



California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee Charter

DRAFT as of December 7, 2021

Mission: The JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee provides support to CARCD and RCDs which strive to prevent, interrupt, and confront injustices, inequities, and discrimination, as well as identify and provide recommendations, tools, actions, protocols, policies and interventions to break down systemic barriers and uplift historically disenfranchised voices in the resource conservation community.

History: The conservation movement has a well-documented legacy of racist and discriminatory actions and policies. The CARCD Board of Directors initiated a JEDI Committee in August 2019, and expanded the membership in 2021 to include additional people who are not on the board of directors. With the desire to make the Committee permanent and inclusive and ensure clarity and transparency, formation of a charter was necessary.

In late 2020 a BIPOC Community support group was formed. Between 2020 and 2021 an increasing number of BIPOC identifying staff raised concerns and actions to the CARCD Board of Directors in the form of a letter including the recent departures of BIPOC identifying staff, citing evidence of microaggressions, discriminatory acts, and unsafe working conditions and policies.

In response to the letter, the CARCD Board committed to expand its JEDI Committee to include statewide RCD staff members to add their lived experience, skills, and voices, including in the formation of this charter.

This Committee is resolved to a future which restores, acknowledges, and recognizes the roles of communities which have experienced oppression, exclusion, and unequal treatment in resource conservation.

The initial focus of the JEDI Committee Charter is centered on the BIPOC community and supports and includes LGBTQ+, IA, allies, and any other people that have been historically disenfranchised.

Roles & Responsibilities:

The JEDI Committee serves as an advisory body to the CARCD Board of Directors and to California's Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) and intends to address statewide JEDI issues and opportunities including:

Education and Outreach:

- The JEDI Committee serves as a liaison between CARCD and RCDs and regional associations of RCDs as appropriate and topical.
- Provide resources to all RCDs to help address JEDI issues and opportunities.
- Proactive communication to individual RCDs and CARCD as well as individual BIPOC staff about support resources, including grievance and mediation options.
- Provide multilingual outreach template materials to local RCDs for use in communicating Board elections to local communities.
- Assist CARCD in bringing pertinent topics and presenters to the annual CARCD conference.

Hiring Practices:

- Provide resources on hiring practices and BIPOC recruitment.
- Help CARCD be a model to other RCDs in hiring practices.
- General HR person, approved by BIPOC community and JEDI Committee, to support CARCD in providing HR resources to member RCDs.

Supporting and Retaining BIPOC Staff and Historically Marginalized Staff:

- Support BIPOC staff and all staff involvement in CARCD/RCD JEDI work, including the JEDI Committee, BIPOC Community group, and other support, learning, and capacity-building opportunities; identify funding mechanisms for staff to be paid for participation.
- Secure funding for BIPOC staff to mentor and support other BIPOC staff.
 - Ensure that BIPOC staff are compensated for time participating in Charter-based activities.
- Extend invitation to BIPOC Community group to act as liaison on the Committee.
- Provide resources to CARCD and local RCDs to assist with retention of BIPOC staff.
- Help CARCD be a role model to RCDs in hiring and retaining BIPOC staff.

Policy and Programming:

- Provide policy revisions (especially those that address power and resource concentrations) and recommendations to CARCD and RCDs.
- Suggest policy revisions to Division 9 including:
 - Amending the requirement that all Board members must be landowners or representatives of landowners (inherent inequality exists in land ownership due to systemic racism).
- Create a JEDI Charter/Certification for RCDs to voluntarily commit to.
 - RCDs can have JEDI Certification revoked in event of one or repeated offenses, as determined by the JEDI Committee.
 - Develop an agreement for RCDs to endorse that includes recommended best practices.
- Incorporate JEDI principles into Tiers 1-3 of RCD accreditation.
- Explore other ways that CARCD can prioritize JEDI and BIPOC in future policy or legislative work.
- Identify JEDI issues in programming, and develop protocols to help address programming improvements needed throughout the state, including:
 - Support Native American land acknowledgements in accordance with local indigenous community members and tribal wishes in RCD work and promote best practices for relationship building and outreach with local indigenous groups.
 - Recommend best practices to RCDs for standards of equitable services rendered to communities and stakeholders.

Intervention and Prevention of BIPOC Staff Leaving:

- As a Committee, or with a consultant approved by Committee, conduct survey or outreach effort to RCD staff, and recently departed staff, throughout the network about workplace equity and safety concerns or ideas for improvement.
- Informed by the above survey, create a standards of conduct for CARCD and RCDs to voluntarily commit to, that addresses and proposes solutions and practices to the issues cited by BIPOC staff who have been leaving at an alarming rate.
- Maintain an ongoing Committee/roster with diverse and representative members who can safely communicate with RCD and CARCD Staff members experiencing inequitable or discriminatory treatment.

- Roster states values, language proficiency, life experience, professional experience, orientation, ethnicity and other information members identify as important.
- General HR person, approved by BIPOC Community group and JEDI Committee, to support CARCD in providing HR resources to member RCDs.
- Collect and maintain a database of staff who have left statewide and instances of BIPOC staff who have left due to discriminatory treatment or workplace culture.
 - Offer exit interviews to departing BIPOC staff to collect departure data.

