

# The CFHL Equity Framework: Our Principles, Our Collective Action

**Health equity** refers to efforts to ensure that all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.<sup>1</sup> **CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) is committed to advancing health equity throughout California** by embedding equity-focused principles into all its programming.

The first defined priority of CFHL is to "address racial and health equity through the promotion and maintenance of an equitable program practice that is inclusive of those with lived experience in design, implementation, and evaluation."

This framework serves as a guide for integrating an equity perspective across CFHL's work.

<sup>1</sup>[California Department of Public Health Office of Health Equity](#)



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## Who is this Framework for?

- Local implementers, including subcontractors
- State agency staff
- Non-funded partners interested in aligning work with CFHL efforts

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## Who Created the Framework?

- The CFHL Equity Framework Local Advisory Council coordinated the development, with Leah's Pantry providing backbone support.
- Local and state staff, including subcontractors, provided feedback throughout the process.
- The framework was approved by CDSS and State Implementing Agency leadership in October 2024.

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## What's Included in the Framework?

- Three transformational goals to catalyze equity-centered decision making
- Sub-goals and strategies for building capacity, centering community, and delivering programs to impact equity
- A flexible approach to strategy implementation, inclusive of various CFHL roles and starting points in the program cycle
- An easy-to-follow navigation that includes images, text, color keys, and icons. On the next page you'll see a graphic that is used throughout the framework—please familiarize yourself with these elements

## STEP 1

### Review the CFHL Guiding Principles

*These fundamental truths serve as the foundation for our priorities and work.*

- 1 All people have the right to the resources necessary for optimal health.
- 2 Longstanding racial and social inequities are persistent due to intentional systems designed to benefit some at the detriment of others.
- 3 People and their communities are interdependent: our communities should be places that promote health and wellbeing for all.
- 4 Lived experience is powerful and important: each person should have the opportunity to contribute to the ideas and actions that shape their communities.

## STEP 2

### Prepare by Asking Yourself Orienting Questions

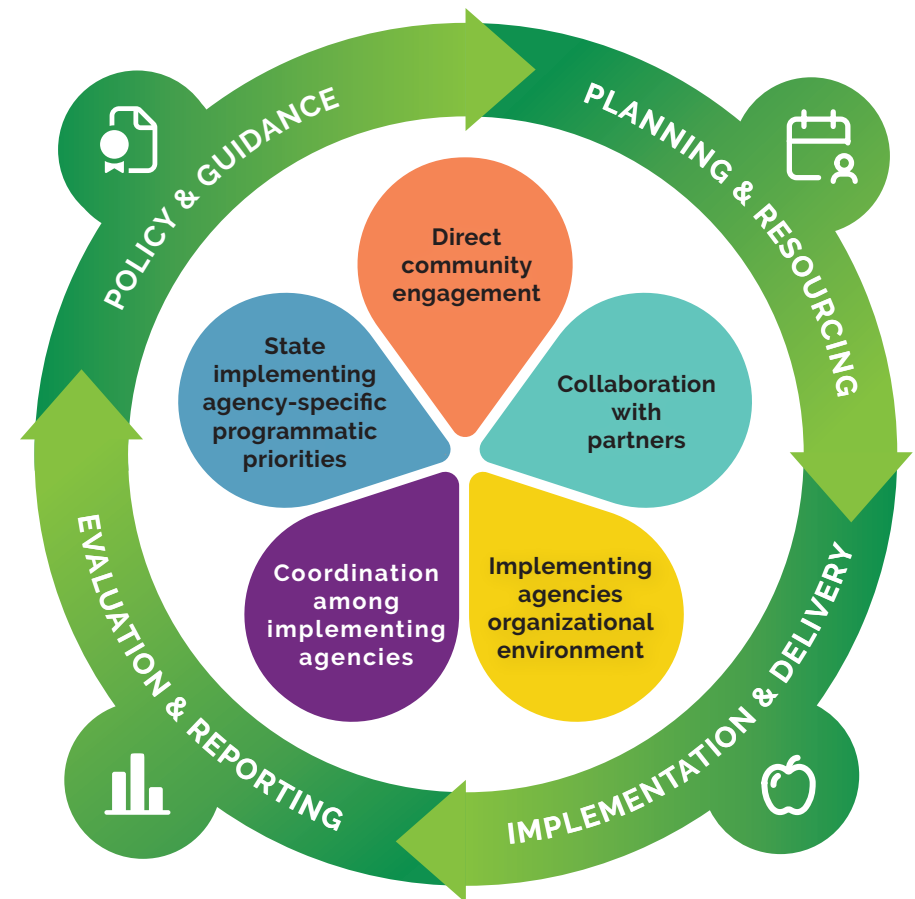
*Reflect on these questions as you prepare to review the framework's goals and strategies and apply it to your work.*

