

April 11, 2016

**Subject:** 2015-2016 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)  
Technical Assistance Pilot Program

**Reporting Period:** January 2016 – April 2016

**Staff Lead:** SGC Staff

---

### **Recommended Action:**

For information only – no action required.

### **Summary:**

This report provides an update to the 2015-16 AHSC Pilot Technical Assistance Program for selected applicants in disadvantaged communities.

SGC Staff completed a Request for Proposals (RFP) process on January 7, 2016 and selected three (3) Technical Assistance (TA) Providers to serve specific regions throughout the state. Simultaneously, SGC Staff conducted an initial needs assessment with eligible TA recipients across the state, and TA Providers and Recipients were connected in February to begin work in preparing Concept Proposals for the 2015-2016 AHSC Funding Round. TA Providers assisted in submitting approximately 29 Concept Proposals out of 62 eligible projects. SGC Staff is in the process of analyzing progress of the Pilot thus far, including assessing the overall structure and function of the program as well as its effectiveness.

### **Background:**

SB 862, Statutes of 2014 established the AHSC program, to be administered by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC, or Council), "to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices to support infill and compact development..." In addition, Senate Bill 535 (De Leon, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) directs State and local agencies to make significant investments that improve California's most vulnerable communities. To this end, the AHSC program is also statutorily required to invest at least 50 percent of its annual appropriation in or for the benefit of Disadvantaged Communities, as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency through the California EnviroScreen 2.0 Tool.

The Budget Act of 2015 (Chapter 321, Statutes of 2015) appropriated \$500,000 in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for a pilot technical assistance grant program for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, to maximize the greenhouse gas reductions of projects located in disadvantaged communities.

## Update:

### Eligible Recipients of Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance (TA) is available for applicants with projects located in CalEnviroScreen-defined "Disadvantaged Community" (DAC) areas that applied for AHSC funding during the 2014-2015 funding cycle and were unsuccessful in securing funding. TA is available for both Concept and Full Application phases, and includes the services listed below.

### Technical Assistance Services

TA can include, but is not limited to:

- Greenhouse gas emissions reduction quantification and strategies,
- Assistance with narrative writing,
- Data analysis and mapping,
- Project planning and management, and
- Development of key partnerships to enhance collaboration.

### Selection of Technical Assistance Providers

SGC has identified the below third-party technical assistance providers to assist eligible participants with direct application development and support for the upcoming 2015-2016 AHSC funding round.

Providers	Region(s)
<p><b>Project Lead: Estolano LeSar Perez Advisors</b>  <b>Partners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Local Government Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>TransForm</i></li> <li>• <i>California Coalition for Rural Housing</i></li> </ul>	<p>Bay Area, Sacramento, San Diego</p>
<p><b>Project Lead: Southern California Association of Governments</b>  <b>Partners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Estolano LeSar Perez Advisors</i></li> <li>• <i>Climate Resolve</i></li> <li>• <i>TransForm</i></li> <li>• <i>Local Government Commission</i></li> </ul>	<p>Southern California</p>
<p><b>Project Lead: San Joaquin Council of Governments</b>  <b>Partners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>California Coalition for Rural Housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Fresno State Office of Community &amp; Economic Development</i></li> <li>• <i>Sigala Inc.</i></li> <li>• <i>San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District</i></li> </ul>	<p>San Joaquin Valley</p>

<b>2015-2016 AHSC Technical Assistance Pilot Program &amp; AHSC Application Timeline</b>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Turnaround</b>	<b>Estimated Date</b>
Contract Term with Technical Assistance Providers Begins		February 2016
Release of 2015-16 Notice of Funding Availability and Concept Application	6 weeks	February 2016
Kick-off Meetings with SGC and TA Providers		February 2016
Connection between TA Providers and TA Recipients		February 2016
2015-16 AHSC Concept Applications Due		March 2016
Notification of Invitation to Submit Full Application	8 weeks	April 2016
2015-16 AHSC Full Application Due		June 2016
Award Recommendations posted for SGC Approval		September 2016
Contract Term with Technical Assistance Providers Ends		October 2016

### **Pilot Program Set-Up**

SGC Staff conducted preliminary phone conversations with each of the eligible TA Recipients and found that TA needs vary widely, even within specific regions. In general terms, TA needs fell into two categories – (1) high-level data and quantification needs, and (2) understanding program thresholds and requirements. SGC Staff shared specific information regarding each TA Recipient to the TA Providers at Kick-off meetings, in order for initial meetings between TA Providers and TA Recipients to be most effective and efficient.

TA Providers and TA Recipients were connected via email by SGC Staff as the Concept Proposal was made available to all applicants. TA Providers were required to meet with each of their TA Recipients and submit to SGC Staff individualized work plans for each Recipient to prepare a competitive Concept Proposal. SGC Staff and the three TA Providers had weekly conference calls to discuss progress with each TA Recipient and answer relevant questions.

### **Results from Concept Proposal Phase**

<b>Region Served</b>	<b># Submitted/Eligible Concepts</b>
Southern California	5/29
Sacramento	2/5
San Diego	2/4
San Joaquin Valley	11/12
Bay Area	9/11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29/62</b>

Overall, our TA Providers were successful in submitting 29 Concept Proposals, with varying degrees of involvement for each. To the right is the regional breakdown of how many Concept Proposals for which SGC TA Providers provided some level of assistance.

SGC Staff is preparing a thorough analysis of the effectiveness of direct application technical assistance, as well as evaluating the structure and function of the Pilot Program with both TA Recipients and TA Providers.

Based upon initial feedback, general reasons for potential TA Recipients declining Technical Assistance included the following:

- Already working with a non-profit TA provider or hired consultant
- Readiness: Project would not meet threshold requirements by deadline, related to:

- Environmental Clearances
- Density
- Transit Requirements
- Change in political support for AHSC project
- Project was not a fit for AHSC and received funding from another program(s)
- Project was missing key required components required by AHSC
- 6/62 eligible TA Recipients were not responsive to multiple attempts to contact via email and phone.

In order to receive as much feedback as possible on program design, SGC Staff solicits regular feedback from contracted TA Providers through weekly check-in conference calls, monthly written status reports, and thorough Quarterly Progress Reports after each phase of the application cycle. TA Providers are also required to submit a Final Report to SGC Staff and Council. This final report will include overall program evaluation, key metrics, and recommendations for any future technical assistance programs.

### **Capacity Building Activities**

In addition to direct application assistance, SGC-contracted TA Providers are to spend 10% of their contract on capacity building activities in preparation for the 2016-2017 ASHC Funding Round with a wider regional audience. SGC Staff has convened the three TA Providers to discuss areas of overlap and leverage in order to scale these activities as widely as possible.

TA Providers have submitted revised scopes of work for these activities, based on their lessons from the Concept Proposal round. SGC Staff is preparing a draft integrated capacity building plan that builds on the strengths of each TA Provider and leverages work and materials, while maintaining specific regional initiatives. This work is planned to commence in May and will be ongoing throughout the life of the contracts.