



SOUTHERN
ECONOMIC
ADVANCEMENT
PROJECT

TOGETHER PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE

Southern Economic Advancement Project
2021 Impact

Equity

INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2019, SEAP partners with policy thinkers and doers to amplify their efforts and bridge gaps in policy infrastructure. SEAP aims to advance policies that improve economic security, healthcare access, and environmental justice for all Southerners—acting as a connector, convener, and policy entrepreneur across issues and states, translating good ideas to the Southern context. SEAP was founded by Stacey Abrams and is a fiscally-sponsored project of the Roosevelt Institute.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a moment SEAP was designed to meet—and one where our work is especially valuable. The South has demonstrably higher shares of populations most at risk, including lower rates of paid sick leave coverage, lower rates of health coverage due to failure to expand Medicaid, higher poverty and thus fewer resources to navigate the crisis, and weak coverage levels of public benefits. We also have some of the most resilient communities and incredible organizations ready to serve.

SEAP launched South Strong on June 16, 2020 in response to partner requests for a regional values statement setting a vision for a post-pandemic South. The South Strong collective includes 200 organizations and scholars from SEAP's 12 focus states (see the complete list at southstrong.org) and focuses on policy development, narrative building, and civic engagement trainings.

In 2021, SEAP built on the South Strong effort by collaborating with allies to expand vaccine outreach and create equitable spending decisions on American Rescue Plan funding. We also continued our research and network-building in economic security, health, and climate through partnerships with movement builders, policy analysts, funders, and data centers.

VALUE STATEMENT

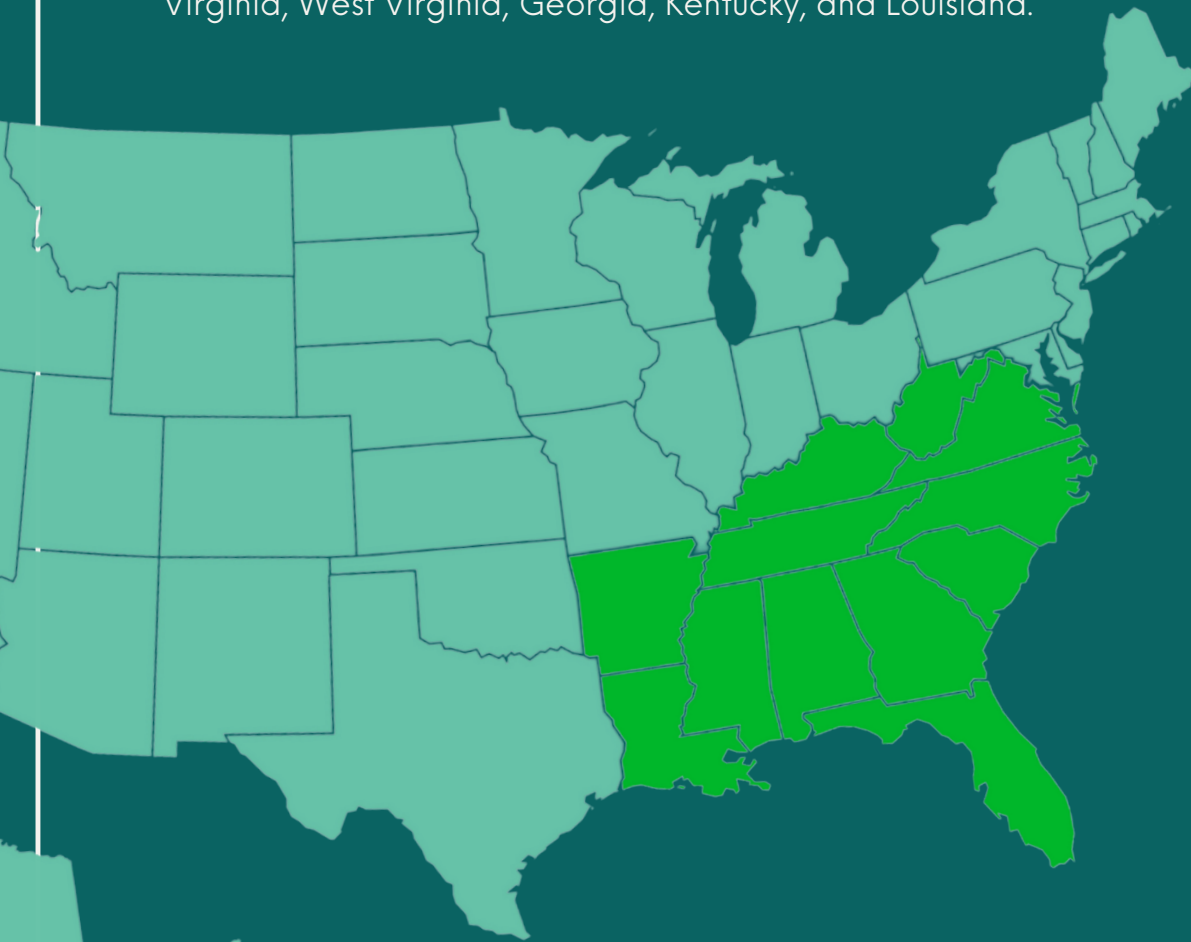
We believe that broadening economic power brings attention to how race, class, and gender intersect social and economic policy in the South. We explore policy ideas designed to address these connections directly.

