

THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Greenlining Institute is fighting to address the immediate impacts of COVID-19 while confronting the U.S.'s longstanding history of policy-driven inequity. Now more than ever our movement must embrace equity, ensuring that those experiencing the most hurt feel the most care. Leaders have to practice equity, turning commitment into actionable equity strategies in our state's immediate response to the crisis, recovery efforts, and while the world reshapes the global economy. Without equity at the center of our decision-making, we risk replicating and reinforcing the same ills that made this pandemic a global calamity.

To ensure that equity is prioritized, all policies must embrace:

1. **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** Policies must ensure that a diverse set of identities have access to and are included and prioritized in decision-making. Investments must be targeted and redistributed to priority communities, eliminating barriers to access, and delivering real benefits to Californians who are most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Policies must also address internal practices and implementation of policies to transform the behaviors, institutions, and systems that disproportionately harm low-income communities of color.
 2. **Partnership and Collaboration:** Policy solutions must include meaningful engagement and partnerships between communities and other entities in order to leverage community strengths and expertise. Investments must be community-driven.
 3. **Transparency & Authenticity:** Policies and programs should be transparent so that stakeholders have access to the information they need to learn, for example, how funds are being used for any implementation efforts, and to assess whether the funds are achieving the program's goals.
 4. **Accountability:** Accountability must be built into a policy and grant program to ensure that the effort stays on track with the goals it set out to achieve. Policies and grant programs can create accountability by tracking, monitoring and reporting data.
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1. **Ease the immediate burden on communities:** We recommend a variety of measures to protect public health, prevent displacement, and ensure that households have access to the services necessary for them to work, attend school, and access government and health services.
 2. **Deliver prosperity and opportunity:** We recommend a variety of measures to create and protect jobs, stimulate the economy, and build affordable housing.
 3. **Build long-term resilience:** Policies must support low-income communities of color to build long term resilience so that they are better prepared for future emergencies
 4. **Make equity real:** Policies must turn equity commitments into actionable strategies in our state's response to the crisis.

1. EASE THE IMMEDIATE BURDEN ON COMMUNITIES

Policy Category Request

- Health Provide access to full-scope Medi-Cal for elders (65+), regardless of immigration status:** California should enact the Health4Elders proposal to provide full-scope Medi-Cal to an estimated 27,000 low-income undocumented elders aged 65 and older by removing immigration status as an eligibility exclusion. As part of the Health4All Coalition, we stand with the California Immigrant Policy Center and partners to urge the legislature to act immediately to remove the immigration status eligibility exclusion to full-scope Medi-Cal for undocumented elders as soon as possible to prevent harm during this pandemic.
- Health Prioritize emergency funding & resources for primary care clinics & community health centers:** As health systems become overburdened with COVID-19 case loads, the state must support licensed community clinics and health centers, which provide essential health services to underserved communities and low-income neighborhoods regardless of a family's ability to pay for care. Local clinics and community health centers are California's health care safety net for many neighborhoods that lack access to critically needed services, and they provide essential care for California's ethnically diverse neighborhoods, women, and children. While full service hospitals and larger health systems are also important, these local clinics get by with minimal support and urgently need assistance to respond during this emergency.
- Health Expand access to free telehealth:** Telehealth services are critical during shelter-in-place to give families access to health screenings and to reduce the burden of in-person patient visits. The legislature should waive telehealth medical fees and copays during this time to encourage more Californians to seek preventative screening and consultation and stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Health Provide oversight on cost containment & excessive hospital billing:** In an emergency, a patient may unknowingly be taken to a hospital that is outside of their medical network and get stuck with a huge bill not covered by insurance. AB 1611 (Chiu) would provide oversight and require that out-of-network emergency care services be offered at the same cost as a patient's in-network provider at the time of billing. We stand with Health Access and partners to urge the legislature to pass this urgently-needed bill and the governor to sign it into law. We must ensure that low income California families who are already negatively impacted by this financial crisis are not also burdened with excessive medical fees and debt.
- Health Collect and report detailed COVID-19 demographic data:** Research shows that the spread of COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting communities of color throughout the nation, both in frequency and severity, with especially elevated rates of illness and death in Black and Latinx communities. The disparate exposure is due to a number of systemic issues including lack of healthcare access, implicit bias of healthcare providers, and greater likelihood of exposure to the virus due to living conditions, unemployment, or "essential worker" status. As hospitals and medical centers respond to treat patients they must have resources and capacity for collecting data on important demographic indicators (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, zip code, and socioeconomic status) and reporting

them to the [State Department of Public Health](#) for transparency. Data transparency is an important accountability measure that will help ensure resources, support, and relief get prioritized to the communities most disproportionately affected by the pandemic as a result of systematic and historical burdens.