- › **What actions am I already taking** that support health equity in my CFHL work?
- › **How can I collaborate with colleagues** to address the root causes of health inequity in my community?
- › **What assets—such as skills, competencies, and lived experiences—do I acknowledge** in myself and others that can help promote health equity?
- › **How can we build strong, community-driven relationships** to guide program decisions and empower those most affected?

## STEP 3

### Review the Process for Defining Decision-Making within CFHL

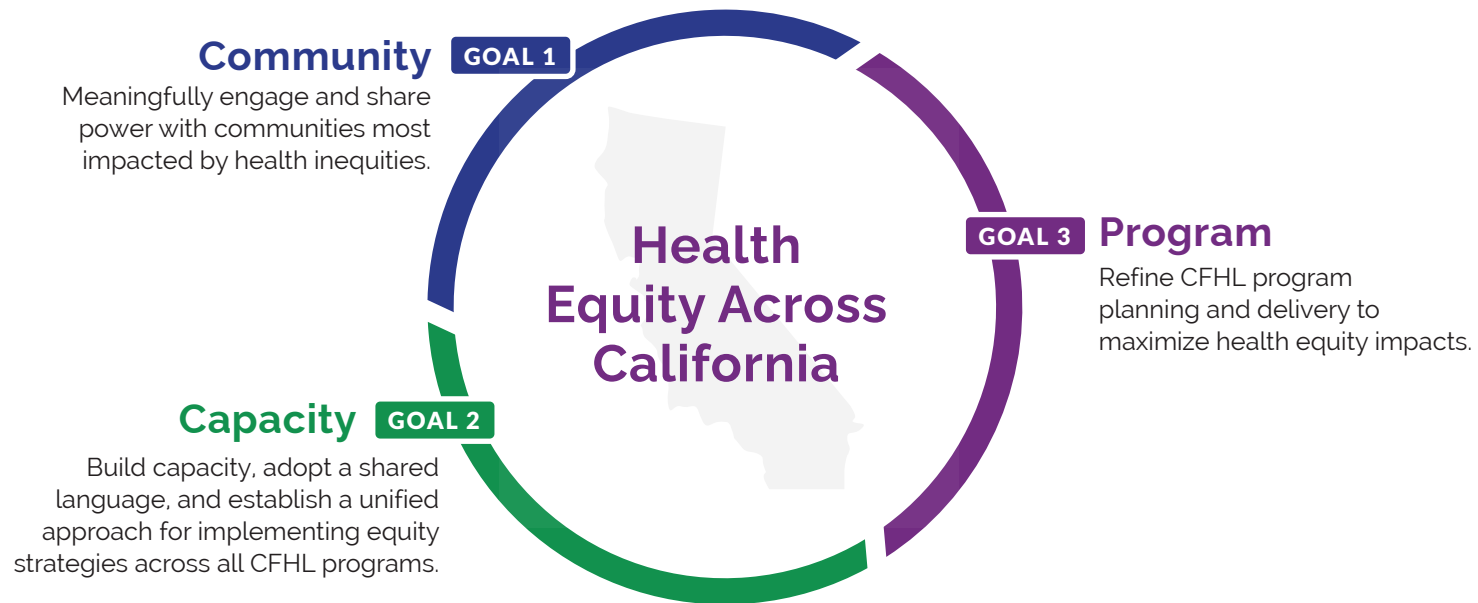
*The outer circle represents the program stages where decisions are made. Inside, the multi-colored flower symbolizes key decision-making points, depicted as petals. When considering actions to achieve the framework's goals and strategies, identify who should be involved in each decision and at which stage of the program cycle it occurs.*



These transformative goals and sub-goals were developed collaboratively by a diverse group of local implementers.

