Strategic Plan 2024 Update

February 2024



A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit https://www.acwa-foundation.org/





VISION

The ACWA Foundation envisions a California water industry that embraces, reflects, and respects the people it serves.

MISSION

Our mission is to serve all Californians by advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the water industry through education, research, and workforce development.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

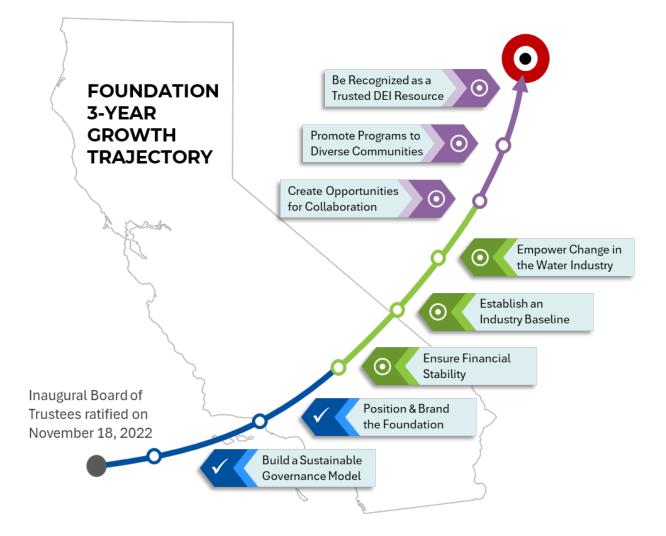
Our guiding principles describe how we operate as a Foundation.

- Have Impact: Move industry forward
- Engage and Empower: Reach out to new communities
- Collaborate: Create a "big tent" for the water industry
- Include: Welcome differences and create a level playing field
- Be Transparent: Share information openly
- **Educate:** Provide the educational foundation for people to succeed in the water industry

VALUE PROPOSITION

Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through education in the industry is critical to attracting an agile and abundant workforce capable of solving the unique and diverse water challenges facing California. We will do this by:

- Building awareness of the value and importance of DEI
- Promoting the **upward mobility** of women and people of color in the water industry
- **Supporting** and moving the industry forward
- Promoting transparency and accountability for change
- Developing tools and programs to empower water practitioners
- Providing education as the foundation to achieve our mission



SUMMARY OF YEAR 1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Increased awareness of the ACWA Foundation statewide;
- Established operational elements and governance;
- Raised more than \$360,000;
- Developed a three-year strategic plan;
- Built statewide partnerships; and
- Awarded \$50,000 of Next Generation Scholarships to underserved juniors throughout the California State University and University of California systems.

FOUNDATION GOALS AND ACTIONS: 2024 AND BEYOND

Goals	Status	Actions
1) Build Sustainable	✓	 Review governance models of other foundations.
Governance Model Implement a solid	~	 Define, create, and review annually policies for board responsibilities and foundation activities.
leadership foundation and	✓	 Identify staffing, contractors, other needs.
succession plan	✓	 Establish committees, responsibilities, leads.
	✓	 Secure legal counsel
		 Define role of volunteers and create a recruitment plan for volunteers.
	2024	 Develop succession plans for trustees.
	IP	 Establish and document success metrics and share Foundation impacts.
	IP	 Hire an executive director to manage the Foundation's business and further its goals
2) Position the Foundation	✓	 Develop Foundation identity / brand.
Build awareness of the	✓	 Develop message strategy, collaterals, website.
Foundation and its mission		 Develop communications and outreach plan for effectively engaging member agencies, water industry partners, and potential donors.
3) Ensure Financial Stability Secure future revenue	IP	 Raise \$1,000,000 by Year 3 and set targets for annual fundraising over the next 5 years of the Foundation.
streams and refine our funding structure and	2024	 Develop a budget for activities that contribute to the goals in the Strategic Plan
budget to align with Strategic Plan activities	2024	 Explore fundraising, grants, and sponsorship opportunities.
		 Develop a prospective grants calendar and response package.
	~	 Develop a donor structure to attract funders at various levels.
	IP	 Define and implement distinct membership, sponsorship, and subscription programs
4) Establish Baseline for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Water	IP	 Research available data on future water industry workforce, and establish partnerships to pursue new data and fill data gaps.
Industry Develop an understanding	IP	 Identify data and research gaps and pursue partnerships to fill them.
of diversity, equity and inclusion across the California water industry	IP	 Work with Partners to gather DEI data (women and minorities who serve on their Boards; senior managers and top executives who report directly to GM; percentage of full-time equivalents who are women and minorities)
		 Develop data / information about the benefits of and returns on investing in a diverse workforce.