Health *Support screening and referrals for domestic & intimate partner violence:* The compounding impacts of rising unemployment, stress, and trauma from COVID-19 are contributing to an alarming increase in reported domestic violence incidents. While this impacts everyone, low income and unemployed women, LGBTQ people, and gender expressive individuals in particular can be more prone to experiencing this kind of abuse. As hospitals and medical centers intake patients, they must prioritize screening for domestic and intimate partner violence and need adequate state and funding to connect patients with essential counseling, therapy, and support services.

Transportation *Ensure affordable, reliable transit and clean transportation:*

1. Immediate fare-free services: In this crisis, requiring transit operators to take fares from riders represents a danger to both transit operators and passengers, all of whom need to practice social distancing. Right now, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District and Santa Clara Valley Transit Agency have both waived fares for services. Other agencies need incentives to do this, and emergency funding for transit (discussed further below) will be critical.
2. Permanent free transit passes for vulnerable riders and essential workers: In the long run, California should formally establish fare-free transit passes for youth, college students, and seniors using the funding sources listed below, and should explore doing likewise for essential workers. This approach represents a critical part of the recovery package that will help vulnerable populations get back to school, jobs, and to health care.

The emergency transit funding currently allocated by the federal government will not be sufficient, and the state of California must provide additional support both for short-term emergency relief and for our long-term recovery efforts. Potential sources of funding to pursue this and other transit operations priorities include:

- a. Pass emergency legislation that temporarily moves all funds from the Transit and Intercity Rail and Capital Program, a competitive grant program for large capital projects, to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, state funding that is distributed to nearly every California transit agency. California must shift funding from expanding new transit stations to instead prioritizing immediate, essential bus and rail operations.
- b. Redirect all legally-moveable funds (minus bicycle and pedestrian projects) from the State Transportation Improvement Program, and a minimum of 30 percent of the Trade Corridor Enhancement and Solutions for Congested Corridors programs, to transit operations. This transfer would provide \$180 million to keep transit running, while maintaining funding to improve biking and walking infrastructure -- which is critical to keep our population healthy and well-connected to transit.

Utilities *Expand access to the telecommunications and energy safety net:* The COVID-19 crisis has left many

families unable to pay utility bills. Low-income programs like LifeLine (which provides low-income households with discounted communications services) and CARE/ESAP (which provide low-income households with discounted energy services and free weatherization) form an essential part of the safety net for Californians who have lost their jobs or cannot afford to keep connected to these services. However, current income eligibility thresholds exclude too many Californians who have been severely affected by COVID-19. California must ease our communities' burden of paying for critical utility services. It must ensure that its low-income utility programs include all people and their households who have been impacted by the pandemic by immediately modifying low-income utility programs' eligibility requirements.

Utilities *Prohibit utility disconnections for a period of at least one year:* California must ensure the health and safety of families impacted by COVID-19 by prohibiting utility shutoffs for at least one year beyond the end date of the state of emergency. The state should confirm that electric and gas utilities have reconnected any customers who were previously disconnected for nonpayment. These shutoff prohibitions should extend and apply to all public and private utilities and service providers beyond CPUC-regulated providers, including communications, electric, gas, and water municipal corporations, municipal utility districts, and public utility districts. This suspension of shutoffs and restoration of services should remain in place for at least a one-year recovery period beyond the end date of the state of emergency to allow families to recover financially from unemployment and other economic impacts.

Utilities *Improve utility affordability:* The temporary prohibition of utility disconnections does not guarantee uninterrupted delivery of utility services to impacted residential customers who cannot afford to pay their bills. California must ensure that households experiencing financial hardships continue to have access to utility services by doing the following:

- 1) Eliminate utility debt accrued during the crisis.
- 2) Expand bill payment assistance, set up arrearage forgiveness, and create flexible, long-term payment plans to reduce utility cost burdens.
- 3) Suspend all late fees and penalties due to non-payment of bills.
- 4) Suspend all debt collection.
- 5) Create special utility rates to ease cost burdens for income-qualified customers.

