



RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS



In November 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the use of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Racial Equity Analysis toolkit for significant Board items, which provides the questions listed here for your exploration. To eliminate racial inequities in our communities, the County of Sonoma continues to integrate intentional and explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions and in the development of policies, programs, and budgets, in alignment with legal principles. Racial equity analyses help staff understand key community metrics and opportunities to advance racial equity and prompt them to develop strategies and actions that improve success for all communities.

When should I do my Racial Equity Analysis?

Policies & Ordinances: In policy work, the Racial Equity Analysis (REA) should be applied **right from the outset of policy development**. This ensures that racial equity considerations are integrated into the policy design process, helping to identify and address potential disparities before they become entrenched. In addition, policies and ordinances that are found to produce inequities, should also be updated by applying a REA.

Program Development: For program development, it's crucial to employ the Racial Equity Analysis **from the inception of program planning**, as well as when updating program policies. This approach allows staff to incorporate equity principles throughout all phases, from program design to implementation and evaluation, resulting in programs that better serve the needs of communities that have been most negatively impacted by institutional racial inequities.

Budget: When it comes to budget work, the Racial Equity Analysis should be used **during the early stages of budget proposal development**, in addition to updating budget proposal items that have contributed to inequities. This enables decision-makers to allocate resources with key data metrics in mind to reduce disparate community outcomes, in alignment with their commitment to racial equity.

How do I complete this Racial Equity Analysis (REA)?

Review & Prepare: Visit our CAO Racial Equity Analysis Teams Channel: [SON-Communications | CAO-Racial Equity Analysis | Microsoft Teams](#) and begin with the tab called, "Start Here." There you will find introductory resources, including the OOE Racial Equity Toolkit Training slides and recordings, direction from County Executive Officer Christina Rivera, Significant Item Calendars, and [Roles and Responsibilities](#) for the REA process.

Next, you can visit the "Resources" tab to find the full GARE Racial Equity Toolkit with more information to guide your analysis, this fillable REA template, other toolkit examples, and the OOE guiding resources for [Community Engagement](#) and [Intergovernmental Relations with Native Nations](#). There are also "Analysis Examples" from County departments and other jurisdictions, and local "Data Sources" under their respective tabs.

Consult: Most importantly, **engage in a consultation process with the Office of Equity (OOE) from the beginning**, and your department's equity group or Core Team member(s) if you have them. The Office of Equity will reach out to those who have been identified to complete an REA to provide guidance, technical assistance, and key recommendations, which will be documented in this analysis. The OOE analysis review process must be completed **before your initial submittal deadline** into Legistar.



RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS



Use these questions as guiding considerations to explore what you know, what you don't know, and what you need to fill the gaps. This analysis is both a product and process. Answer each question to the best of your ability, and if there is a lack of data or information available, please note that.

Tips: Reference historical and current day **systemic and institutional barriers and advancements** to racial equity, use **clear, ethno-racial language** when relevant (Black/ African American, Latine/x, White, communities of color, etc.), and use **inclusive and accessible language** (ex. "systematically marginalized populations", "communities of color", "community members"), avoid terms like "vulnerable", "hard-to-reach populations", and "minorities."

Board Item Date: 11/4/2025

Board Item Name: American Rescue Plan Act Community Resilience Program Agreement

Department/Agency (Lead): Sonoma County Human Services and Office of Equity

Contact Persons Completing Analysis: Kellie Noe, 707-565-5849; Melissa Valle, 707-565-5709

Step 1. Overview: Describe your program or policy and the desired results and outcomes?

- a. Who/what does this program, policy, or plan have an ability to impact?
 - i. The program will have the ability to impact the following:
 1. Children and youth
 2. Community engagement
 3. Contracting equity
 4. Economic development
 5. Education
 6. Food access and affordability
 7. Health
 8. Housing
 9. Human services
 10. Jobs
 11. Other: Culturally responsive disaster response
 12. Workforce equity
- b. What is the program, policy, or plan?
- c. What are the desired results (in the **community**) and outcomes (within your own organization)?
- d. What are the **indicators/performance measures** that would show if you were achieving those desired results? (How would you know?)