WHO WE ARE

SEAP was founded by Stacey Abrams, who served as executive director through December 2021. SEAP's staff includes Sarah Beth Gehl (Executive Director, as of January 1, 2022), Genny Castillo (Regional Engagement Director), Maria Filippelli (Data Director), and Dede Dunham (Communications Manager). Ashley Robinson, Morgan Smith, and Tyler Bellstrom served as consultants on South Strong and ARP Assistance Team in 2021.

WHO WE SERVE

SEAP focuses on 12 Southern states and marginalized/vulnerable populations: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, and Louisiana.



POLICY AREAS



ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Covid-19
- Criminal Justice
- Federal Recovery Funds
- Food Security
- Regional & Community Development



CLIMATE

- Climate + Public Health
- Decarbonization
- Federal Recovery Funds



HEALTH

- Climate + Public Health
- Maternal Health
- Medicaid Expansion

OUR APPROACHES



CIVIC VOICE

- Policy Academies
- Summits & Workshops
- Surveys



CAPACITY BUILDING

- Data Assistance
- Microgrants
- Network Building
- South Strong Coalition



RESEARCH

- Academic Fellows
- In-house Analysts
- Research Organization Grants

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METRICS & HIGHLIGHTS

Model Resolution

2

Two Southern cities, New Orleans, LA, and East Point, GA, adopted SEAP's American Rescue Plan (ARP) Model Resolution, which was introduced in June of 2021.

Webinars & Events

1000

From activists to youth to government leaders at all levels, more than 1000 individuals attended/registered for SEAP's 2021 events.

Org Outreach

100+

During 2021, SEAP set out to connect and partner with more than 100 individual organizations.