Utilities *Exclude cost recovery for customer protections from being passed on to ratepayers:* The state must ensure that costs incurred by utilities from implementing customer protections in response to COVID-19 are not passed on to ratepayers. Any cost recovery that increases utility bills would further exacerbate our communities' hardship.

Energy *Improve the health and safety of California's existing buildings:* California must scale up its support for low-income weatherization and energy efficiency. Decarbonizing (discussed in more detail below) and making our existing building stock energy efficient locks in public health and safety for residents and businesses, lowers consumer risk from high gas prices in the future, and supports recovery of the local workforce and economy. California must structure energy efficiency and building

decarbonization funding to start with low- and moderate-income residents, affordable housing, small businesses, and buildings that provide services for impacted communities.

Nonprofits ***Create a \$100 million community nonprofit grant fund:*** Small, diverse nonprofits are the first place that low-income, vulnerable communities turn to for support during a crisis. For those small nonprofits with budgets at or below \$2 million, Greenlining urges the state of California to create a grant or forgivable loan fund that subsidizes their operating expenses for the next 18 months. These organizations are all incurring increased costs as the communities they serve grapple with COVID-19 and turn to them for support. While federal assistance will enable some of these organizations to maintain staff at their current level, we urge the governor and legislature to maximize the invaluable resource these nonprofits represent for low-income communities and communities of color throughout the state.

Nonprofits ***Increase speed and allow flexibility in budget reimbursements:*** For nonprofits with government contracts, Greenlining recommends the state allow an expedited or automatic approval process for budget modifications that do not increase the contract total in order to help these organizations cope with rapidly changing conditions. This flexibility will enable nonprofits to move budget-line items associated with existing contracts to new priorities such as the cost of disinfecting facilities. Further, we urge you to direct your department heads to maximize the speed at which they reimburse the county agencies if they agree that they, in turn, will increase the speed of their payments to nonprofit service providers. This includes advance payment of the full grant amount. Many nonprofit service providers are dependent on government contracts that tie their funding to the number of families served. Greenlining requests that the administration ensure any nonprofit with a budget at or below \$2 million and a current contract with the state be pre-paid the remainder of their projected annual contract amount. Pre-paying these front-line nonprofits will allow them to continue serving the communities and families that need their help the most.

Nonprofits ***Create a tax credit to maximize philanthropy to small organizations:*** California should create a tax credit that leverages philanthropy to nonprofits. Greenlining urges prompt legislation to ensure that small nonprofits can stretch donations as far as possible.

Small business ***Make \$100 million available for mom-and-pop businesses left out of the federal recovery aid:*** California should provide \$100 million to local community development financial institutions that operate in low-income communities and communities of color to 1) put more boots on the ground as the federal fund application rolls out and 2) make available forgivable loans to businesses with under 10 employees who are unable to access federal funds. This will be essential for ethnic small businesses that do not qualify for the current Paycheck Protection Program.

Small business ***Create a commercial rent tax credit for restaurants and non-grocery store businesses:*** The current shelter-in-place directives are essential to protect our communities' health, but they leave many small businesses, especially restaurants, paying rent for space that is illegal for them to operate. Greenlining recommends the creation of a commercial rent tax credit to offset 100 percent of the rent incurred by small, vulnerable businesses over the next six months and then some portion after that for the next 12 months. This program could build on the infrastructure of California's sophisticated Low-

Income Housing Tax Credit allocation program and staff, which are already in the businesses of subsidizing real estate to support vulnerable communities.

Small business ***Waive payroll taxes and annual LLC fees for small businesses:*** Small business income has plummeted but fixed operating expenses, such as rent and other costs, have remained static. Greenlining recommends an extension of the existing payroll tax waiver for an additional six months next filing season. We also recommend that the state legislature move forward with the LLC fee waiver that is currently in the governor's latest budget proposal. This waiver will allow entrepreneurs to protect their assets during this challenging time when, unfortunately, many of them could lose everything.

Small business ***Use diverse media outlets to reach vulnerable communities:*** Media owned by and serving people of color will be the best at connecting with hard-to-reach populations, especially non-English speaking communities and communities that do not have access to broadband, that are often underserved by the mainstream media. Greenlining urges the state to prioritize contracting with diverse media outlets, especially as state agencies share essential updates and public health information about the impact of COVID-19.

