



## AGENDA

ACWA Foundation, Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting

January 15, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81054127409?pwd=zNUHc4ovsYnX7J7liXJmklxfNWKAIP.1>

- 1) Call the Meeting to Order Chair Varela
- 2) Chair's Report Chair Varela
- 3) Action Items**
  - a) Approve September 18, 2025, Minutes (**Action**) Chair Varela
  - b) Financial Report (**Action**) Treasurer Shively
- 4) Discussion and Reports**
- 5) Budget - DRAFT Mealoy and Shively
- 6) Board Development Vice Chair Persike
  - a) New Board Members and Terms
  - b) Advisory Council
  - c) Committees
  - d) Plans for Nominating
- 7) Bylaws Vice Chair Persike
  - a) ACWA MOU
  - b) Addition for Advisory Council
- 8) Update on Core Projects Exec Director Mealoy
- 9) Other Business
- 10) Adjourn



## **Board Meeting Minutes November 20, 2025**

Trustees in attendance:

Chair John Varela, Vice Chair Jennifer Persike, Treasurer Kari Shively, Secretary Sue Stevenson Edgar Dymally, Victoria Johnson, Hector Martinez, Steve Blumenshine, Jennifer Jacobus, Rosa Castro  
Executive Director Lisa Mealoy

The meeting was called to order by Chair Varela at 11:01 am

### **Closed session:** Executive Director Contract Extension

The board approved a contract extension for Lisa through January, allowing time to develop a more comprehensive long-term contract.

### **Chair's Report**

Chair Varela provided an overview of upcoming trustee term expirations and outlined expectations for trustees seeking reappointment:

- Trustees whose terms expire at year end must submit a Letter of Intent.
- Letters should describe:
  - o The trustee's contributions to the Foundation.
  - o The value their agency receives from their participation.
  - o Their commitment to the annual trustee contribution (\$500), which was reduced from the original \$1,000 to accommodate smaller agencies.

Varela emphasized the importance of trustees demonstrating engagement, noting that some trustees have not contributed financially or participated consistently. He stressed that board seats should be held by individuals who actively support and advance the Foundation's mission.

Vice Chair Jennifer Persike added that many nonprofit boards require detailed justification for reappointment, including demonstrated contributions and participation. She noted that interest in serving on the Foundation board is growing, and trustees must show they are adding value rather than occupying a seat passively.

### **Financial Report**

The board reviewed the financial report, which showed a \$43,000 operating deficit year-to-date despite \$334,000 in the bank, with upcoming executive director costs of \$13,000 and \$20,000 in invoiced but unpaid grants and sponsorships. The board approved the financial report and discussed the official launch of the Betty Boatman Emerging Leader Award, which will accept applications until June 1st with awards to be announced in the fall.



# Financial Report

Year End: 12/31/2025

## 2025 Income Statement

### 2025 OPERATING REVENUES:

Charitable Contributions - Bette Boatmun	\$	2,637.72
Charitable Contributions - Trustee	\$	3,458.07
Charitable Contributions - Other	\$	77,250.00
Foundation Program/Services Income	\$	27,975.68
Interest	\$	1,345.89

*Total Operating Revenues* \$ 112,667.36

### 2025 OPERATING EXPENSES:

Scholarships Disbursed	\$	(5,000.00)
Conference Expenses	\$	(274.97)
Administrative Expenses	\$	(4,150.75)
Executive Director - Services	\$	(156,000.00)
Executive Director - Expenses	\$	(7,040.28)
Partnerships, Memberships and Fees	\$	(20,000.00)
Legal Expenses	\$	(2,130.00)
Financial and Tax Expenses	\$	115.10
Insurance Expenses	\$	(2,437.24)

*Total Operating Expenses* \$ (196,918.14)

**2025 OPERATING INCOME** \$ (84,250.78)

## 2025 Balance Sheet

### ASSETS:

Cash - Bette Boatmun Fund	\$	2,637.72
Cash - Other	\$	285,042.76
Other assets	\$	-

*Total Assets* \$ 287,680.48

### LIABILITIES:

Loans or guarantees	\$	-
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*Total Liabilities* \$ -

**2025 NET POSITION** \$ 287,680.48

### Notes:

#### 1. Costs accrued but not yet paid:

-  
-  
-

#### 2. Income promised/invoiced but not yet paid:

-  
-  
-  
-



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# Fundraising paths in 2026



## Organizational Support

Unrestricted funds to cover:

- Research & development of workforce programs
- Promotion of water careers to colleges



## Program Specific Sponsorship

Funding for programs like:

- High School Internships toolkit
- Showcasing Water Careers to College Counsellors and Faculty



# SUMMIT 2026



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 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2026

 Water Workforce Development  
Advocates WEEA, CUWA, etc.

