



Environmental Justice Advisory Board

The application form (**hosted by Better World Group**) is linked [HERE](#) and below at the end of this document. Please carefully read this document prior to applying.

The [Ocean Protection Council](#) (OPC) is committed to providing support and capacity for community partners to participate in ocean and coastal conservation, decision-making, and policy, in a way that ensures state coastal and ocean actions are equitably informed by California communities and provide meaningful benefits to them.

OPC has partnered with [Better World Group](#) (BWG) to develop and convene an Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJ Advisory Board) to help advise the State of California to better address the ocean and coastal needs of California communities. Community leaders throughout California are invited to meaningfully engage in this collaborative effort to support OPC's [Equity Plan](#) and [Strategic Plan](#) priorities that affect California's coast and ocean statewide.

Purpose of the Advisory Board

The OPC Equity Plan calls for active engagement with public members representing environmental justice (EJ) and tribal communities. To achieve this, BWG will establish an EJ Advisory Board (referred hereafter as the Advisory Board) with the purpose of advising on the needs and perspectives of environmental justice communities, and California Native American tribes and tribal governments into state policies, programs, and actions that impact the coast and ocean.

The Advisory Board's overarching purpose is to **provide equity and environmental justice expertise** to inform the State of California's work to advance equitable outcomes and partnerships with agency and community partners. This includes the following:

1. **Elevate ocean and coastal needs and priorities of tribal and environmental justice communities**, to help ensure state coastal and ocean actions, including on climate change, are responsive and culturally relevant, and lead to equitable and resilient outcomes for California communities.
2. **Support evaluation and reporting** efforts by sharing perspectives regarding equity indicators and metrics to measure progress towards the State of California's goals and environmental justice outcomes.

3. **Advise on equitable grantmaking processes** to help improve access to funding opportunities and provide meaningful community benefits.
4. **Strengthen networks and partnerships** with community members, environmental justice leaders, advocates, community-based organizations, tribes, and tribal communities to support inclusive outreach, participation, and meaningful engagement.

The Advisory Board's primary role is to provide advice and share perspectives to advance equity across OPC and state programs that impact the coast and ocean. All feedback and recommendations by the Advisory Board are advisory and will not supersede, replace, or otherwise alter existing law and opportunities for public engagement, nor will Advisory Board members make or participate in making contractual or grant decisions. The Advisory Board may be invited to provide public informational updates at select OPC quarterly Council Meetings through co-presentations with OPC staff. BWG will work with the Advisory Board and OPC to determine the format of future Council Meeting participation on an annual basis.

Advisory Board members will be selected based on their demonstrated experience and qualifications in alignment with the Advisory Board's purpose stated above. The selection committee will prioritize applicants with lived or professional experience in environmental justice communities, tribally-led entities/organizations, and tribal governments in the following regions: North Coast, San Francisco Bay Area, Central Coast, Los Angeles, San Diego, or statewide.

Both tribal governments as well as tribally-led entities/organizations are encouraged to apply to the Advisory Board, however, input received through their membership does not replace formal government-to-government consultation with tribes on any applicable state policy or action.

Capacity and Dedication of Time

The Advisory Board will consist of 8-10 individuals who will meet quarterly for three (3) years beginning Spring 2024. Advisory Board members are expected to prepare for each session by reviewing materials and may be asked to attend additional meetings outside of the quarterly cadence, as needed. It is anticipated that Advisory Board members will spend approximately 15-20 hours per quarter participating on the Board. At this time, BWG intends to host two Advisory Board meetings virtually and two meetings in-person (with hybrid capabilities) each year. The in-person meetings are meant to support knowledge exchange and deeper connection between Advisory Board members, facilitators, and OPC staff. In-person meetings will be held in different regions across California. **Attending in-person is optional, but highly encouraged.** The Advisory Board's first session will take place on May 29, 2024 at CNRA's headquarters located in Sacramento via hybrid format.

BWG has grant funding to develop and facilitate the work of this Advisory Board. That grant authorizes BWG to pay stipends to Advisory Board members to compensate them for their participation and travel costs. Such stipends are between the member and BWG, and OPC is not responsible for such payments. Members and BWG are responsible for declaring this income as appropriate on taxes and with the FPPC.

If a member is unable to serve the full three-year term, BWG will seek a replacement using top scoring applicants from the first round of applications. By applying to join the Advisory Board, you are confirming your ability to fully and meaningfully participate, which includes dedicating 15-20 hours per quarter and participating for a minimum of one year.

Conflict of Interest

Membership on the Advisory Board brings the responsibility to conduct oneself ethically, fairly, and responsibly, including by avoiding conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest exists when an organization or individual would receive or would appear to receive an unfair advantage. Advisory Board members will be subject to state conflict of interest laws and will be asked to file Form 700s, among other tasks including the completion of state ethics training. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to, California Government Code sections 1090, 1099, Public Contract Code sections 10365.5, 10410, and 10411, and Political Reform Act sections 82048 and 87104.

Advisory body members will be deemed “officials” for purposes of the advice they are offering under Government Code section 87104.

Examples of conflicts of interest include:

- You are currently employed by any applicant or subcontractor to an applicant submitting a grant proposal to OPC for which program you are also asked to provide advice.
- Your spouse or registered domestic partner works for an OPC applicant or subcontractor on a program or policy for which your advice has been sought;
- You have received gifts (as that term is understood in the California Political Reform Act) from an OPC applicant on a program or policy for which your advice has been sought;
- You sit on a Board or Commission that will be asked to permit or approve all or a part of any OPC grant application received.

Prohibited Appearance or Communication: Pursuant section 87104 of the Political Reform Act, Advisory Board members may not appear before or communicate with OPC on behalf of their company or organization in order to influence grants or contracts related to OPC programs. This prohibition refers to any written communication by an Advisory Board member which is made for the purpose of influencing a decision on a contract, grant, loan, license, permit, or other entitlement

for use. This includes, for instance, submitting a bid or grant application to OPC that personally identifies an Advisory Board member. Such a communication would constitute a prohibited appearance or communication under section 87104 of the Political Reform Act.

While an Advisory Board member cannot personally influence OPC grants or contracts that benefit their or a spouse's company, the company or organization may have other employees communicate with OPC about a grant or contract. In such cases, board members should recuse themselves from advice or activity that could be directly or indirectly related to the grant or contract in question.

If you believe you have a potential conflict of interest, or any concerns at all, you are urged to immediately discuss these concerns with BWG, who may direct you to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to ensure all potential conflicts are properly resolved. In certain instances, an Advisory Board member may be disqualified or be required to recuse themselves from specific topics brought before the Advisory Board.

How to Apply

To apply to the Environmental Justice Advisory Board, please fill out the [application form](#) (hosted by Better World Group) by Friday, **February 23, 2024** at 11:59 PM.

BWG invites applicants to submit questions and requests for additional information between Monday, January 8, and Sunday, January 21, 2024. All questions and requests should be directed to ejadvisoryboard-app@betterworldgroup.com. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will also be posted on the Advisory Board webpage by Wednesday, January 31.