Response to Step 1 - a through d

To support the ARPA Implementation Plan, the Office of Equity utilized an equity design process that built on the best practices of the Latinx Health Work Group through the creation of an

ARPA Equity Work Group. This Group developed community priorities and operationalized those priorities through the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process for community investments.

The process for creating the membership of the ARPA Equity Work Group included a short application and a letter of recommendation from a community member or community-based organization. Applications were reviewed by a cross-department panel of Equity Core Team members and staff and leadership from the Human Services Department, Economic Development Board, and Office of Equity.

The Office of Equity formed the ARPA Equity Work Group in August 2021. Members of the Equity Work Group received training on the Anti-racist Results-based Accountability (AR-RBA) methodology to ensure a baseline understanding across participants and that the group's vision for community recovery would be grounded on connecting proposed outcomes to relevant program performance measures.

After receiving further direction from the Board on September 14, 2021, the ARPA Equity Work Group continued to work to develop unmet community and business needs and to support a community engagement process to co-create our County's path to an equitable COVID-19 recovery, as well as to inform and support the County's future equitable disaster response.

The ARPA Equity Work Group engagement was strengthened by targeted focus group meetings with community-based organizations, outreach through virtual town halls in each county supervisorial district, as well as a review and analysis of recent community feedback and public comment.

The combination of community engagement strategies recognized the ongoing work that our community partners have undertaken throughout the pandemic, and ensured that the funding criteria and investments reflect community needs. Staff also relied on additional data sources such as 2021 industry and occupation-level data from the Economic Development Board (EDB), which highlighted areas of ongoing need for economic and workforce recovery investments, and the findings of the Portrait of Sonoma 2021 Update.

Step 2. Data Collection & Analysis: What's the data? What does the data tell us?

Local Data Sources to Consider: [Portrait of Sonoma](#), [Sonoma County Census Data](#), [County of Sonoma Human Resources Employee Demographic Dashboard](#), [the State of Black Housing in Sonoma County](#), [Sonoma County Queer Needs Assessment Report](#), [Sonoma County Youth Truth Survey Results](#), [National Equity Atlas: Policing in Sonoma County Schools](#), [Bay Area Equity Atlas](#), [California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool](#)

- a. **Geographic Impact:** Will the program, policy, or plan have impacts in specific geographic areas (neighborhoods, areas, or regions)? What are the racial demographics of those living in the area? Who is the **most negatively impacted** in your analysis?
- b. **Community Insights:** What does **population level** (this is community level data) data, including quantitative (the numbers) and qualitative (the stories) data, tell you about existing racial inequities? What does it tell you about root causes or factors influencing racial inequities?
- c. **Program, Policy, Plan Insights:** What **performance level** data (this is your department's/County level data) do you have available for your program, policy, or plan? This should include data associated with existing programs or policies.

- d. **Data Gaps:** Are there **data gaps**? If so, how can you obtain better data? What additional data would help analyze the program, policy, or plan?

Response to Step 2 – a through d

Data from the Portrait of Sonoma County update was used to assess community needs. The Portrait of Sonoma County uses the Human Development Index to highlight disparities across education, income and health indicators. In addition, the updated report is also informed by and responds to the numerous crises that have struck the County since 2017, all of which have disproportionately harmed low-income Black, Indigenous and communities of color.

Additional data sources were used to augment existing information with a view to capturing the effects of the COVID-19 crises in real time and, therefore, inform any proposed ARPA investment strategies.

