussion forums.
- e) As of July 2021, RCEA will participate as a member of the newly formed Equity Metrics Working Group of the California Energy Efficiency Coordinating Committee (CAEECC), which serves as an advisory group to the CPUC.

RCEA staff will provide an annual report to the Board of Directors and RCEA’s Community Advisory Committee on the implementation of this Racial Justice Plan.