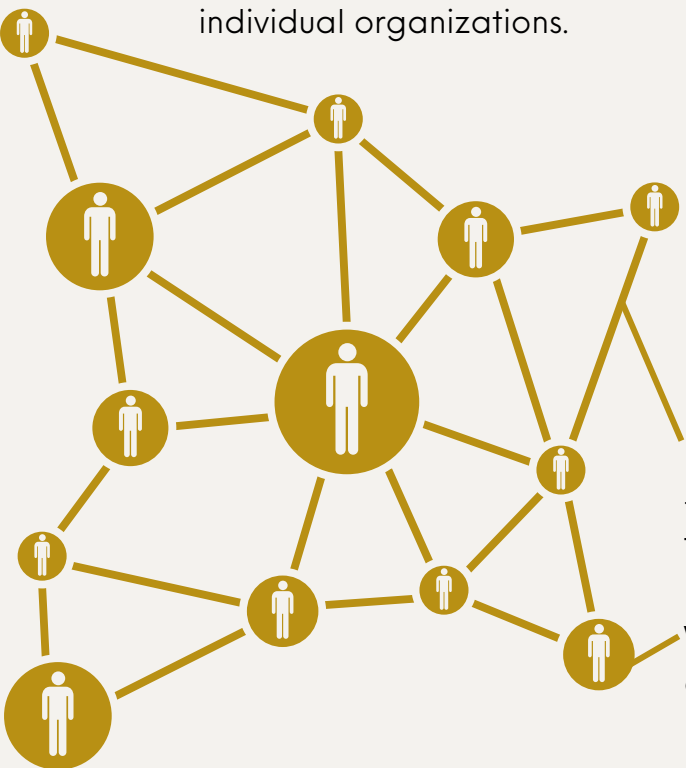
Gov Outreach

300+

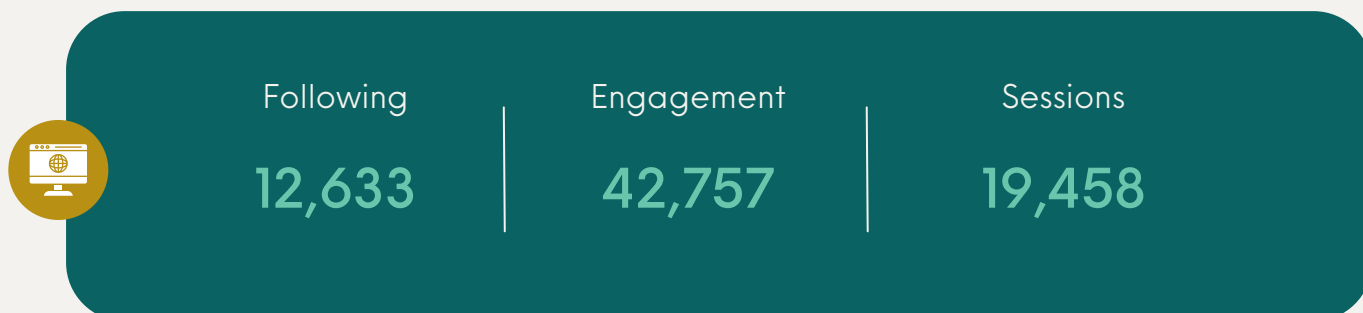
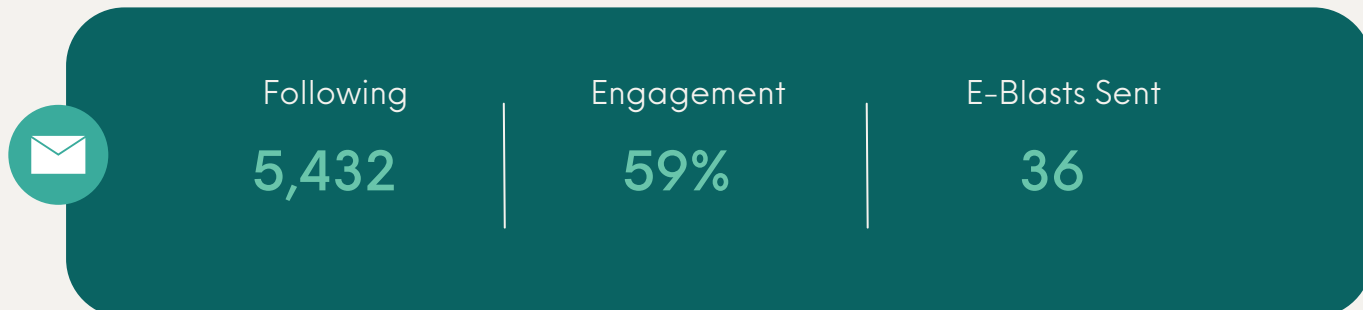
To ensure fairness in pandemic recovery, SEAP's teams reached out to hundreds of local leaders across the country.

Service

In 2021, SEAP staff served on working groups and task forces, including the Census Quality Reinforcement Taskforce, Atlanta Economic Security Task Force, ProsperUS Coalition, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission Working Group, As the South Grows Advisory Committee, and Collaborative for Racial Equity Working Group.



METRICS & HIGHLIGHTS: SOCIAL + WEB



*These analytics were collected starting January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021. Metrics marked with an "x" are unavailable.