Supporting strategies are detailed on the following pages. **As you navigate through this document ask yourself:**

- ▶ *Are these goals and strategies already embedded in my work and the work of my organization?*
- ▶ *How can I use these goals and strategies to continue to build equity into my work?*



## 1 Community SUB-GOALS

- 1.1** Develop authentic relationships with community members and partners to effectively support community-driven programs.
- 1.2** Integrate participatory processes throughout the entire program cycle.
- 1.3** Involve community members in PSEs, with a focus on community-level initiatives.
- 1.4** Incorporate participatory budgeting into CFHL resourcing policies and processes.

## 2 Capacity SUB-GOALS

- 2.1** Implement and maintain the CFHL Equity Framework to coordinate and align efforts throughout the network.
- 2.2** Use specific language for community engagement efforts, informed by [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#).
- 2.3** Incorporate asset-framing and ethical storytelling into CFHL processes using [ASNNA's toolkit](#).
- 2.4** Integrate community-specific historical and contextual factors and the needs of diverse population groups into CFHL programs.

## 3 Program SUB-GOALS

- 3.1** Deliver CFHL programs in neighborhoods and sites with the greatest potential for health equity impact.
- 3.2** Deliver culturally responsive direct education programs.
- 3.3** Align PSEs with the [Getting to Equity Framework](#) components to maximize the health equity impacts of PSE interventions.
- 3.4** Integrate CFHL into broader multi-sector efforts to support nutrition security and physical activity opportunities.

## GOAL 1: **Community** Meaningfully engage and share power with communities most impacted by health inequities.

SUB-GOALS	STRATEGY 1	STRATEGY 2	STRATEGY 3	STRATEGY 4
<p><b>1.1</b> Develop authentic relationships with community members and partners to effectively support community-driven programs.</p>	<p> When building and maintaining relationships with community members and partners, acknowledge their assets, including lived experience.</p>	<p> Build authentic relationships when hiring, retaining, and defining staff roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p> Ensure that community members are valued fairly, including adequate compensation for their time and expertise.</p>	<p> Evaluate how a greater emphasis on building relationships may impact program deliverables, site selection, and overall processes.</p>
<p><b>1.2</b> Integrate participatory processes throughout the entire program cycle.</p>	<p> Incorporate participatory processes into state-level guidance for needs assessment and evaluation.</p>	<p> Build capacity to collect, analyze, and share data with program participants to ensure transparency.</p>	<p> Share data with local implementers and program participants before publishing or sharing it with external audiences to maintain trust.</p>	<p> Build capacity and identify resource and expertise needs to design and implement participatory evaluation.</p>
<p><b>1.3</b> Involve community members in PSEs, with a focus on community-level initiatives.</p>	<p> Engage community partners to help identify and support community champions.</p>	<p> Continually engage community members in policy development and prioritization discussions.</p>	<p> Leverage direct education to support community members recruitment for PSE initiatives.</p>	<p> Document and share the impact of community member involvement in PSE initiatives.</p>
<p><b>1.4</b> Incorporate participatory budgeting into CFHL resourcing policies and processes.</p>	<p> Recommend participatory budgeting in local funding guidance.</p>	<p> Develop resources on participatory budgeting for use by community members and partners.</p>	<p> Integrate participatory budgeting into local CFHL budgets.</p>	<p> Integrate participatory budgeting into community engagement efforts.</p>



- Policy & Guidance
- Planning & Resourcing
- Implementation & Delivery
- Evaluation & Reporting
- Direct community engagement
- Collaboration with partners
- Implementing agencies organizational environment
- Coordination among implementing agencies
- State implementing agency-specific programmatic priorities

### EQUITY TOOLBOX

**GOAL 2: Capacity** Build capacity, adopt a shared language, and establish a unified approach for implementing equity strategies across all CFHL programs.

