Racial Equity Analysis

Racial equity principles have been applied to the entire ARPA CRP implementation. The below sections articulate how racial equity has been centered in all aspects of ARPA CRP.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

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. 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 recovery, as well as to inform and support the County's future equitable disaster response. The ARPA Equity Work Group engagement was supplemented 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. This 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.

This approach was paired with August 2021 industry and occupation-level data from the Economic Development Board (EDB) through their consultant, Dr. Robert Eyler, that demonstrated areas of ongoing need for economic and workforce recovery that presented opportunities for investment. This approach also included the Office of Equity and the Human Services Department's work to update the Portrait of Sonoma and to co-develop an action agenda with a community Design Team.

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 our County since 2017, all of which have disproportionately harmed low-income Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. New sources of data were used to augment our traditional sources with a view to

capturing the effects of these crises in real time and this information informed ARPA investment strategies.

Data from the Portrait of Sonoma, compiled with information from Town Hall participants, community surveys, listening sessions, the ARPA Equity Workgroup, and Sonoma County COVID health data revealed that the populations listed below have been hit hardest 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, 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

Equitable Funding & Implementation Process

The Board of Supervisors recognized the need for an application process that was more flexible and provided access for new organizations to be considered in funding determinations and staff concluded that a NOFA, instead of a Request for Proposals (RFP), would be the better vehicle to achieve these goals. Unlike an RFP, where a scope is clearly defined, a NOFA process provides for greater flexibility to evaluate based on the most critical criteria - defined by the ARPA Equity Workgroup at the outset of funding recommendation committee meeting and outlined in the criteria. The NOFA also allowed for more creativity in responders.

The NOFA review process to recommend which proposals should be funded was also 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 our 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.

To ensure that the 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 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 approved by the Board, in order to ensure fidelity to the program selection criteria and the intent of ARPA 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.

Monitoring Equitable Outcomes

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.