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

WEBINARS HOSTED OR CO-HOSTED BY SEAP:

- ARP for Southern Movement Leaders with Grantmakers for Southern Progress
- Beyond COVID: An ARP Roundtable for Local Government Officials and Staff ft.:
 - Mayor Chokwe Lumba, Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham, Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Stacey Abrams, and US Treasury's Kitty Richards
- Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act ft. Congresswoman Lauren Underwood, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, and Stacey Abrams
- Data-Driven Recovery: Why States Need Chief Data Officers with the Data Center and National Center on Citizenship
- Examining the Intersection of Criminal Justice Debt & Economic Opportunity in the Deep South with Hope Policy Institute
- Pandemic to Prosperity: South (4 webinars) with Fair Count and National Center on Citizenship
- South Strong: Accountability
- South Strong: Black Women Best with Groundwork Collaborative
- South Strong: Community Buy-In
- South Strong: Redistricting
- South Strong: Storytelling Workshop with Greg Kaufmann
- Southeast Conversations on the Lancet Countdown: Climate and Health with Emory University Rollins School of Public Health and American Public Health Association
- Youth: Voice.Story.Power with Deep Center & Roosevelt Network



WEBINARS FEATURING SEAP STAFF:

- SOCAP Global Spectrum 21
- International Municipal Lawyers Association
- Income Movement
- International City/County Managers Association
- Progress Georgia
- National Conference on Citizenship
- National League of Cities/Economic Mobility Peer Network
- NC Committee to End Homelessness
- NC Justice Center/NC Black Alliance/Local Progress NC Chapter
- MDC/Rural Forward
- Mississippi Alliance for Nonprofits & Philanthropy
- Southerners for Medicaid Expansion
- People's Action
- Harvard University Dominican Student Conf.
- Virginia House of Delegates Joint Women's Healthcare Caucus
- ProsperUS Coalition
- Washington City/County Managers Association
- US Endowment for Forestry and Communities

PRESS RELEASES

- [East Point City Council Passes ARP Model Resolution](#)
- [New Orleans City Council Adopts ARP Model Resolution](#)
- [SEAP Establishes New Team to Assist Southern Communities with ARP Funds](#)
- [SEAP Launches Campaign to Highlight Need for Medicaid Expansion in Southern States](#)
- [SEAP Launches Survey to Help Local Leaders Prioritize ARP Funding](#)
- [SEAP Provides Grants to Help Southern Organizations Fight Vaccine Hesitancy](#)
- [SEAP celebrates Black farmers receiving \\$5 billion to address debt and historic injustice](#)
- [Tableau Foundation Teams up with Fair Count, SEAP](#)

IN THE NEWS

- [Easing hurricane season's burden through careful ARP spending](#)
- [Dismantling 'The Last Plantation'](#)
- [High anxiety is not a joke as Louisiana's families stagger through pandemic](#)
- [Invest in Data Infrastructure for Smart, Equitable Recovery](#)
- [S. Abrams sets her sights on vaccine access in rural Georgia](#)
- [Stacey Abrams Is Tackling Vaccine Hesitancy](#)
- [Pandemic-Era Expanded Government Benefits Drive U.S. Poverty Rate Down](#)
- ['X' Marks the Spot: Officials Map a Route Out of the Pandemic](#)
- [S. Abrams: 'Callous' leadership in these states has left millions of Americans without health coverage](#)

DIGITAL TOOLKITS (Developed + Collaborated)

- From Polling to Policies: SEAP/GWC Fall Polling Results
- Prosper Us: Week of Action
- In Celebration of Black Moms: Cash as Care | Guaranteed Income
- Southern Opportunity and Resilience Fund
- Taste of Belonging | Welcoming America
- The Broadband Together