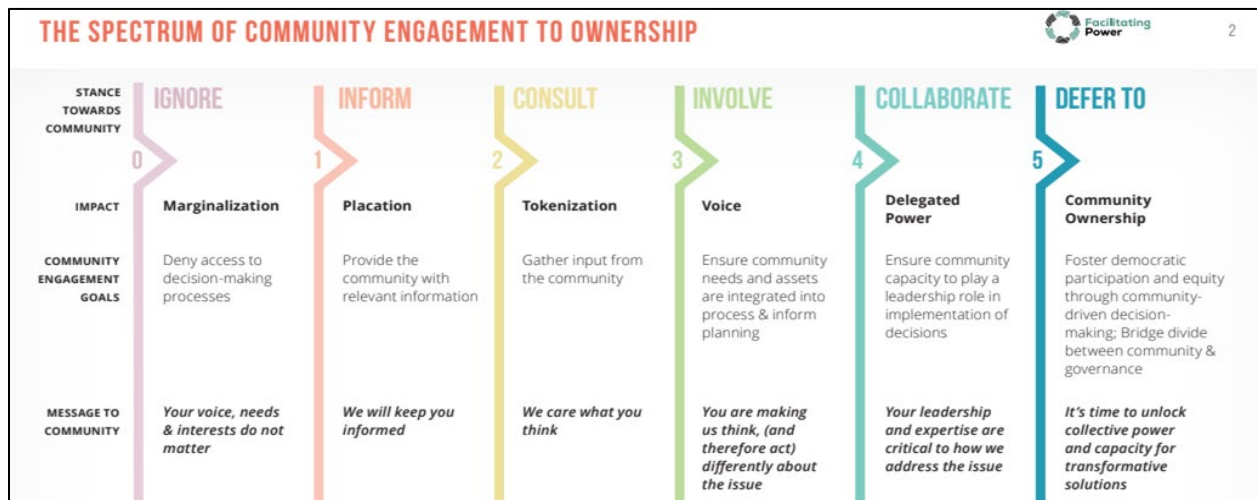
Data from the Portrait of Sonoma, information from Town Hall participants, community surveys, listening sessions, the ARPA Equity Work Group, and Sonoma County COVID-19 health data revealed that the populations listed below had been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in Sonoma County. In accordance with ARPA guidelines, proposers were encouraged to describe how their programs would help eliminate or reduce the disproportionality experienced by the following adversely impacted populations, as shown by the data, including, but not limited to:

- Essential Workers, including Farm Workers
- BIPOC Students BIPOC-owned businesses and non-profit organizations
- High school students who graduated during virtual learning
- Populations with the highest rates of COVID-19 (cases per 100,000) in Sonoma County by race/ethnicity, including but not limited to: Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American

Step 3. Community Engagement: How have communities been engaged?

We often focus on the benefits of making decisions, but we don't always ask **who** benefits from those decisions. It is important to ask who benefits, and to identify if there is a pattern over time about who has benefited- and who has held most of the burden- from government decisions. Doing so can help you make informed choices in both the short and long term about policies, practices, procedures, and budgets when the goal is racially equitable outcomes.

The Office of Equity created two resources, the [OOE Community Engagement Guide](#) and [OOE Informational Brief on Intergovernmental Relations with Native Nations in Sonoma County](#) as guides and models for intentional community engagement.



Full Resource: [Spectrum of Community Engagement](#)

Based on the information gathered in Step 2, explore:

- Who are the **most affected community members** who are involved with or have lived experience related to this program, policy, or plan? How have you **involved these community members** in the development of this program, policy, or plan?
- What community engagement/strategic partnerships are **already underway** (departmental or organization-wide)? What was **learned from the past** community engagement/partnership processes?
- What has your engagement process told you about the **burdens or benefits** for different groups? (concerns, facts, potential impacts)
- What has your engagement process told you about the **root causes** that produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this program, policy, or plan?
- What does the **community need to know** about this program, policy, or plan?
- What are ways to minimize any negative impacts (harm to communities of color, increased racial disparities, etc.) that may result? What opportunities exist for increasing racial equity?

