



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

To: California Strategic Growth Council Members

From: Lynn von Koch-Liebert, SGC Executive Director

Re: Executive Director Report to the Council – December 14, 2023

Staffing Updates

- SGC welcomed two Executive Fellows in November.
 - Camille Randolph (they/them) is the Executive Fellow for SGC's Community Investment and Planning division. Previously to becoming a Fellow, they worked for the City of Oakland, in the Finance Department. They earned their Master's degree in Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict at Trinity College Dublin. For undergrad, they attended UC Davis, where they studied International Relations. While at UC Davis, they worked as a Senator in the student government. They also worked as a Conductor on the student-run bus line—Unitrans! Camille is excited for their upcoming fellowship year with SGC.
 - Alex C. Walker (he/him) is the Executive Fellow for SGC's Equity and Government Transformation division. He is a proud bulldog, graduating California State University, Fresno, with full honors and summa cum laude status. He earned his bachelor's in political science, as well as two certificates, legal studies, and social justice and social change. While attending Fresno State, Alex completed an original, award-winning research project for the College of Social Sciences Honors Program, served in student government and campus organizations, such as President of the COSS Leadership Council and Legal Committee Vice Chair. Alex continues to be involved in his local community, serving as Club Administration Director of the Rotary Club of Lemoore and as a Board Member of the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley. Agriculture brought Alex's family to the Valley, and agriculture, specifically through FFA (Future Farmers of America), is where he discovered his passion for service and ultimately decided to pursue a career in public service. As an Executive Fellow for the California Strategic Growth Council, Alex is excited to apply his skills to deliver and serve communities across California.

Investment Program Updates

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Marc Caswell, Jessica Lopez, Shep Wilbun, Justin DeWaele, Brianne Logasa, and California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) Staff Team

- After deep stakeholder engagement, the AHSC team is presenting the AHSC Round 8 Final Guidelines to Council for adoption at the December Council Meeting.
- After a 30-day public comment period, the AHSC Round 8 Draft Guidelines Public Comment period closed. During this period, staff held 3 Public Workshops related to Guideline updates as well as more than a dozen small-group meetings with advocates, stakeholders, tribes, and inter-agency partners.

- The team received more than 40 comment letters which included more than 300 specific action items to consider, along with dozens of comments from the 225 attendees of the public workshops.
- Round 8 Final Guidelines are building upon the continued success of the AHSC program, and are focused on streamlining and clarifying processes to reduce confusion and workload for applicants and reviewers alike.
- Adoption at the December 2023 meeting keeps AHSC on an annual cycle, designed to align with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) program to help ensure that AHSC-awarded projects are positioned to close their financing and get projects started quickly and maximize our investments.
- The SGC team and AHSC Technical Assistance (TA) providers continue to hold “AHSC 101” workshops across the state, partnering with regional agencies including metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and housing advocacy organizations, tribes, and other partners. These events will continue throughout the year and are designed to build interest and connect interested parties for both the upcoming round and future cycles.

Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Jerry Rivero, Jennifer Kim, Sarah Newsham, Anna Jane Jones, Rebecca Avilés, Jessica Ison, and California Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- Round 5 TCC application window closed August 1, 2023, and underwent application review:
 - The interagency review panel and TCC Staff conducted site visits for all six Implementation Grant applicants in October.
 - The interagency review panel and TCC Staff held deliberations in late October and early November.
 - Staff recommends four Implementation Grant awards to Council:
 - \$22,125,000 Award to The Energy Coalition
 - \$22,125,000 Award to the City of Coachella
 - \$22,125,000 Award to the San Diego Foundation
 - \$22,125,000 Award to the City of Bakersfield
 - Staff recommends four Project Development Grant awards to Council:
 - \$4,018,788.45 Award to Riverside County
 - \$1,084,660 Award to Santa Barbara County
 - \$1,055,500 Award to Mariposa County
 - \$2,548,010 Award to Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
 - Staff recommends three Planning Grant awards to Council:
 - \$300,000 Award to Urban Collaborative Project Community Development Corporation
 - \$299,910 Award to Tranquility Resource Conservation District
 - \$300,000 Award to GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles
 - Staff reports will share the full detail of the recommendations and the Round 5 application cycle.
- Staff opened a TCC Round 5 Feedback Survey in October and have received 34 responses to date. This survey will close at the end of December.