Housing ***Provide assistance to homeowners and renters through rent forgiveness and mortgage suspension:*** To the maximum extent possible, the state should work with financial institutions to continue suspending mortgage payments for homeowners and landlords, and pursue options to forgive rent obligations for the duration of the crisis, including a recovery period after the state of emergency is lifted. Economic relief and displacement protections should not be limited to property owners – the state must also prioritize rent forgiveness for tenants who are at grave risk of losing their homes. In addition to the suspension of mortgage payments, the impacts of rent forgiveness may also be offset in some cases by emergency financial assistance predicated on the landlord's compliance with all health, safety, and habitability laws.

Housing ***Prioritize homeless and supportive housing production:*** Require that municipal inspectors supporting the production of housing for the homeless and supportive housing who can do that work without abridging safety rules do so, setting up remote systems or social distancing or provide assistance to establish electronic submission and issuance of building permits, plan checks and site inspections as the need arises.

Housing ***Emergency Rental Assistance:*** Utilize the robust affordable housing financing structure in California to subsidize the rent of families at or below 60 percent of AMI. Specifically, direct CTCAC and CDLAC to convert a portion of state tax credit financing into voucher subsidies, similar to HUD's Section 8 program. If that does not prove feasible, owners of naturally occurring affordable housing should be allowed to participate in a large scale portfolio program that subsidizes rent in their units for 15 years in return for a commitment to deep rent regulation and affordability.

Housing ***Support the financing of new construction and rehabilitation of existing affordable housing:*** State housing tax credits represent a flexible source of capital to ensure that affordable housing for low-income families continues when it is needed most. CTCAC should be directed to set a price per credit that accounts for a drop in capital due to the COVID-19 recession.

2. DELIVER PROSPERITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Policy Category Request

Health / Small Business *Encourage hospital contracts and procurement with diverse businesses:* As large health systems increase their spending to buy emergency equipment, supplies, and to support routine organizational functions such as legal, janitorial, communications, and food services, they should prioritize contracts and procurement with minority-, women-, veteran-, and LGBTQ-owned businesses to support and protect local businesses from the economic downturn. Implementation of AB 962 (Burke) represents a first step towards hospital transparency and accountability in supplier diversity, but we need action immediately. Hospitals should move swiftly to support diverse businesses, and state officials should encourage them to do so.

Supplier Diversity *The state should use supplier diversity and contracting broadly as tools for economic growth:* Greenlining encourages the administration to direct the procurement staff of each state department to submit a plan within the next 90 days outlining how they will creatively reach diverse small businesses for their contracting needs. An agency like CalTrans, with its more than \$23 billion budget, could save thousands of businesses that are currently struggling.

Jobs *Establish a California full employment program:* Guaranteeing employment to all state residents willing to work must be a priority for our state government. Over four million Californians are already out of work and may be soon joined by many more. At the same time we will need a robust workforce for the near-term COVID-19 recovery and to address our country's longstanding history of policy-driven inequity. Californians looking to get back to work can do so by meeting community-identified needs in the public and nonprofit sectors to take up any slack in private for-profit sector employment. These will include jobs in infrastructure construction, upgrades and maintenance, health care, clean manufacturing, and public services (education, youth programs, child care, senior care, etc.).

Jobs *Deploy the massive purchasing power of the state government to create markets for California-made products:* The state government spends millions of dollars each year to purchase goods and services. We should require whenever possible that the government purchase California-made products, and that it use large state procurement commitments as a tool to create demand for new California-made sustainable goods and to develop particular domestic clean energy industries, high-speed broadband, and universal health care. To guarantee that California purchasing power results in family-sustaining jobs, we should require all procurement to include the following requirements:

1. Pay all employees at least \$15 per hour;
2. Guarantee employees at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave;
3. Maintain fair scheduling practices;
4. Ensure that employees may exercise collective bargaining rights, such as by posting notices of collective bargaining rights and maintaining complete neutrality with regard to union organizing; and
5. Employ individuals with barriers to employment and contract with minority-, women-, LGBTQ-, and veteran-owned business enterprises.

Jobs *Expand public and employee ownership:* Leverage existing public agency spending to invest in sustainable businesses, including cooperatives and nonprofits, by providing contracts, grants and loans with an emphasis on small, locally-based companies that keep the wealth created by local labor circulating in the community rather than being drained off to enrich absentee investors.

Housing *Ensure affordable housing production continues:* Order that existing housing entitlements for affordable housing receive a mandatory minimum 24-month extension, to prevent projects that have already completed their review from timing out due to COVID-19-related work slowdowns.

