

# Alameda County Racial Equity Amplification Tool for Climate Action

Pilot Version, Last Revised August 2022

## Background for Other Local Governments

This tool is intended to support local governments in climate planning processes. The tool helps project groups start to discuss how to account for and include groups affected by projects.

This tool was developed by Beth Altshuler Muñoz Consulting, Inc. in partnership with the Alameda County Office of Sustainability and cross-agency Climate Development Group. This tool was used in early 2022 as a framework to consider equity within climate actions (“measures” and their “submeasure” projects) being considered by internal staff working groups for the draft Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations. It has since been revised based on user feedback.

Other local governments and groups are welcome to use and modify the tool for non-commercial purposes and with attribution to Alameda County under license [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

With questions about or suggestions for the tool, contact us via <https://www.acgov.org/sustain/who/contactus.htm>.

## Instructions

For important context and goals for applying this tool, see the “Background” section at the end of this document.

- This worksheet is intended for a project team or group of interested stakeholders to work through together, not individually. We recommend using a shared document that can be simultaneously edited. Another option, if meeting in a room together, is using a projector so everyone can view what is written by a note-taker.
- The tool is broken into three main parts, each containing questions for the group’s consideration. The first two parts will be done in one session, and the third part will be done in another session.
- You may want to identify one person in your group to read out the next question and keep the group moving forward.
- Parts of the tool are best completed after taking a pause for deeper reflection. These elements are highlighted in the process and groups are encouraged to take quiet time to pause. If the group has a facilitator, the facilitator can provide parameters of time for each reflection, such as by saying, “We will reflect quietly for two minutes with the following prompt.”
- You can identify one person who will transcribe spoken comments while still also actively participating, or group members can individually type their responses directly into the boxes of a shared version of this document.
- The worksheet is intended for a project team to assess one draft climate plan measure at a time so that the scope is specific enough to reveal gaps and opportunities.
- Outside-the-box and big-picture thinking is encouraged. At the same time, participants should note that no idea should be disregarded as too small, as small steps matter too.

## Part 1: Measure Snapshot

*(In your climate plan draft, each measure and sub-measure likely is labeled with identifying information. Modify the below as needed so that the measure can be easily identified by your project group.)*

**Measure Code (e.g., section name and measure number):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Measure and Sub-Measure Text:**

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**Measure Lead(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Measure Partners:** \_\_\_\_\_

*PAUSE FOR REFLECTION: Before we begin, think quietly to yourself for a minute about the ideal anticipated output of the measure. What would that look like? Who or what is it serving? Keep these images in mind as you walk through the following questions.*

*Remember, we will be applying the tool at the measure level, with sub-measures providing detail regarding implementation of the measure. Keeping the sub-measures in mind will help you be specific when answering the questions below.*

- 1. Measure Focus:** Is this measure a primarily internally- or externally-focused effort or both? If you're not sure, consider whether outcomes are measured by improved conditions for the public or for the organization.

- 2. Context and Considerations:** What are some helpful considerations and context for the current state of related programs, services, and operations? What community input have you received about this measure? Quickly enter any relevant data points into a box below (e.g., resource availability, demographics of who existing program serves, input from community or stakeholders).


## Part 2: Reflecting on the Draft Measure

These questions will help you reflect on the existing draft measure and sub-measures to consider how they can advance racial equity in their current state or with revisions. Remember that some of these equity improvements will come from small changes, in addition to more substantial changes.

3. **Intended Outcomes:** Enter intended outcomes, one per box, based on previous stakeholder conversations.


4. **History and Current Contexts:** Our physical, social, and economic systems have provided the conditions for some groups to have more access to opportunities than other groups. How does this history relate to the climate measure (e.g., redlined areas have less tree cover)? Enter one historical condition per box.


*PAUSE FOR REFLECTION: Take a minute now to visualize groups who will be affected by the measure, specifically external groups such as communities, neighborhoods, businesses, or institutions. Who are they? How are they affected?*

5. **Impacted Groups - EXTERNAL (Community/Business/Institutions):** Identify specific racial/ethnic groups who might be affected by this measure. Consider intersecting identities such as age, sex and gender identity, nationality, immigration status, physical ability, pre-existing health conditions, neighborhood or location, or residence in a [state-identified California community](#) disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. Lastly, consider the affected groups' level of engagement past and present and how to move forward (e.g., providing stipends for CBO participation in planning process).