- Staff continue to work with Round 4 awardees through the Post-Award Consultation process. To date, 6 of 7 Planning Grant Agreements and 3 of 3 Implementation Grant Agreements have been executed.
- Staff celebrated project milestones with TCC Grant Sites:
 - City of Richmond: On November 17, 2023, Richmond Rising, recipients of a Round 4 TCC Implementation Grant, hosted a TCC-program-funded event to kick off grant activities with the project leads and coordinate project efforts.
- The Connecting Communities Program signed a technical assistance contract with Horne. Horne is expected to provide In-depth technical assistance for 10-20 partners.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Shanna Atherton-Bauer (DOC), and Department of Conservation Staff

- SALC staff reported one easement project closing between October 5th and November 22nd. This project has resulted in the permanent conservation of 79 acres of grazing land in one county.
- SALC's Acquisition and Planning application window closed September 8, 2023.
 - SALC staff reviewed and scored projects between September and November.
 - SALC staff conducted site visits for all but one acquisition grant.
 - SALC staff recommend funding 8 Planning grants totaling \$4 million in request.
 - SALC staff recommend funding 38 Acquisition projects (33 easements, 5 fee acquisitions) totaling \$109,094,410 in awards and representing 50,880 acres of agricultural land. Of these, 16 were developed using SALC Capacity and Project Development funding awarded in Round 8.
 - Additional details are available in the SALC Awards Staff Report, which will be available as part of the Consent Calendar.
- SALC's capacity and project development application window closed July 21, 2023.
 - Staff reviewed and scored projects between July and October.
 - Staff conducted interviews with all applicants to ask clarifying questions and better understand each application.
 - Staff recommend funding:
 - 7 Tier 1 applications totaling \$680,078 in award
 - 12 Tier 2 projects totaling \$2,999,760 in award
 - All Tier 1 applicants have the ability to request up to an additional \$150,000 as part of their current grant to facilitate eligible project development work if they meet specific capacity objectives outlined in the Round 9 Guidelines during their grant term, with Executive Director approval.
 - Additional details are available in the SALC Awards Staff Report, which will be available as part of the December 2023 Consent Calendar.

Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi, Emely Anico, Natalie Obaldia, and Diana Zamora-Reyes

- The CCR Team hosted a Town Hall and an e-Lightning Session at the 2023 American Geophysical Union earlier this week. The Town hall outlined SGC's Participatory Research to Policy Model. Followed by conversations with panelists. The panel was comprised of three CCR grantees sharing tangible outcomes and best practices for incorporating meaningful engagement, capacity building, and technical assistance into State-funded research. The e-Lightning session



featured researchers throughout the nation sharing their experiences adopting community based participatory research through 3-minute “flash” talks.

- The CCR Team began the closeout process for Round 3 grantees this month, hosting an exit presentation by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and their research partners on their completed Round 3 SGC Climate Change Research Program Project, Incentivizing Climate-Smart Farmland Transitions in the San Joaquin Valley.
- The CCR Team is finalizing synthesis reports of the research projects funded in Round one and two.
- The CCR and 5th Assessment teams continue to meet quarterly with research leadership from the University of California and California State Universities. During the most recent September meetings, we discussed outreach to UC networks for potential author team members for the Regional Synthesis Reports.
- CCR Team attended a 4-hour training hosted by CARB in partnership with West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project on Community Partnership and Power Sharing Monday October 2nd.
- The CCR team continues to lead the engagement efforts of California’s Fifth Climate Change Assessment:
 - The [RFP for Core Climate Research](#), led by CNRA to fund original climate research aligned with the [26 priority topics](#) identified as gaps in the scientific literature, posted their Notice of Intent to Award [15 research agreements](#) on November 1st.
 - Regional Report author teams are expected to be established by January 2024.

Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Program

Staff: Amar Cid, Dora Monterroza, Jess McCool, and Jessica Cervantes

- Round 1 CRC Application Window Closed September 18, 2023. The CRC Program received a total of 189 Applications Submitted across all three grant types asking for a total of \$ 685,330,873.13. Given the high volume of applications received, CRC Program Staff have developed a staggered application review process and will be using a staggered awards approach. This has been informed by best practices shared by other OPR, SGC, and State grant programs. The planned awards timeline is as follows:
 - Planning Grants will be awarded at the February 2024 SGC Council Meeting
 - Project Development and Implementation Grants will be awarded at the April 2024 SGC Council Meeting
- Staff are undergoing Round 1 Application Review:
 - Staff completed the Planning Grant Application Completeness and Threshold Review on November 13, 2023. 87 applications were reviewed and assessed for eligibility and program thresholds.
 - Planning Grant Interagency Review kicked off with Reviewer Orientation and Training on November 16, 2023. CRC Staff are hosting weekly reviewer office hours and will also facilitate a deliberation panel. Interagency Review scoring and deliberation for Planning Grants is expected to conclude mid-December.
 - CRC Team is currently conducting Application Completeness and Threshold Review for all Project Development and Implementation Grant Applications (102 applications total) and expect this to conclude early/mid-December.



- Staff continue to coordinate closely with SGC teams and OPR staff on ICARP’s Adaptation Planning Grants, Regional Resilience Grants, and Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grants programs to share best practices, public input, and align funding.
- Staff are amending the CRC Round 1 Final Guidelines for approval at the SGC December Council meeting. This amendment reflects the expanded advance pay authority given the recent signing of AB 590.
- Staff launched the CRC Networking Hub hosted on Milken Institute’s Community Infrastructure Center platform. This platform will give applicants and prospective applicants an opportunity to connect with each other and relevant subject matter experts throughout the state. The team will be utilizing this channel to share additional and aligned funding opportunities as well as related events and trainings. The CRC Networking Hub will foster a space to continuously form and maintain relationships while building capacity among various partners throughout the state.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

Staff: Ena Lupine, Blanca Escobedo, Markie Price, and Nancy Cheng

- **Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program:** RCC Round 2 applicants submitted 43 pre-proposals on September 6 and staff reviewed and offered feedback to each applicant. The deadline for applicants to submit full proposals was December 6 and staff have assembled an interagency review panel to review and score applications. Staff plan to bring RCC Round 2 recommended awardees to Council in February 2024.
 - CACE staff and SGC leadership attended site visits with three RCC Round 1 grantees in November. Staff traveled to McCloud on November 6 for the Siskiyou Climate Collaborative site visit; Stockton on November 29 for the San Joaquin Regional Climate Collaborative site visit; and San Rafael & Marin City on November 30 for the Marin Climate Justice Collaborative site visit. Site visits with the remaining three RCC Round 1 collaboratives are scheduled for February 2024.
- **Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program:** CACE program staff brought Program Guidelines to Council for approval at the October meeting. Following Council’s adoption of the Guidelines, staff issued a Notice of Funding Availability and initiated a competitive application process for the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program on November 8 and held an application workshop on November 28. CACE staff is also holding biweekly office hours throughout the entire application period.
 - Staff have also released a Request for Quotes for Technical Assistance Providers for the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program and has held two workshops on October 12 and December 5 to share information about the program and technical assistance scope of work. Proposals are due on January 19, 2024.
- **BOOST:** CACE staff released the [final report](#) from Round 2 of the BOOST Program in October 2023. The report highlights the outcomes of round 2 of the program, including helping the participating cities access \$25 million in grant funding, providing needed trainings for 32 city staff members, and facilitating 20 community conversations and engagement events. SGC recently released a [blog post](#) that tells the story of the City of Needles’ BOOST Round 2 participation and the meaningful benefits this rural community in San Bernardino County experienced through the program.