SUB-GOALS	STRATEGY 1	STRATEGY 2	STRATEGY 3	STRATEGY 4
<p><b>2.1</b> Implement and maintain the CFHL Equity Framework to coordinate and align efforts throughout the network.</p>	<p>The Local Advisory Council will maintain, update, and monitor progress on the Framework.</p>	<p>Build capacity among community members and partners to engage with CFHL on equity strategies.</p>	<p>Identify and prioritize implementing agencies capacity building needs based on staff experience, turnover rates, and funding.</p>	
<p><b>2.2</b> Use specific language for community engagement efforts, informed by <a href="#">The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership</a>.</p>	<p>Include specific language in planning documents to show how power is shared and feedback loops are incorporated.</p>	<p>Ensure the use of clear, specific language with community members to facilitate their understanding and participation in engagement initiatives.</p>	<p>Develop and adhere to community engagement processes that align with the planned level of engagement.</p>	<p>Use specific language to describe community engagement efforts in PEARS and other reporting documents.</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> Incorporate asset-framing and ethical storytelling into CFHL processes using <a href="#">ASNNA's toolkit</a>.</p>	<p>Identify and highlight community assets in planning documents to inform program decisions.</p>	<p>Develop guidance on ethical storytelling to enhance impact reporting.</p>	<p>Build capacity of CFHL and partners to implement ethical storytelling practices through training and resources.</p>	<p>Consistently apply ethical storytelling techniques to all CFHL impact reporting.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> Integrate community-specific historical and contextual factors and the needs of diverse population groups into CFHL programs.</p>	<p>Develop tools for local implementers to identify factors contributing to health inequities and nutrition insecurity in CFHL communities.</p>	<p>Conduct or review research that addresses health inequities experienced by diverse population groups.</p>	<p>Build capacity to understand the needs of diverse population groups.</p>	<p>Incorporate research and data into CFHL programs to meet the needs of diverse population groups and to address historical and contextual factors.</p>



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**EQUITY TOOLBOX**

**GOAL 3:**  
**Program** Refine CFHL program planning and delivery to maximize health equity impacts.

SUB-GOALS	STRATEGY 1	STRATEGY 2	STRATEGY 3	STRATEGY 4
<p><b>3.1</b> Deliver CFHL programs in neighborhoods and sites with the greatest potential for health equity impact.</p>	<p> Develop guidance and provide support for using data to identify and prioritize neighborhoods and sites.</p>	<p> Prioritize site selection based on potential equity impact rather than focusing solely on program allowability.</p>	<p> When assessing readiness of new sites, explore the historical and current dynamics between CFHL, other social services, and community partners.</p>	<p> Collaborate with Tribal Nations to co-create and tailor CFHL programs that honor cultural practices and strengthen health equity within tribal communities.</p>
<p><b>3.2</b> Deliver culturally responsive direct education programs.</p>	<p> Eliminate, modify, or update curricula that do not align with the curriculum equity rubric.</p>	<p> Work with community members to select curricula that best align with their needs and interests.</p>	<p> Beyond language translation, adapt curricula to address the specific needs of local communities.</p>	<p> Hire staff with language fluency and cultural ties to program participants and community members.</p>
<p><b>3.3</b> Align PSEs with the <a href="#">Getting to Equity Framework</a> components to maximize the health equity impacts of PSE interventions.</p>	<p> Build capacity to incorporate <a href="#">Getting to Equity Framework</a> components into PSE planning.</p>	<p> Document key components of the <a href="#">Getting to Equity Framework</a> in planning documents.</p>	<p> Implement PSEs that align with <a href="#">Getting to Equity Framework</a> components to increase opportunities for health equity impacts.</p>	<p> Report on the integration of <a href="#">Getting to Equity Framework</a> components in PSE efforts.</p>
<p><b>3.4</b> Integrate CFHL into broader multi-sector efforts to support nutrition security and physical activity opportunities.</p>	<p> Develop guidance for building relationships with non-traditional partners working on upstream factors.</p>	<p> Actively seek funding to complement CFHL to address factors related to nutrition security that are outside program allowability.</p>	<p> Identify in work plans how staff can leverage skills or perspectives from other programs into CFHL work using braided funding.</p>	<p> Coordinate and collaborate with partners addressing upstream issues at the local level.</p>



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