

## **Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Advisory Group Application**

The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program is a set of tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities designed to meet the goals of safe, accessible, and affordable drinking water for all Californians. The SAFER program includes the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, which is intended to help water systems provide safe drinking water to communities. The Fund is particularly focused on addressing drinking water needs in disadvantaged and historically disenfranchised communities, and California Tribes.

### **How does the SAFER program relate to me and my community?**

In 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board identified the Human Right to Water as a top priority and core value. The Human Right to Water resolution declares that every person in the state has the right to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water. As such, the program is designed to ensure that the one million Californians who currently lack safe drinking water receive it as quickly as possible. The SAFER program also aims to support the state's drinking water systems in achieving sustainable and resilient operations. Supporting sustainable resilience is a critical element for achieving the goals of safe, reliable, and affordable water for all Californians, including Tribes.

### **What is the SAFER Advisory Group?**

The SAFER Advisory Group consists of 19 members that represent public water systems, technical assistance providers, local agencies, Tribal water systems, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the public and residents served by community water systems in disadvantaged communities, state small water systems, and domestic wells. The Advisory Group advises the State Water Board on the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Expenditure Plan and other related SAFER policies.

Advisory Group members are appointed by the Board's Executive Director, or her designee, who ensures that a representative from at least one Tribe is appointed to the Advisory Group and appointments are geographically balanced. Advisory Group members serve two-year rotating terms. This means half of the Advisory Group membership is replaced or reappointed each year. Current Advisory Group members are listed in the membership application package.

### **Who can be a SAFER Advisory Group Member?**

The Advisory Group is open to members of the public; residents served by a community water system in a disadvantaged community, a state small water system, or a domestic well; or representatives from public water systems, technical assistance providers, local agencies, NGOs, or California Tribes.

### **How do I apply to be a SAFER Advisory Group Member?**

Review the membership application package and instructions. Submit the online application or complete the printable form and email or mail the form to the address listed in the instructions. Applications must be submitted or postmarked by the due date listed on the application. Applicants will be notified when their application is received. Appointees will be selected and notified in winter of that application year. For questions about the application process, please email [SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov) or call 916-445-5615.

## **Who is an effective SAFER Advisory Group Member?**

An effective Advisory Group Member is someone who: (1) wants to share their own experiences and is dedicated to working with people from different backgrounds and perspectives, (2) wants to represent their community in California's water resiliency efforts, and/or (3) has ideas and expertise about how to achieve funding equity and environmental justice for all Californians.

## **What if I don't have technical knowledge related to water or Water Board programs?**

The purpose of the Advisory Group is to bring together people with different experiences and expertise to advise the State Water Board on how to spend SAFER funds. Board staff will provide all necessary information and background documents, answer any questions, translate documents, arrange interpretation services for Advisory Group meetings, and advise on any technical questions that arise.

## **What would be my role or responsibility as a SAFER Advisory Group Member?**

Advisory Group Members provide input on (1) how the Fund Expenditure Plan is developed and implemented and (2) how/if community needs are being met through SAFER program efforts. This usually includes reviewing materials in between Advisory Group meetings, participating in all Advisory Group meetings, and working with Board staff to provide feedback on outreach and engagement tools designed to support public participation.

Please see page 2 of Advisory Group Charter to review all responsibilities in their entirety.

## **What is the expected time commitment for Advisory Group Members?**

Advisory Group Members serve two-year terms and meet at least four times a year at locations throughout California. Current meetings are being held virtually until further notice. Advisory Group Members are expected to attend all virtual and in-person meetings. Virtual meetings last three to four hours. In-person meetings last four to seven hours (plus travel time).

Advisory Group Members should plan for at least four hours to review meeting materials beforehand and one to two hours per month of additional SAFER coordination. In addition to the SAFER Advisory Group meetings, State Water Board staff hold additional workshops and webinars to provide more detailed information on specific elements of the program such as the needs assessment or the process for funding. These additional workshops and webinars are optional but provide important background that can help inform discussions at Advisory Group meetings.

## **Do Advisory Group members need internet and video capability?**

Internet and video capability are strongly recommended. Board staff will work with Advisory Group Members to help secure internet and video capability or find alternate solutions for virtual meetings as needed.

## **Can Advisory Group members be reimbursed for expenses?**

Advisory Group Members who are not currently receiving any type of compensation from the State Water Board, such as grants or contracts, are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred when attending Advisory Group meetings. Members seeking reimbursement of travel expenses must provide their social security number to Board staff. The names and the amounts of the reimbursement will be listed on a public website.

*(This fact sheet was last updated on July 1, 2021)*