 Time to be strategic on needs, bandwidths and collaboration

## Identify Needs

- Determine critical workforce requirements
- Assess current capacities



## Short and Long Term Strategies

- Develop actionable plans
- Address funding and training
- Adapt to evolving demands



## Partnership Opportunities

- Engage with key stakeholders
- Explore funding partnerships
- Build cross-sector collaborations



Motion to approve financials: Persike, Second Jacobus. Unanimous approval

#### ACWA Conference Trustee Participation

Executive Director discussed regional update and special event participation including the Solution Spotlight with Tomorrow's Talent and Contra Costa Water, Reception with FLOW.

Bette Boatman Award: Trustee Stevenson asked that the award be discussed at the ACWA Conference with the intent to launch the applications in the spring. Jennifer Persike mentioned that we need to be cognizant of when the potential programs launch their application processes.

#### Nominating Committee

The meeting focused on the upcoming changes to the ACWA Foundation Board of Trustees, with John announcing that trustees whose terms are ending need to submit a letter of intent explaining their value to the foundation and their agency's benefits. Jennifer Persike emphasized the importance of detailing individual contributions to the board. Chair Varela and Vice Chair Persike discussed plans to present the foundation's value to ACWA at the January board meeting, highlighting the \$40,000 annual donation and its return on investment. Trustee Dymally warned about the need to reignite the foundation's mission with new ACWA board members, as the foundation's focus has evolved from DEI to workforce development in response to the "Silver Tsunami" of retiring water industry workers.

Trustee Avila echoed these points, noting:

- Strong support for the Foundation's direction.
- Concern about long-term financial sustainability.
- Smaller agencies face fiscal constraints that limit their ability to contribute.
- Workforce development programs must be designed with smaller agencies' realities in mind, including shared staffing models or regional entry-level opportunities.

## H. Additional Trustee Comments

#### Associate Board Proposal (Trustee Castro)

- Recommendation to establish an **Associate Board** to engage early-career professionals.
- Suggested partnership with UCLA's Riordan Leadership Program for capstone support.
- Noted barriers for younger professionals:
  - Financial contribution expectations.
  - Meeting times during work hours.
- Suggested:
  - Evening or weekend associate board meetings.
  - Social and community-building events targeted at younger demographics.
  - Monthly donation options to lower financial barriers.

#### California Water Workforce Development

The group discussed the future of the water industry in California, focusing on attracting and developing the next generation of water workers. Jennifer Persike emphasized the need to help water agencies recruit and retain young talent, while Edgar Dymally suggested considering the perspectives of smaller agencies in the ACWA Board. Trustee Dymally praised the internship program but expressed concerns about the sustainability of the foundation's operations, particularly regarding revenue generation.

### **Supporting Small Water Agencies**

The meeting focused on strategies to support smaller and medium-sized water agencies, with Trustee Dymally emphasizing the need to focus on industry-wide workforce development rather than specific agency needs. Trustee Avila suggested creating task forces to engage smaller agencies and requested a focus discussion to identify their value propositions. Trustee Castro proposed involving UCLA students for capstone projects and suggested a monthly donation platform to increase financial contributions. The group agreed on the importance of strategic planning and organizing focus groups to gather input from member agencies, with Trustee Dymally suggesting conducting these at ACWA conferences.

## **7. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

## Executive Director's Report

### ACWA Foundation Board Meeting

#### *Overview*

The ACWA Foundation continues to build momentum as the statewide, systems-level partner advancing California's water workforce. The past quarter has focused on two parallel priorities: (1) advancing the Foundation's Core Projects to strengthen the workforce pipeline, and (2) laying the governance and advisory structure necessary to support sustainable growth, credibility, and long-term impact.

Taken together, this work positions the Foundation to move from concept development into scaled implementation while ensuring the Board is supported by the right expertise, capacity, and engagement structures. As the Foundation advances, a central operating principle is that programs delivering clear, practical value to agencies are also the programs most likely to generate sustained financial support. By designing initiatives that agencies actively use—and benefit from operationally—the Foundation aligns impact with relevance, and relevance with long-term funding.