<b>Who benefits and how?</b> Include co-benefits such as job creation, health improvements, mobility options, and local food access. List one per box.			
<b>Who is negatively affected and how?</b>			
<b>Who has been consulted?</b>			

<b>Who else should be consulted?</b>			

*PAUSE FOR REFLECTION: Think now for a minute about which employees will be directly or indirectly affected by this measure and who will be implementing it. Try to visualize them.*

- 6. Impacted Groups - INTERNAL (County Staff/Contractors):** Identify specific positions or kinds of employees or contractors (or volunteers) who might be impacted by this measure. Consider which departments and facilities would be involved or affected.

<b>Who benefits? How?</b> Include co-benefits such as cost savings or improved staff working conditions or job opportunities.			
<b>Who is negatively affected by this measure? How?</b>			
<b>What are equity implications for those working on implementing this measure?</b>			
<b>Who has been or should be consulted and how?</b>			

**7. Unintended Consequences:** What might be potential unintended consequences of the measure? (For example, the use of back-up generators at County facilities to help promote resilience could cause noise and air pollution for community members nearby.) How could we address these conflicts?

Unintended Consequence	Who Is Affected	Potential Solution/Mitigation

**8. Increasing Benefits and Mitigating Harm:** How would you suggest revising the measure to expand racial equity benefits and minimize harm in its current form or with revisions? Can you think of revisions that would help address historic inequities? What could be done to maximize the co-benefits associated with this measure? (For this question, don't limit your responses to what is currently feasible. In the next question you can consider what makes sense to include in the measure.)

Possible Revision	Addresses Which Historic Inequity or Maximizes Which Equity Benefits

**9. Stakeholders for Planning and Implementation:** What groups or individuals should be engaged with on this measure and its revisions? List them below.


**10. Updating the Measure and Sub-measure Language:** Make suggestions for how to incorporate the revisions identified above into the measure and sub-measure language to increase equity benefits and minimize harm. Copy the current measure language from Part 1 and provide revised language in track changes/reviewing mode. Remember to go back to the groups or individuals listed as stakeholders for additional suggestions.


**11. Assessing Impact on Racial Equity:** To what degree does the revised measure advance racial equity in Alameda County? Some measures may result in transformational systems change while others may result in smaller changes or have no effect. Check the selected rating box below and (optionally) explain why you selected this rating.

	<b>+2: Repair root causes of racial disparities</b> (e.g., structural and systemic changes such as large policy and budgetary action)
	<b>+1: Mitigate symptoms of systemic racism</b> (e.g., interpersonal and operational changes; working within the current system to make it better such as through inclusive access to existing services)
	<b>0: Maintain the status quo</b>
<b>Explain why you selected this rating.</b> (Optional)	

**12. Next Steps for Engagement on Measure Language:** List below who needs to be engaged to finalize the proposed revisions. Whose approval do you need to make these revisions? Who needs to be informed?

Name	Role	Needs to Approve or Be Informed

### Part 3: Implementation and Evaluation

Complete Part 3 after you have confirmed revisions to the draft measure and sub-measures. It is important to ensure the project team and relevant decision-makers have approved revisions before moving ahead, to maintain internal and external trust.

This section is intended to start a discussion about successful implementation and increase clarity on the project's equity goals.

#### Plan Measure and Sub-Measure Text (revised):

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- 13. Next Steps - Implementation:** What preparation, planning, and actions are needed for successful implementation? These could include reviewing existing data, doing research, having conversations with specific stakeholders or affected populations, or learning from similar projects. These steps could be conducted during development or as a part of measure implementation.

Who is responsible for these next steps? Please note if you (or someone in your subgroup) will be responsible for an identify step or will help gather information if more information is needed.

Next Steps	Person Responsible

- 14. Key Partners:** Which of the groups most affected by this project will you reach out to, to explore their interest in co-designing the project? How will you compensate them for their time and expertise?

Potential Partner	Potential Role/Interest	Potential Approach to Compensation

- 15. Indicators:** What equity-related indicators will be monitored and evaluated? What data do we need?

Potential Indicator	Data Source/Data Needs



**16. Sharing Progress:** How will information on progress be shared with stakeholders and affected groups?


## Background

### Related Alameda County Policies

*(Other local governments using this tool will want to review their own related policies.)*

In 2019, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors declared a climate emergency. The [associated resolution](#) recognizes the disproportionate impact that climate change has on communities of color and low-income communities: “individuals and families on the front lines of climate change across Alameda County, the United States, and the world who live with income inequality and poverty, institutional racism, inequity on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to health care, housing, clean water, and food security, particularly communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities, and who experience greater risk of harm from climate change because of their close proximity to environmental hazards and stressors, are often the first to suffer the impacts of climate change and have the fewest resources to avoid those impacts or to relocate...”