Response to Step 3 – a through f

Through a combined process of seeking survey input, holding town halls, convening listening sessions with promotor groups and CBOs, and gathering feedback from the Equity Work Group, the County identified initial community need areas, and informed the process for the evaluation and distribution funds.

With the recognition that an application process that was more flexible and provided access for new, and smaller, organizations to be considered in funding determinations, staff concluded that a NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability), instead of a Request for Proposals (RFP), would be the better vehicle to reduce barriers for prospective applicants and increase the range of proposals received. Unlike an RFP, where a scope is clearly defined, a NOFA process provides for greater flexibility to evaluate based on the most critical criteria – previously defined by the ARPA Equity Work Group through the use of AR-RBA. The NOFA also allowed for applicants to identify how they would use County funding to apply creative solutions to respond to the current hardships experienced by the communities they serve.

In an effort to foster collaboration, the County facilitated Community Meet and Greet and ARPA Networking meetings with the purpose of bringing together businesses, agencies, and community-based organizations. During these meetings, attended by over 200 participants (hosted in the morning and evening), the County received multiple requests to host further networking opportunities, a total of six ARPA Networking meetings were held from February 8-24, 2025 to further support relationship building and collaboration.

The NOFA review process to select proposals to be recommended to the Board for funding, was led by the community. Invitations to participate in the review process were sent to over 150 individuals and of those, 33 individuals representing a range of lived and professional experiences in the community, particularly of communities of color, were able to commit. The NOFA proposal reviewer selection process supported equitable outcomes by requesting that reviewers met the following criteria:

- Understand how the intersectionality of social categorizations such as gender, race, socio-economic status, immigration status, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, family structural identities, religion, age, mental disability, physical disability, mental illness, and physical illness can create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and systemic barriers.
- Have a commitment to acknowledging individual biases and promoting equitable access to public health protections and economic recovery; and
- Represent the diversity of Sonoma County.

Step 4. Analysis and Strategies: What are your strategies for advancing racial equity?

As reflected in the [Portrait of Sonoma](#) (pages 10-12, 35), racial inequities exist across every indicator for health, wealth, and well-being when disaggregated by race. This is why, when we are working towards the goal of racially equitable outcomes for all groups, we need to ask, "How might (a given decision) impact communities of color and other systematically marginalized communities?" In addition, we also need to ask what unintended consequences a decision might have, so that we can try to prevent or further potential disparate outcomes.

- a. Given what you have learned from research and stakeholder involvement, how will your recommended actions **increase or decrease racial equity**? Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposed strategies?
- b. What are **potential unintended consequences**? What are the ways in which your program, policy, or plan could be modified to **enhance positive impacts** or reduce negative impacts for impacted communities?
- c. Are there complementary strategies that you can implement? What are ways in which existing partnerships could be strengthened to maximize impact in the community? How will you partner with stakeholders for **long-term positive change**?
- d. Are the impacts aligned with your community outcomes defined in Step #1? If not, what will you change in order to create alignment?

Response to Step 4 – a through d

To ensure that the NOFA review committee's decisions centered racial equity, an orientation was held for the review committee members where staff presented data from the 2021 Portrait of Sonoma County and other epidemiological local data sources that demonstrate the disproportionately negative impact on communities of color in Sonoma County, especially the Black and African American community, Indigenous communities, and the Latinx community and other heavily impacted groups such as: essential workers, including farm workers, BIPOC small businesses and nonprofits, BIPOC students, and high school students who graduated during virtual learning.