- **Technical Assistance Toolkit Update:** Since releasing the Technical Assistance Toolkit in Summer 2023, CACE staff continue to present the TA Toolkit to interagency work groups and plan to continue to promote this resource in the coming months.

Collaborative Policy Initiatives

Health and Equity Program (HEP)

Staff: Jazmine Garcia Delgadillo, Michael Jimenez, and Kimberli Davila.

Health in All Policies (HiAP)

Staff: SGC partners with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Public Health Institute State of Equity program (PHI) to staff the Health in All Policies Task Force. The Task Force brings together almost 30 agencies, departments, and commissions to integrate health and racial equity considerations into programs and policies that advance State priorities.

- **HiAP Task Force Hosts November 28 Quarterly Meeting.** The Health in All Policies Task Force met on November 28. The convening will be held virtually and will host guest presenters and various progress updates of Task Force activities including the Anti-Police Terror Project Campaign on Health and Traffic Safety, the California Department of Public Health, and CALFIRE. The Task Force will also reflect on the past year's accomplishments and discuss opportunities for next year. Following the convening, Task Force members will receive an internal evaluation survey that will inform planning for the upcoming year.
- **HiAP Task Force Workgroups Convene Monthly.** The Grant Program, Contract, and Funding Equity and Equity in Data and Access to Information workgroups that are hosted within the HiAP Task Force continue to meet monthly. Workgroups have finalized action plans and have continued to work on short-term actions.

Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP)

Staff: HEP and SGC Program and Administrative Managers

- **HEP Provides Annual Update to Strategic Growth Council on Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP).** Starting in late October, HEP led a cross-programmatic effort to meet with and support all SGC programs and leadership in drafting annual REAP implementation updates. This process builds on ongoing facilitation support HEP provides across all of SGC for the REAP, including bimonthly hands-on check-ins and sustaining a tracking tool for programmatic updates. Program updates have been compiled in a staff report for the December 14, 2023, Council meeting, accompanied by a presentation on these updates, lessons learned from updating the 2023-2025 REAP, and a discussion with the Council on their feedback to advance SGC's racial equity work.
- **Internal REAP Working Groups.** Staff convene within three internal working groups on the following racial equity advancement topics: Technical Assistance and Contract Equity; Workforce Equity and Organizational Culture; and Engagement and Coordination with Tribes. Since adopting the SGC REAP in 2019, SGC has conducted an annual demographics survey to assess how reflective SGC's workforce is of California's diversity. The internal Demographics and Identities Survey conducted this year builds on the Workforce Equity Survey administered in 2022. To expand coordination with the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) tribal-serving initiatives, the internal SGC Tribal Coordination and Engagement Working Group met with OPR's internal staff working group, building awareness of the offices' respective tribal-serving programs and sharing forthcoming opportunities for collaboration and participation in tribal-serving events.



- **HEP Joins Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Annual Member Convening.** On November 1 and 2, 2023, HEP attended the Annual Member meeting. HEP co-hosted a breakout session with the Bay Area Reducing Health Inequities Initiative on strategies for government transformation and co-governance to advance racial equity.

Racial Equity Resource Hub

Staff: HEP and the Communications Team

- **Updates to the Racial Equity Resource Hub.** HEP continues to collect resources from State entities as directed by Council to host on the Hub, and is continuing to update past resources to ensure they are up to date and are accessible to users. HEP is also working on streamlining the resource posting process to ensure timely updates on critical State racial equity resources. This month, the Racial Equity Resource Hub will be hosting a blog post from HEP highlighting the updated Racial Equity Action Plan.

Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)

Staff: SGC partners with the Public Health Institute's (PHI) State of Equity program to host a racial equity capacity-building program for California State government institutions and employees. CCORE brings together approximately 40 agencies, departments, boards, and offices to build a people-power movement inside of California State government to advance racial equity by deploying organizing principles inside and outside of the system.

- **CCORE Learning Cohort (LC)** is set to launch in 2024. We will have two information sessions for interested departments and individuals to learn more about this upcoming cohort on November 30 and December 7. If you have any questions or would like to get on our email list to hear CCORE LC 2024 updates reach out to us at: CCORE@phi.org.
- **CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC).** The 2023-2024 pilot cohort centering Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, continues to blossom as it is halfway through the cohort season. We have recently welcomed the Anti-Oppression Resource & Training Alliance (AORTA) as facilitators who will work with us in our caucusing space through February. In 2024, we look forward to ongoing deep dive dialogues and wisdom that will be shared by our next round of facilitators.

Natural and Working Lands

Land Equity Task Force

Staff: Sean Kennedy

- The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force hosted its first public meeting at the Sacramento State Downtown Campus on Monday, October 30. Task Force members discussed the body's bylaws and charter and began to develop a work plan for future meetings. The Task Force voted to appoint Nelson Hawkins, Founder of We Grow Urban Farm in West Sacramento, and Emily Burgueno, Head Seed Keeper, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. The Task Force will continue to meet quarterly and submit formal recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on or before January 1, 2026.
- On the December 14, 2023 Council Meeting consent calendar, SGC staff will nominate Qi (pronounced as Chee) Zhou to serve as the Task Force's California Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee representative. Qi is the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Program Manager at California Association of Resource Conservation

Districts (CARCD). She has been working closely with farmers, extension agencies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies on agriculture and environmental issues for over 10 years, with a focus on assisting historically underserved farmers and ranchers. For the past 5 years, Qi has provided multi-lingual outreach, workshops, training, and technical assistance to many small scale, underserved farmers in California. She also created the "Association of Asian Farmers" working group which has over 140 active Asian farmer members in the group. Qi holds a Ph.D. degree in Plant and Environmental Sciences from Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

Regional Planning Initiatives

Staff: Marc Caswell, Justin DeWaele, and California Air Resources Board and HCD staff

- On October 9th, HCD announced the Rural and Tribal awardees for the Regional Early Action Planning Grants (REAP 2.0) program. The awards total \$54 million across 16 projects and include affordable housing development, utilities and active transportation infrastructure development, site acquisition, predevelopment activities and more.
- This follows the first tranche of REAP 2.0 awards announced on July 5th, which totaled \$352 million across 12 MPOs, local governments, and transit agencies. There remains \$104M of awards to announce. Most, if not all, application reviews are completed at this point.
- The REAP 2.0 Interagency Team is working on the Annual Reporting Template, which grantees will need to complete to track progress on their awards. The Team is also providing technical assistance to grantees on an ad hoc basis.
- The final California Comeback Plan included a \$600M investment in augmenting the existing Regional Early Action Planning Grant (REAP) 2.0 funds. The program focuses on implementing regional plans in ways that reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT), accelerate infill housing development in furtherance of the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals, increase housing supply at all affordability levels, affirmatively further fair housing, and reducing vehicle miles traveled. The REAP 2.0 program is managed by a joint team across HCD, SGC, OPR and CARB. The \$600M is spread across three allocations: a non-competitive \$510 million MPO allocation, a \$30 million competitive rural and Tribal allocation, and a \$30 million competitive high impact/transformational (HIT) allocation.
- The OPR/SGC Regions Working Group is shifting to a quarterly cadence and will have a 'lunch and learn' format with topics covered by presenters.

Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, and Equity

Staff: Sean Kennedy

- On October 26, SGC collaborated with CivicWell and other State agencies to convene a practitioner workshop focused strategies for State-local coordination to advance Priority 3 objectives around strategic growth. The workshop discussions will inform 2024 updates to [SGC's Housing, Climate, and Equity work plan](#) and ongoing efforts to co-create operational solutions for critical statewide needs or gaps hindering more significant progress on energy and climate action within communities.
- Also on October 26, Councilmembers had the opportunity to visit a St. Teresa of Calcutta Villa, an affordable housing community supported by the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities program. Councilmembers also toured Barrio Logan.



- During the October 26 SGC Council Meeting, a panel of local and regional planners and community partners will discuss successful strategies and opportunities for accessing and utilizing State funding and other resources to simultaneously meet housing and climate goals across the San Diego region. Central to this work is understanding how local and regional implementers engage with State policies and programs, which can then inform State actions to improve access to resources and reduce burdens on local and regional agencies. The panel is intended as an opportunity for local and regional implementers to share their perspectives on these issues, including successful strategies for accessing and deploying State opportunities.

Catalyst Conference Updates

In conjunction with the 2024 Catalyst Conference occurring on February 1 – 2, 2024, SGC will release three new models on the SGC Model Hub.

- **Iterative and Inclusive Program Design:** This model details the iterative process SGC and its partner agencies take in designing and implementing climate equity programs to respond to the changing needs of their constituents through iteration and adaptability, leading to improved program outcomes for recipients and implementing entities.
- **Collaborative Governance:** This model details the ways SGC supports community-level collaborative governance structures that position communities for access to funding opportunities now and in the future.
- **Multi-benefit Projects:** The model details the ways SGC ensures its investments generate wide-reaching and long-lasting benefits that extend well beyond the scope and lifetime of a particular project.

Media Clips

Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities

- [[High County News](#)] November 1, 2023: “On Aug. 30, the California Strategic Growth Council awarded \$30.1 million to Eureka and a housing nonprofit for the construction of 90 homes on three city-owned parking lots. In response, one of Arkley’s companies sponsored a petition for a 2024 ballot initiative — the “Eureka Housing For All” initiative — that would prevent development on the parking lots in question, unless developers preserve the existing number of parking spots and add more parking for the new units.”
- [[San Diego State University Newscenter](#)] November 8, 2023: “Chelsea Investment Corporation will seek out tax-exempt bonds, federal and state tax credits, and California Housing and Community Development (HCD) funds from the [Infill Infrastructure Grant \(IIG\)](#) program and California Strategic Growth Council funds from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program, to finance the project and will not receive any subsidy from the CSU.”
- [[Urbanize Los Angeles](#)] October 30, 2023: “The vote by the Board of Supervisors comes just over one month after [the California Strategic Growth Council awarded \\$30.8 million](#) for the project - part of \$187 million granted to Los Angeles area affordable housing developments through the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program. The state money will cover the cost of on-site supportive services, laundry facilities, outdoor recreation areas, and the purchase of nine zero emission buses.”

Climate Change Research

- [[UC Davis](#)] October 24, 2023: Adding crushed volcanic rock to cropland could play a key role in removing carbon from the air. In a field study, scientists at the University of California, Davis,



and Cornell University found the technology stored carbon in the soil even during an extreme drought in California. The research, part of the Working Lands Innovation Center, was funded by the California Strategic Growth Council and the Grantham Foundation, Roger Sant and Doris Matsui.”

Transformative Climate Communities

- [\[Center for American Progress\]](#) November 6, 2023: “[US EPA’s Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program] use a “community development hub” strategy that allows agencies to work with trusted regional entities that have closer and long-standing relationships with local organizations and governments, creating connective tissue and partnerships that better deliver federal resources directly to the communities that need them. Many nongovernmental organizations and foundations are already using a similar model... as well as California’s state-of-the-art public engagement and capacity-building program, the Transformative Climate Communities program, at the state level.”