Administration and Communication:

- Hold 10 or more JEDI Committee meetings per year.
- Present the annual JEDI Committee report at the CARCD conference.
- Present findings and reports at CARCD board meetings.
- Review and revise the Charter once per year.
- Maintain meeting notes and make all materials accessible on website, listserv, and Digest.
- Outreach to CARCD, RCDs, and staff (specifically BIPOC staff) twice a year.

Addressing Grievances, Conflict Resolution, and/ or Mediated Dispute Resolution:

We recognize a need for a facilitated process to address emergent personnel-related concerns or grievances of BIPOC staff in our network, and the need to include BIPOC Community and JEDI Committee participants in that process. We intend to develop a process for meeting that need by Spring 2022 while focusing our initial work on establishing this JEDI Charter.

Membership:

The JEDI Committee is open to participation by all current CARCD and RCD staff and board members as well as interested parties including partners, government agencies, farmers, ranchers, technical specialists/consultants, natural resource specialists and independent interested individuals. The Steering Committee will invite membership applications twice a year.

Representatives from the following categories are encouraged to participate as committee members or agency representatives to provide technical expertise or pertinent information, though Agency/organization restrictions may be placed on the level of their participation:

- People with lived experience of underrepresented communities
- People passionate about justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion

Committee membership and participation shall be solicited by the Steering Committee through a general announcement on the CARCD webpage (<https://carcd.org/our-work/committees/jedi-committee/>), announcement to the RCD Regional Chairs, Staff Listserv announcement and written or oral invitation.

While broad participation is encouraged, it is expected that participants review the JEDI Committee Working Group Agreements, and maintain a respectful dialogue with all parties.

If any member is disruptive, interferes with Committee productivity or does not regularly participate, the Steering Committee can vote to remove those participants. Otherwise, resignation from the Committee should occur through written notice by the member to the Committee Chairs.

Structure:

Steering Committee - The JEDI Steering Committee shall be led by a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be from a CARCD Member District and at least one of these positions, to the extent possible, should be a CARCD board member.

The Steering Committee commits to:

- Provide leadership to the committee,
- Represent the committee, as needed,
- Facilitate productive conversations and Committee progress,
- Make subcommittee assignments,
- Schedule meetings,
- Provide meeting minutes on the CARCD JEDI Committee website (<https://carcd.org/our-work/committees/jedi-committee/>) and written or oral Committee reports to the CARCD Board of Directors.
- CARCD will provide staff support wherever possible.

Membership - The Steering Committee will consist of seven people and will be formed from participants within the CARCD JEDI Committee. JEDI Committee members can nominate themselves or others to serve on the Steering Committee at the Spring CARCD Board Meeting.

The Steering Committee appointment will be done annually. Members will be selected by the JEDI Committee, and recommended to the CARCD Board for appointment. If the Board does not act on all appointments, they can send their findings back to the JEDI Committee for alternate Steering Committee recommendations. The Steering Committee will then submit alternate recommendations for the Board to consider until a slate is agreed upon.

Voting – Steering Committee members shall serve as voting members of the Committee, unless restrictions placed on a member’s participation prohibit their eligibility as voting members. The Steering Committee strives for consensus pertaining to group decisions, if consensus cannot be reached, a majority for voting purposes shall consist of five Steering Committee members. General JEDI Committee members will vote to approve the slate of Steering Committee members, this process will reoccur annually. Voting methods will follow CARCD Board guidelines.

Meetings:

The JEDI Committee will meet at least 10 times per year. The Steering Committee may meet additionally as needed.

A representative from the Committee will present at the CARCD Board quarterly meeting and other times as required.

The Committee will also present at the annual membership meeting in November and will, among other items, focus on presenting a JEDI report evaluating the findings, recommendations, and analysis of the state of RCD policies and our commitments to advancing and restoring our BIPOC community as co-equal partners in resource conservation.

All meeting notes will be posted on the CARCD JEDI Committee webpage: <http://www.carcd.org/home0.aspx#>

Annual Work Plan:

The Committee shall establish an Annual Work Plan specifying its focus areas and work activities for the coming fiscal year (January - December). The work plan will be revisited and updated annually.

Reports & Communications:

- BIPOC Community Involvement: JEDI Committee is expected to report and communicate progress and activities to the BIPOC Community via liaisons identified by the BIPOC Community group quarterly and as requested, to evaluate the activities, efforts, and commitments of the JEDI Committee, CARCD and RCDs.
- A written or oral report on Committee activities will be provided at each CARCD Board of Directors meeting and provided to the BIPOC Community upon release.
- Maintain meeting notes and make all materials accessible on website, listserv, and Digest.
- The Committee will also present at the annual membership meeting in November and will, among other items, focus on presenting a JEDI report evaluating the findings, recommendations, and analysis of the state of RCD policies and our commitments to advancing and restoring the BIPOC Community as co-equal partners in resource conservation.
- To increase influence and bring messaging together, communications to public officials and partners will be assembled by the JEDI Committee, submitted to the CARCD Executive Director, Board President, and JEDI Committee Chair and/or Vice Chair for final review and signature if necessary and appropriate.

Funding:

The Committee's fiscal year is January 1 – December 31. Contingent on available funding, each member or their RCD may be responsible for their own time, travel and per diem expenses.

An annual budget will be prepared and adopted by the Committee Chairs or Steering Committee, if applicable, in case opportunities arise for which funding can be secured (e.g., grants).

Annual Charter Review:

The Committee Charter will be approved and, subsequently, reviewed annually by the BIPOC Community and JEDI Committee members.