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### ACWA Foundation Core Projects: Plans and Direction

The Foundation's Core Projects are intentionally designed as an integrated portfolio addressing awareness, access, preparation, and advancement across the water workforce pipeline. Rather than operating as standalone initiatives, these efforts reinforce one another and create shared value for agencies of all sizes. Importantly, each project is also designed to support the Foundation's long-term sustainability by creating clear value propositions for agencies, sponsors, and funders—linking program impact directly to opportunities for ongoing investment, partnerships, and diversified revenue.

#### Student Studies (Ventura College and Palo Verde College)

The student studies remain the analytical backbone of the Foundation's work. Current efforts are focused on translating findings into actionable guidance for agencies and educators, including:

- Refining messaging and outreach strategies based on how students discover and evaluate water careers.
- Integrating insights related to second-career students and skilled trades into downstream tools and pilots.
- Using findings to reduce trial-and-error for agencies participating in internships and career exposure activities.

These studies provide a credible, California-specific evidence base that grounds the Foundation's work in data rather than assumptions and supports future fundraising and partner engagement. From a sustainability perspective, the studies create durable intellectual capital that can be leveraged for sponsored briefings, grant proposals, and agency-facing products, helping convert research into ongoing funding opportunities rather than one-time outputs.

## High School Internship Toolkits

The high school internship toolkits represent the Foundation's primary near-term vehicle for scale and broad participation. Ongoing and planned work includes:

- Finalizing legal, HR, and risk-management templates that lower barriers for small and mid-sized agencies.
- Incorporating student study findings into outreach materials and learning plans.
- Designing guidance that helps agencies amplify internship visibility through peer-to-peer and school-based exposure.

The toolkits are designed to allow agencies to participate meaningfully in workforce development without duplicating effort, while simultaneously strengthening the statewide talent pool that benefits all employers. These will continue to grow and evolve over time as they also serve as a platform for ongoing sustainability through sponsorships, co-branded resources, and fee-based webinars or training offerings that respond directly to agency demand.

## Glendale College / Crescenta Valley Water District / Glendale Water Pilot

This pilot continues to serve as a test case for more holistic college–utility collaboration. Current areas of focus include:

- Engaging student services and job placement staff alongside faculty to include onsite visits and technical engagement with water professionals.
- Clarifying and communicating the full range of water-related careers, including indirect and supporting roles.
- Identifying elements of the collaboration that can be replicated by other colleges and agencies.

Lessons learned from this pilot will inform future toolkit development and broader system-level recommendations. In addition, the pilot creates a proof point for agency-led partnerships that can attract future sponsors, philanthropic support, and replication funding as the model is adapted by other regions.

## Second Careers in Teaching (Exploratory)

Exploratory work is underway to assess whether a lack of educators with direct water-sector experience represents a meaningful constraint on workforce development. Near-term efforts are focused on:

- Clarifying credentialing requirements and pathways from water operations into teaching.
- Identifying gaps in curriculum or preparation.
- Determining whether there is sufficient statewide demand to justify a convening or pilot role for the Foundation.

If validated, this work would support long-term instructional capacity and reinforce water careers as multi-phase, advancement-oriented professions. This exploratory work is also well positioned for grant funding and public-sector workforce investments, allowing the Foundation to expand impact without drawing on unrestricted resources.

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## Bette Boatmun Award

The Bette Boatmun Award remains a signature program of the Foundation, recognizing individuals whose leadership and service have had a lasting impact on California's water sector. Beyond recognition, the award provides an important opportunity to reinforce the Foundation's values and mission.

Current focus includes stewarding the award's credibility, aligning award storytelling with workforce and leadership development themes, and exploring ways to engage past recipients as ambassadors or advisors. Over time, the award can serve as both a celebration of legacy and a bridge to future workforce impact.

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## Board Development and Governance Capacity

As the Foundation's programmatic work advances, parallel attention to governance and advisory capacity is both necessary and timely. Several board terms formally concluded at the end of 2025, and while continuity is being maintained in the short term, this moment presents an opportunity to strengthen and clarify the Foundation's governance model.

### Board Development

Current priorities include:

- Identifying gaps in expertise, regional representation, and functional experience aligned with the Foundation's strategic direction.
- Developing a clear value proposition for board service that reflects the Foundation's systems-level role.
- Managing continuity during the transition period while applications are reviewed and organizational agreements are finalized.