Green Stimulus *Deploy resources to electrify all buildings and transportation:* Electrification can provide environmental and social justice communities access to major benefits such as cleaner air, healthier homes, good jobs and empowered workers. Electrification also grants access to affordable clean transportation and energy to reduce monthly energy bills, while helping the state meet its climate goals, including a net-zero carbon economy and 100 percent clean electricity by 2045. While electrification has promising benefits for residents and for the state, the rollout of policies at both the local and state level must be undertaken equitably. Decision makers must ensure that environmental and social justice communities are supported to transition to all-electric homes and transportation. See below for a more detailed discussion of building electrification.

3. BUILD LONG TERM RESILIENCE

Policy Category Request

Health *Invest in health workforce diversity initiatives:* We are experiencing a health workforce shortage crisis. In particular, there are not enough medical providers of color to reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of our state. To provide meaningful employment and quality culturally competent care, California must continue to invest in health career pathway training, educational loan forgiveness, and financial assistance programs for aspiring health professionals and students from underrepresented backgrounds. As our state moves quickly to hire COVID-19 testers and contact tracers to respond to emerging needs of a new public health workforce, it is imperative that people of color are trained and hired as community health workers and that these jobs transition into long term meaningful employment opportunities.

Support for Workers *Support California's undocumented workers:* The safety and well-being of all Californians through the COVID-19 pandemic depends on a strong safety net that allows all of us to shelter in place while it is necessary to do so. However, even while expanding the amount, duration, and accessibility of unemployment insurance, the federal government has chosen to continue to exclude undocumented workers – essential workers who make up the backbone of California's shared prosperity -- from this assistance. We support the proposal from Assemblymember Ash Kalra and 13 other legislators for creation of a temporary, partial income replacement program for excluded workers who are not eligible for unemployment insurance and who are unemployed or underemployed as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While this is far less help than what other workers are currently eligible for, we believe it will provide a base level of support towards ensuring that undocumented and mixed status families can survive this pandemic and rebuild their lives.

Climate & Community Resilience Collaborate with priority communities to develop and pass legislation to pursue a no less than \$10 billion bond measure to help the state recover from COVID-19 and build long-term resilience to climate change: To advance equity and address the unique needs of the most vulnerable in our state the bond proposal must:

1. Secure adequate climate resilience funding for projects providing direct and meaningful benefits to priority communities (see below);
2. Create a process to define “vulnerable populations” in the context of climate adaptation (see more below);
3. Include procedural equity provisions to ensure robust and meaningful community engagement, particularly from priority populations;
4. Provide funding for capacity building and technical assistance;
5. Include strong anti-displacement provisions and other protections for renters, businesses, cultural institutions, and neighborhood-serving facilities;
6. Connect workforce training opportunities to jobs created by the bond funding, while prioritizing low-income residents with employment barriers.

Climate & Community Resilience Invest bond funding in programs that deliver meaningful community benefits: In the wake of COVID-19, continued investment in existing programs that we know reduce poverty and pollution, advance economic opportunity, and build community resilience must drive bond investments. Sector-specific investments must meet a triple bottom line of creating genuine economic stimulus, meeting community climate resiliency needs, and centering equity. We recommend supporting the Low-Income Weatherization Program, Transformative Climate Communities, and Urban and Community Forestry as foundational programs that meet these criteria and are appropriate for bond investments. We also recommend funding new approaches that build community resilience such as community resilience centers, healthy homes, and distributed energy systems.

Climate Resilience Identify climate-vulnerable populations through an integrated mapping platform: California currently lacks a way to identify communities most vulnerable to climate change and crises in general. California needs a tool to help prepare for emergencies and proactively prepare communities. The development of a climate vulnerability mapping platform integrating scientific projections, socioeconomic factors, and adaptive capacity factors would lay the groundwork needed to protect California’s most vulnerable populations from climate disasters so that policymakers can see the full picture and prioritize decision-making accordingly. This effort could integrate information derived from vulnerability assessments of critical infrastructure and public services, focusing on their capacity to withstand changing climate conditions (e.g. electric grid, broadband, and water infrastructure).

Environment Strengthen standards that protect the public health, safety and welfare: Some of the state’s biggest industries are using this public health emergency as an excuse to weaken public health protections. Weakening or delaying needed, health-based standards would damage both our economy and our health. Smart regulatory standards drive innovation and save lives and money. While the Trump administration continues, even during this crisis, to roll back sensible standards at the behest of polluters, California must stand firm in defense of public health. State government and agencies must provide strong leadership at this time and not allow industry or local regulators to backslide on

science-based solutions that provide measurable health, environmental and economic benefits.