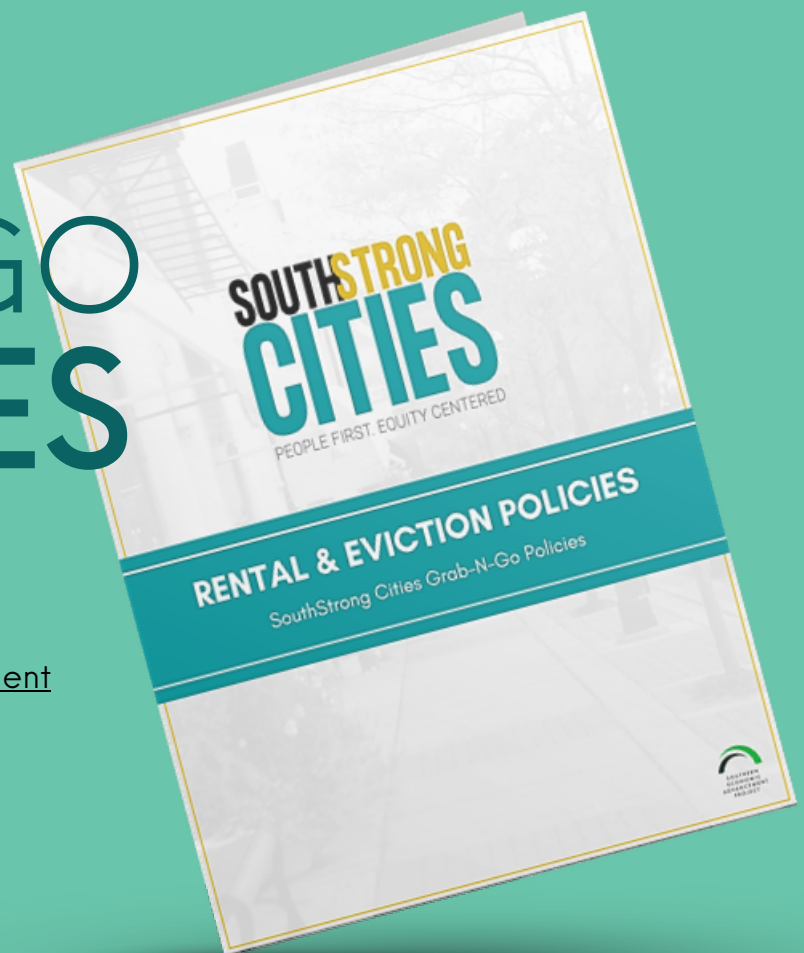
RESEARCH & DATA

REPORTS

- [A Community-Centered Model of Equitable and Just Employment](#)
- [Building States' Labor Infrastructure](#)
- [Community Engagement Guide Concerning the ARP](#)
- [Equity & Voice in Local Government Budgeting](#)
- [From One City to Another: Good Examples of ARP Outreach and Equity Plans](#)
- [Health Policy Opportunities in the Southern States](#)
- [Pandemic to Prosperity: South \(1st Edition\)](#)
- [Pandemic to Prosperity: South \(2nd Edition\)](#)
- [Pandemic to Prosperity: South \(3rd Edition\)](#)
- [Pandemic to Prosperity: South \(4th Edition\)](#)
- [The Impending Calamity of State FPUC Withdrawals](#)
- [Voters Across the South are Concerned About Climate Change](#)

GRAB & GO POLICIES

- [Rental & Eviction Policies](#)
- [Green Building Initiatives](#)
- [Local Workforce Programs](#)
- [Equity in Economic Development](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Utility Shut-offs](#)
- [Transportation Initiatives](#)



SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides local governments with unprecedented and significant direct federal aid. The effective deployment of these funds offers a critical opportunity to impact every community. Local advocates need to be alert to the immediacy of the opportunity to influence spending decisions and their role in carrying out the US Treasury’s guidance that local funds should be spent for strategic purposes, improve equity outcomes, and reflect community voice. Further, the ARP funds present an opportunity to build advocacy and accountability strength that can be leveraged as additional federal funds are appropriated for infrastructure, jobs, and other priorities.