Goals	Status	Actions
5) Empower Change in the California Water Industry Increase the number of	IP	 Populate a toolbox of DEI strategies, methods, and trainings that can serve as a resource for the water industry.
women and minorities on boards and in senior roles of agencies		 Offer workshops, webinars, and training for agencies to educate them on the value of DEI and provide instruction on implementing programs in their organizations.
		 Promote the development and upward mobility of women and people of color within the water industry.
		 Connect agencies with tools, training, and partners to promote industry job opportunities with underrepresented populations.
	IP	 Develop and collaborate with other organizations (such as CMUA) on workforce development programs (blue collar and white collar).
		 Understand the education and leadership gaps needed to ensure people have the skill sets to succeed in these emerging water industry positions.
		 Partner with groups such as the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies on its Bay Area Consortium for Water & Wastewater Education (BACWWE) that subsidizes local community colleges to train water industry operators.
6) Create Opportunities for Collaboration	IP	 Develop and engage a network of partners and champions to advance DEI (ongoing).
Seek partnerships with academia, business, and other organizations to expand DEI educational opportunities	IP	 Define the roles, benefits, and type/forms of partnerships in which the Foundation will engage to further its mission; develop a standard Memorandum of Understanding to use in solidifying long-term partnerships.
	2024	 Establish a work group / forum for DEI officers within ACWA member agencies and other water industry entities to gather and share best practices, training, and tools, and to improve networking across agencies.
7) Promote Foundation Programs to Diverse		 Develop outreach program to recruit women and minorities to the water industry.
Communities Develop recruitment and education opportunities		 Develop a centralized internship program accessible to all ACWA members that focuses on underserved communities, underrepresented students, minorities and women.
	IP	 Establish new scholarship opportunities for underserved communities and underrepresented students pursuing a career in water.
		 Consider transitioning ACWA scholarships to Foundation for administration [e.g. Stephen K. Hall Water Law and Policy]
		 Collaborate with other groups on programs for early education outreach (K-12) to promote interest and entry into the water industry (2025).
		 Develop / collaborate on a framework for assessing the rigor and relevancy of California's higher education,

Goals	Status	Actions
		community college and certificate programs supporting the water industry (by 2026).
8) Increase the Foundation's Recognition as a Trusted Resource and Partner Increase awareness and engagement in programs available to support California water agencies.		 Solicit regular feedback from water agencies on Foundation programs.
		 Identify other audiences that could benefit from Foundation programs.
		 Position Foundation as a thought leader on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the California water industry through presenting at and sponsoring events.
		 Establish relationships with the California African American, Asian Pacific, and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce; the Business Journals, or similar entities that confer awards related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Key: DEI = diversity, equity, and inclusion IP = in progress ✓ = complete or substantially complete

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

The following key performance indicators will be used to help assess the progress of the Foundation in meeting its goals, provide accountability and transparency, and ensure continuous improvement. These metrics may change over time as the Foundation matures and its programs expand.

1. Funding and Financial

- a. Annual funds raised/donated
- b. Number of donors and average donation size
- c. Year-over-year growth in funds raised
- d. Foundation efficiency (program expenses compared to total expenses)

2. Program Delivery

- a. Number of scholarships awarded
- b. Average value of scholarships awarded
- c. Number of volunteers actively engaged
- d. Number of internships facilitated

3. Reputation and Brand

- a. Website views
- b. Social media engagement
- c. Invitations to speak/engage