Once the awards were presented and approved by the Board, in order to ensure fidelity to the program selection criteria and the intent of the ARPA program to impact those most negatively affected by the pandemic, the ARPA implementation team hosted a series of trainings and workshops with all funded program fiscal leads and some subcontractors, including:

- ARPA Community Resilience Programs Orientation in July 2022
- Equity-Centered Results Based Accountability Training and Workshop (formerly EC RBA, now Anti-Racist RBA) in August 2022
- Equity in Data Collection Demographic Data training in September 2022
- In addition to these trainings, listening sessions were held in September 2022 to hear concerns from programs around collecting sensitive information from recipients, especially from programs who have never before collected data at the level being asked by the County.
- The ARPA team collected feedback from the organizations to identify unintended consequences such as how County processes may impact organizational operations and administration. Changes were made to some of the County processes to allow flexibility for fiscal leads and better promote positive outcomes for both the organization and the communities they serve.

Step 5. Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?

Now that you know what the unintended consequences, benefits, and impacts of the proposal and have developed strategies to mitigate unintended consequences or expand impact, it is important to focus on thoughtful implementation.

Describe your plan for implementation:

ARPA is using Anti-Racist Results-Based Accountability (AR-RBA) to deepen contractor-funder relationships, improve client outcomes, and monitor program progress. AR-RBA is a tool for strategic planning and a framework for performance management. ARPA in Sonoma County recognizes that inequities that exist in our community are the result of generations of institutional and structural racism. AR-RBA was adopted to provide an ends-to-means framework to assess whether investments are actively mitigating inequities in Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, and local communities of color.

This implementation plan is:

- Realistic
- Adequately funded
- Adequately resourced with personnel

- Adequately resourced with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement
- Adequately resourced to ensure on-going data collection, public reporting, and community engagement.

Step 6. Accountability and Communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

Accountability entails putting processes, policies, and leadership in place to ensure that program plans, evaluation recommendations, and actions leading to the identification and elimination of root causes of inequities are implemented. Just as data is critical in analyzing potential impacts of the program or policy, data will be important in seeing whether the program or policy has worked. Developing mechanisms for collecting data and evaluating progress will help measure whether racial equity is being advanced. Evaluating results means that you will be able to make any adjustments to maximize impact.

- a. How will impacts be documented, evaluated, and shared? How will the public know whether you are achieving the anticipated outcomes? How will you report on community impacts?
- b. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with the communities most impacted to make sure your work to advance racial equity is working and sustainable for the long-haul? How and when will you check back in with community to share your findings and hear their feedback?
- c. What [communication strategies](#) will help advance racial equity? (Think of data narratives)

Response to Step 6 - a through c

As was mentioned above, Anti-Racist Results-Based accountability is being used as the framework to assess if program outcomes are being met. Contractors and staff meet regularly through turn the curve conversations to review data and make real time adjustments if needed. Regular updates are provided to the Board of Supervisors and an online dashboard has been created to share program outcomes with the community. A final report will also be developed and shared through a board item. This will assure the data is shared back to the community partners who have been critical to the implementation of the Community Resilience Program.

OFFICE OF EQUITY (OOE) SUMMARY



The Office of Equity completes this Summary page in collaboration with the department lead. It highlights effective practices that are helping to identify and narrow disparities and outlines key recommendations to further advance equitable community outcomes. This summary is intended to support tracking, implementation, and monitoring of racial equity priorities and community impact more effectively across the county.

Highlights & Key Actions
This was Sonoma County's first-ever community-led process for distributing resources through an equity framework; collaborating via equity working groups, salient community knowledge and lived experience, and operationalizing a NOFA process that was high access and low barrier to engage organizations of various sizes and capacities. This process ensured that communities who were disproportionately impacted were prioritized. Training and technical assistance helped support organizations build capacity to meet stringent federal requirements and successfully move through the ARPA process, with many organizations reporting a good experience working with the County to meet their organizational needs. Organizations have also reported an improvement to internal systems and practices that extend beyond their ARPA projects.
OOE Recommendations
No new recommendations.

Department Head has reviewed the analysis and the OOE Summary: Yes

CAO Analyst has reviewed the analysis and the OOE Summary: No

Core Team 2 Lead has reviewed the analysis and the OOE Summary: No

Progress Updates: To be completed by the OOE 6-12 months after Board item.