This work is foundational to ensuring the Board is well-positioned to provide strategic oversight rather than operational lift.

## Advisory Council

The establishment of an Advisory Council is being explored as a complementary structure to the Board. The intent is to:

- Engage subject-matter experts, practitioners, and partners who may not be positioned for board service.
- Provide targeted input on workforce development trends, regional conditions, and pilot design.
- Create a flexible on-ramp for deeper engagement with the Foundation's work.

An Advisory Council would allow the Foundation to access broader expertise without expanding the formal governance body.

## Committees

Committee structures are also under consideration to support both Board effectiveness and staff capacity. Potential areas include:

- Programs and Impact
- Governance and Nominations
- Development and Partnerships

Well-defined committees would allow for deeper engagement on complex issues while keeping full board meetings focused on strategy and decision-making.

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## Looking Ahead

The coming months will be critical for translating planning into implementation. Key priorities include:

- Advancing the high school internship toolkits toward pilot use and broader dissemination.
- Applying student study findings across all active projects.
- Clarifying and formalizing board, advisory, and committee structures to support growth.

The Foundation is moving deliberately, with an emphasis on building durable systems rather than short-term programs. This approach may not be flashy, but it is effective—and, importantly, it is designed to outlast any single initiative or funding cycle.

Respectfully submitted,

**Executive Director** ACWA Foundation



# ACWA FOUNDATION

## Committees

### Primary Role

Committees support the Board and staff by providing focused oversight, expertise, and implementation support for Board-approved priorities. Committees are a key mechanism for advancing the Foundation's active program portfolio.

### Types of Committees

- **Standing Committees** (e.g., Finance, Education, Training, Fundraising ): Provide ongoing oversight of core organizational functions.
- **Program or Project Committees** (e.g., Internship Toolkit Development, Workforce Pathways, Educator Networks): Advance initiatives with defined scopes, timelines, and deliverables.

### Core Responsibilities

- Develop recommendations and work products for Board consideration.
- Support staff in moving projects from concept to implementation.
- Integrate expertise from Trustees, Advisory Council members, and external experts as appropriate.
- Operate under Board-approved charters and provide regular progress updates.

### Committee Membership and Leadership

- Each committee will have a clearly defined chair.
- Membership will extend beyond the Board to ensure access to relevant expertise.

### Current (Active) Committees

#### Education

- Identifies and builds educational opportunities and activities including mentorship, internship programs in collaboration with Foundation members.

#### Finance

- Led by the Board Treasurer, provides monthly financial reports to the Board of Trustees, and annually creates a budget and conducts an audit of the ACWA Foundation's finances. This committee also secures future, sustainable revenue streams from individuals, organizations, special events and activities, and government grants, to support the Foundation's various programs and operating expenses.

#### Training

- Plans training, workshops and webinars

#### Fundraising

- Builds organizational and project based fundraising programs, coordinates with board and actively fundraises.

## Relationship Among Governance Bodies

- The **Board of Trustees** holds final decision-making and fiduciary authority.
- The **Advisory Council** informs and advises but does not govern.
- **Committees** support governance and implementation, depending on their charge, and report to the Board.



# ACWA FOUNDATION

## Advisory Council

### Primary Role

The Advisory Council provides non-governing, non-fiduciary expertise to inform the Foundation's strategy, programs, and partnerships. The Council strengthens the Foundation's ability to remain responsive to workforce trends, education pathways, and regional needs across California.

### Core Responsibilities

#### Program and Strategy Advisory

- Provide subject-matter insight on education, workforce development, equity strategies, and industry needs.
- Advise on the design and refinement of programs such as internships, scholarships, research initiatives, and learning communities.

#### Ecosystem Connectivity

- Serve as a bridge to community colleges, CTE programs, water agencies, nonprofit partners, and private-sector employers.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, replication of successful models, and shared resources.

#### Project-Based Engagement

- Participate in time-limited committees or working groups focused on specific initiatives (e.g., internship toolkits, educator networks, regional convenings).
- Support evaluation and continuous improvement of pilot programs.

#### Advisory Council Expectations

- Participate in periodic meetings, briefings, or consultations.
- Provide candid, practical feedback grounded in professional experience.
- Contribute expertise and networks without assuming governance or fiduciary authority.

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