Telecomm Resilience *Build a statewide all-fiber infrastructure:* Many California households depend on outdated technologies for internet access -- making it difficult or impossible to use increasingly important technologies such as videoconferencing. This infrastructure investment would not only help bridge the digital divide, but also provide jobs to help soften the impact of the economic downturn. The governor has pledged \$50 million for broadband deployment in this year’s budget, but there is a significant risk that those funds will be eliminated from the budget. California needs to fund significant investment in statewide broadband infrastructure upgrades and buildout to help our economy recover and give all communities a fair chance.

Resilient Decarbonization *Decarbonize our built environment by putting the needs of frontline communities first:* Decarbonizing or getting rid of fossil fuels from CA’s buildings means more than just upgrading the technology that allows people to access and use clean energy. Decarbonization means cleaning up the air that we breathe, improving the safety of our families, and increasing the amount of money left in our pockets. California should not repeat its past mistakes in funding and implementing clean energy policies that do not benefit the communities most impacted by pollution and climate change. To change this familiar but inequitable paradigm, California decision makers must prioritize decarbonization policies that result in real benefits for our communities such as housing and energy security and affordability, our residents’ increased health, safety, and comfort, and quality jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and benefits. The state should consider dedicated programs to ensure prioritized communities access the health and resiliency benefits of electrification first and not last.

4. MAKE EQUITY REAL

Policy Category Request

Transparency & Equity *Ensure meaningful input and accountability from priority communities:* Establish a council made up of leaders from priority communities that reports directly to the Governor, Senate Pro Tempore, and the Speaker of the Assembly. The council will share information on COVID-19 recovery needs in priority communities as well as concepts for community-led transformation. The council can also help ensure policy and regulatory implementation is accountable to California's commitment to equity. In addition, all community residents in the state should also be able to access and participate in public decision-making processes (e.g., remote public meetings and hearings in the legislature or at agencies) during the pandemic through strategies such as early notification, longer public comment periods, and multiple access options.

Data-Based Policy *Repeal Proposition 209:* We also urge the legislature to move swiftly to pass ACA 5 to enable the repeal of Prop. 209, which is holding back millions of dollars of economic activity and is out of step with 44 of the 50 states. The COVID-19 crisis has illuminated clear, race-specific inequities, with racial and ethnic groups that have historically been discriminated against and marginalized suffering both elevated death rates and more severe economic harm. Race-specific problems simply cannot be solved by race-neutral means.

Transparency & Equity *Establish a statewide Office of Equity responsible for ending systematic disparities in California:*

The Office of Equity would identify existing policies and practices in the state that contribute to, uphold, or exacerbate racial disparities. It would also enact measures to support capacity building and provide technical assistance for state agencies to invest in strategies for racial equity, including employee training and support, development of racial equity programming, and assistance to departments to change departmental policies and practices to improve racial equity outcomes.

Transparency & Equity *Ensure that investments in priority communities follow equity principles:*

1. Investments must be targeted to priority communities, delivering real benefits to Californians who live closest to and are most socioeconomically vulnerable to pollution and climate change. California must reaffirm the state's commitment to invest in priority communities established by SB 535 (De León, 2012) and AB 1550 (Gomez, 2016). The state should seek to exceed the 35 percent minimum target for investments in priority communities;
2. Investments must be community-driven;
3. Investments must significantly address the needs of priority communities and maximize benefits;
4. Investments must avoid creating or exacerbating burdens. In a COVID-19 world, we cannot afford to make investments that are harmful to priority communities;
5. Investments must be multi-sectoral to achieve transformation. For example, investments in broadband infrastructure projects should incentivize the use of clean energy.
6. Investments must operationalize equity by:
 - a. Embedding equity in the mission, vision, and values of investment programs;
 - b. Building in equity into the program's process;
 - c. Ensuring equity outcomes via implementation; and
 - d. Measuring and analyzing for equity.

We are aware that some of the proposals listed above may seem like a heavy lift. In fact, they represent the minimum that California must do in order to work its way out of the current crisis. COVID-19 has exposed glaring inequities in our society, inequities that call on us not just to recover from immediate impacts, but to reimagine California's approaches to everything the state does and to transform our core institutions to at last provide real equity for all Californians.