
Sonoma County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Community Equity Work Group

CHARTER

Vision: *That the needs of disproportionately impacted community members, specifically low income communities and communities of color, are addressed through an equitable distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.*

Mission: *To establish priorities, metrics, and accountability measures for the use of ARPA funds towards the recovery of Black, Indigenous, communities of color, and low income communities; to nourish effective community partnerships rooted in racial equity to ensure broad access to ARPA funds.*

Background:

The federal government allocated \$96 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Sonoma County to:

1. Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses;
2. Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic;
3. Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control;
4. And replace lost revenue for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs.

In alignment with the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan pillar, the County of Sonoma recognizes that meaningful and effective change can only occur when we co-create solutions with the communities most impacted, in this case, by COVID-19. Local COVID-19 data reveals that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people have been most negatively impacted by the pandemic, and they are also the communities that have historically experienced underservice. The Work Group was established to inform the County on urgent needs to support the equitable recovery and to develop suggestions for targeted mitigation strategies to interrupt inequitable funding allocations.

Focus Areas:

From September – October, 2021, the Work Group will review qualitative and quantitative data to identify areas of focus for investment in and development of government/community partnerships. Over four sessions working with the support and expertise of Office of Equity and consultants Equity + Results, the Work Group will prepare to present its recommendations for priority funding areas and measures of success for approval by the Board of Supervisors in its November 2, 2021 meeting.

Following the Board's approval, the Work Group will continue to convene to develop performance metrics and to advise the County on the Request for Proposals to be released in early 2022.

Meetings	Work Group Responsibilities
Session 1: Introduction and Data Review September 24, 2021 11 am – 2 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build an understanding of the methodology to use public and community data to drive recommendations and metrics. ● Review critical data and feedback from community meetings. ● Review quantitative data and identify gaps in the data that prevent the public and decision-makers from making well-informed choices. ● Begin producing a collective understanding amongst Work Group members of the baseline.
Session 2: Root Cause Analysis October 8, 2021, 12 - 3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dig into the root causes of disproportionality in the data to inform our collective understanding of <i>why</i> we are seeing disparities and which “hot roots” we can do something about with ARPA funding.
Session 3: Set Funding and Investment Priority Areas October 15, 2021, 9am – 12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brainstorm <i>how</i> we might successfully go about addressing “hot roots” identified ● Prioritize recommendations for funding areas.
Session 4: Develop Equity Performance Metrics for Priority Funding Areas October 25, 2021, 12-3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the prioritization of strategies for recommendations to the BOS. ● Identify "better off" or impact metrics for each of the recommendations to ensure that BOS understands the intended impact versus a technical check-the-box strategy
Board of Supervisors Meeting November 2, 2021, time TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the priorities and recommendations for funding areas for Board of Supervisors approval.

Members commit to attending these meetings and working with each other and the Office of Equity between meetings to draft the recommendations, develop the performance metrics, and inform the Request for Proposals that will be released to community based organizations at the end of this process. Members commit to working collaboratively and transparently to advance a shared vision and action plan for equitable allocation of these funds.

Membership

The ARPA Equity Work Group is comprised of multi-sector community leaders that, collectively, are able to identify and speak to the myriad concerns and needs of our low income communities, Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, and LGBTQI communities. They are selected based on their capacity to:

- Accurately represent the current needs of these communities
- Organize and strategize to achieve the Vision and Mission of the Work Group
- Identify and connect to community members and partners

Member Responsibilities

In order to effectively address these needs, members are expected to:

- Commit to working collaboratively and transparently.
- Commit to attending the meetings described above, including participating in this work offline as needed.
- Strategize and develop action-oriented solutions to improve the delivery of resources and services to disproportionately impacted members of low income communities, Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, and LGBTQI communities.
- Serve as conduits of information between the communities they represent, the Work Group, and other community-facing organizations communicating key information and raising relevant issues.
- Represent decisions made by the group to stakeholders, including the Directors of Office of the Equity, Human Services, and the Economic Development Board, and the Board of Supervisors.
- Attend all meetings, or watch recordings of missed meetings.

Meetings

- Work Group meetings are structured to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and action. Input, information gathering and information sharing may, at times, need to occur between meetings so as to move the work forward in a timely manner.
- The Work Group will strive for consensus on all decisions, but decisions are based on a majority vote of members present.
- Members of the Work Group will receive a \$1000 stipend for their valuable work, paid in 5 installments after each meeting.

Staff Support

- Staff support the development of meeting agendas with input from Work Group members, produce notes, and facilitate meetings.
- Staff act as liaisons to their departments and consultants.
- Staff are responsible for documenting progress and sharing with the group and stakeholders.