- **ARP TOOLKIT** As state and local governments began receiving ARP relief funding, SEAP's South Strong initiative established an ARP Assistance Team. The team ensures Southern communities have substantial assistance and resources to help them invest ARP funds responsibly and equitably. Our toolkit provides an advocate’s guide to ARP, community engagement guides for local leaders, an equity and engagement best practices tracker, a spending tracker, and much more (available [here](#)). A variety of groups are linking to the SEAP ARP Toolkit as a resource for their networks, including Florida League of Cities, Welcoming America, US Department of Treasury, Alabama Arise, Ahead NC, Local Progress, One Voice Mississippi, Center for Community Progress, and Community Catalyst. The toolkit has been viewed more than 3,700 in 6 months. The SEAP ARP Assistance team has performed direct outreach to local governments, hosted webinars and convenings of leaders and advocates, provided presentations to state and local coalitions, and informed Treasury of experiences among Southern governments.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

- **COUNT ME IN** In March 2021, SEAP partnered with Fair Count and the Kaiser Family Foundation to launch #CountMeIn to increase vaccination access and awareness across the South, particularly to Black, Latinx, and Native American populations. SEAP’s contributions included:



Creation of the Georgia Vaccination Sites Dashboard to show vaccination sites and zip-code level community indicators that could be a barrier to access.



Coordination of microgrants to grassroots organizations engaged in vaccine outreach in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and North Carolina.



Facilitation of a Spanish-language tele-townhall with **5,700+** callers on the line and Alabama tele-townhall with **13,900+** callers on the line.

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES CONT.

PANDEMIC TO PROSPERITY: SOUTH

SEAP and Fair Count commissioned the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) to examine data documenting the state of the South during the pandemic. The partnership included quarterly reports and webinars featuring White House speakers, state-level data officers, and experts from the Data Center.



YOUTH SUMMIT

SEAP, Deep Center, and the Roosevelt Network co-hosted the Youth Voice, Story, and Power Summit, which connected youth across the Southern Black Belt to learn about policy and legislative change. Students and young people participated in a half-day event focused on knowledge and resource building to fuel them to use their personal experiences as a vehicle to engage in policy and advocacy work.

POLLING

In September 2021, Data for Progress, in collaboration with the SEAP and Groundwork Collaborative, surveyed 2,222 registered voters in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The poll found that voters in these 12 states broadly support Medicaid expansion, share a concern on climate change, and favor investing recovery funds on community services rather than tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. The polling results were featuring in a Pandemic to Prosperity webinar and circulated on the Hill during Build Back Better debates.

MEDICAID MADNESS

SEAP kicked off Medicaid Madness in March to engage communities through a bracket game to predict which Southern state would expand Medicaid first. The charge of this campaign was to uplift the need for Medicaid Expansion in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Influencing Medicaid Expansion in these eight states will allow for more affordable, quality, and equitable healthcare to some of the most vulnerable and underserved communities in the South.





MOVING FORWARD

Three exciting projects in first quarter 2022:

2022

1

American Recovery Plan (ARP) Community Survey

Since November 2021, SEAP has surveyed SNAP households in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and the city of New Orleans to gather feedback on ARP spending priorities. The survey identifies challenges that Southerners are experiencing due to the pandemic and brings in voices and ideas from local communities, especially those typically underserved. Through partnerships with state and local organizations, SEAP's data team will provide survey insights to state and city leaders, as they prioritize ARP funds. To date, there are more than 3,500 responses with a possible expansion to other states in 2022. SEAP will also provide data training sessions on the survey results and dashboards for local organizations as part of our capacity-building efforts.

2

ARP Spending Tracker

Also within our ARP work, SEAP will launch a Spending Tracker examining the spending decisions of more than 100 cities across 5 states. The Tracker provides the status of decisions as well as categorization of how the funds will be spent across household assistance, revenue replacement, small business assistance, infrastructure, and more.

3

Regional Commission Convening

In February, SEAP will co-host a convening on the implementation of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission. After decades of advocacy by organizations across the South, the Biden Administration named a federal co-chair for the SCRC—the vital step in progressing the formation of the regional commission that will cover many of the nation's most persistently poor counties. SEAP gathered and sponsored five scholars from Tuskegee University, Emory University, Georgia State University, and Georgia College and State University to author a white paper on organizational structure opportunities for the new commission with an eye towards community engagement. The February convening with the SCRC Working Group will feature the white paper along with discussions from key stakeholders.