Alameda County works to address the long-term implications that inequity has on prosperity, health, and safety for residents. The [Alameda County Legislative Platform 2021-2022](#) states that “The County supports policies and practices that promote equitable outcomes for communities marginalized by systems of neglect and oppression so that all people can thrive. Policies and practices should promote equity, and work to eliminate disparities based on race, ethnicity, sovereignty, national origin, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability status, and socioeconomic status. The County supports policies that address all forms of systemic oppression, particularly institutional and structural racism, which have played a central role historically and currently in creating and perpetuating persistent social and health inequities.”

The Climate Emergency Resolution commits the County to “put into effect priority programs and projects to support resilience efforts within our most vulnerable communities who will be the first affected.” The Legislative Platform indicates that “Policies and programs should include strategies to identify and address existing disparities including collecting disaggregated data and utilizing equity metrics to measure outcomes...”

This tool aims to advance these policies by reviewing draft climate measures to take into account disproportionate climate burdens and consider the needs of historically excluded communities in the planning process.

### Leading with Race

Race is the leading predictor of outcomes across the United States and Canada. Unless actively countered, racial inequities can be perpetuated at individual, institutional, and structural levels, resulting in racial disparities in outcomes across health, education, and employment.

The State of California’s [2021 Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) notes that the disproportionate risks facing the most climate vulnerable communities “are caused by physical (built and environmental), social, political, and/or economic factor(s), which are exacerbated by climate impacts. These factors include, but are not limited to income inequality, racism, and discrimination based on national origin, gender, and sexual orientation and identification.” We approach our climate work looking at a range of factors that can affect outcomes, while naming the persistent role race plays in experiences and outcomes. (For additional tools, see the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#), a national network of governments working to advance racial equity and increase opportunities for all communities.)

### Tool Goals

Governments can create or eliminate barriers for better outcomes through policies, programs, and relationships. Developing the ability to advance equity in our areas of work makes us more effective public servants, preparing us to deal with the complex social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by the communities we serve.

We hope that all residents will have access and opportunity to benefit from climate solutions and not bear an unequal burden of the impacts of climate change.

This tool was developed to assist climate action plan project teams to:

- Identify and discuss racial and other equity implications of climate action plan draft measures;
- Revise or reframe measures to lower risk of perpetuating existing inequalities, lower risk of creating new inequities, increase likelihood of addressing past inequities, and increase likelihood of maximizing community benefit; and

- Identify measures with the largest opportunities for equity benefits so that resources can be guided to those measures.

Not all measures will have explicit equitable outcomes. For those measures, the tool may help prevent inequities from being exacerbated by a new policy or practice.

### Targeted Universalism

While applying this tool, keep in mind the approach of [targeted universalism](#), which is setting universal goals for all groups concerned and targeting the strategies to achieve the goals. With this approach, we can both improve overall outcomes for everyone while implementing strategies that “close the gap” for those who experience the most vulnerability to climate change and the biggest barriers to benefiting from climate solutions.

### Forms of Equitable Outcomes

While applying this tool, considering the range of types of equitable outcomes, as shared by the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#), will help to you identify gaps and opportunities.

- **Participatory/Procedural Equity**
  - Processes to develop and implement any program or policy are fair and inclusive and build community capacity and self-determination.
- **Distributional Equity**
  - Resources or benefits and burdens of a policy or program are distributed with priority for those with highest need.
- **Structural Equity**
  - Commitment and action to correct past harms and prevent future negative consequences by institutionalizing accountability and decision-making structures that aim to sustain positive outcomes.
- **Intergenerational Equity**
  - Decisions consider generational impacts and do not result in unfair burdens on future generations.

### Co-Designing with Communities for Climate Equity

To achieve climate equity, we must co-design with climate-vulnerable communities. A climate-vulnerable community faces disproportionate impacts of climate change due to exposure to hazardous climate events in combination with the underlying social and economic conditions that affect the community’s ability to successfully respond or adapt.

While this tool was designed to provide a first pass review by internal teams working on an operational climate plan, we hope that the discussions sparked by the tool will lead these internal teams to engage with communities affected by their projects, where applicable. The Alameda County Legislative Platform 2021-2022 states that policies and programs should promote “community participation in shaping solutions that most impact them.” As described by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, meaningful [public participation](#) “affords stakeholders (those that have an interest or stake in an issue, such as individuals, interest groups, communities) the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives.”

Successful solutions will include vulnerable communities in determining solutions early in the planning process and continue to engage with them throughout the project’s implementation. These communities are expert on their local conditions, needs, and assets. Diverse perspectives produce more sophisticated solutions, decrease gaps in planning, and increase long-term community and project buy-in.