SGC
catalyst conference
In Collaboration with Milken Institute

2024 Summary Report

Summary of Participant Feedback & Ideas

February 2024

Abstract

Recent years have witnessed unprecedented levels of state and federal funding to address worsening climate-related challenges, particularly those faced by historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Across the climate investment landscape, individuals and organizations are leveraging this funding to support, design, implement, and maintain projects that generate meaningful and equitable community benefits.

While historic, the current levels of public climate funding are insufficient to meet long-term needs. A recent assessment of climate finance in California estimates that the state will need an annual average of $62 billion from 2023 to 2035 to stay on track for its climate goals. In this context, there is a pressing need to support communities and organizations in identifying and implementing actionable, creative strategies toward equitable climate resilience now and in the future.

The 2024 SGC Catalyst Conference, *Progress in Place: From Power Building to Project Implementation*, convened frontline leaders, researchers, funders, and government partners to learn from one another, prioritize areas of future focus, advance projects, and celebrate the transformation already underway. Conference sessions reflected the urgency at which we need to make place-based investments that center and support disinvested communities and the speed at which federal and state funds are deployed.

Conference outcomes include:

1. Replicable strategies and resources to access funding and capital investment to advance climate equity.
2. Shared strategies for sustaining community benefits across social and physical infrastructure funding under the Biden-Harris Justice40 initiative, the California Climate budget, and beyond.
3. Promotion of use cases developed to support key climate equity project pathways across urban and rural regions.
4. New networks to pursue actionable, creative strategies that support youth and tribes to advance climate equity within the current and future funding landscape.

This summary report presents a high-level overview of the discussions hosted during the conference panels and breakout sessions. All content is based on notes recorded during those sessions and should not be viewed as policy recommendations. The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the views of SGC, its employees, or the State of California.

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"'Progress in Place' symbolizes our efforts to catalyze climate equity and resilience in the places we live and for the people who live there. The cross-sector partnerships, near-term resources, and forward-thinking strategies for institutional change shared during the conference are pivotal to this work, and we are excited to continue working with our partners to advance these efforts."

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director of the California Strategic Growth Council

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Youth Poem

The 2024 Catalyst Conference had the privilege of hosting Paola-Marie Eulie, the 2023-2024 Rancho Cordova Youth Poet Laureate. Paola-Marie attended the conference with her father, and her mentor from 916Ink, a nonprofit empowering youth through creative writing in the Sacramento region. At the end of the gathering, Paola-Marie reflected on her experience, the conference priorities, and shared a poem with attendees.

About Paola-Marie Eulie

Paola-Marie Eulie is a proud Rancho Cordova poet and dedicated 11th-grader at Christian Brothers High School. Her love for poetry began in third-grade when presented with the silly prompt, "Every day I go out, I stuff my shoes with sauerkraut." Paola-Marie currently serves as the 2023-24 Rancho Cordova Youth Poet Laureate and is passionate about making literacy fun and accessible to all, especially youth.

In addition to poetry, Paola-Marie serves on the Youth Ministry at St. John Vianney Catholic Church and is an elected monthly reader. She is bilingual (English/Mandarin), has a blackbelt in Taekwondo, and has played piano for the past 10 years. In her free time, she also enjoys fencing, reading, and caring for animals, especially her Cairn Terrier, Sofia. Paola-Marie is considering becoming an English teacher in the future to help other young people see the FUN in literacy.

Where Do the Coyotes Go
By Pauloa-Marie Eulie

I don't remember
How long ago it was
When I first saw
the coyotes

Mangy things that
looked just like dogs
Mom told me we took their land
And now they've come here

I see them when I walk my dog
Yanking her away
Before she barks
And provokes the blood thirsty beasts

Yet when they look at me
I see the fear in mirrored
In their own eyes
As they steer clear of me

See behind the teeth
and the long bushy tail
Is a mom who is
Trying to feed her kids

Behind the black nose
And yellow eyes
Is a dad who is
Trying to keep his family safe

And the kids?
Those are kids like me
Who are just trying
to make it to adulthood

And the packs of coyotes?
Just like Oakpark
And all the other underserved places
Left to fend for themselves

See they don't remember
the Nisenan (Nice-ih-nun)
Or the Miwok (Mee-wok)

The Cayuse (Ky-yoose) or the Umatilla
(you-ma-tilla)
Or even the Walla Walla

The tribes who
Held them and their homes
With dignity and respect
Honoring the nature around them

They don't remember the gold rush
Where their ancestors first felt
Fear for their communities
And concern for their homes

They remember us
The apex predator
Who cut down the trees
and take their land

They remember us
The apex predator
Who hold their fate
In our hands

If we don't learn
From the tribes of our past
We'll have to ask
Where do the coyotes go?

If we don't start
Hearing their yips and growls
desperate pleas lost in translation
Where do the coyotes go

If we don't take the opportunities
To change the fate of our climate
It'll be too late to ask
Where do the coyotes go

We've made progress
But let's keep asking
How do we help the marginalized
So they don't have to go

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We don't need to be
Financial leaders
We don't need to know
All the fancy lingo

What we need is
People like you and me

To work as a team
Rising together

And as we rise together
As one people, one community
Please let's not forget
Where do the coyotes go

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Introduction

The amount of state and federal funding to address worsening climate-related challenges, particularly those facing historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities, has reached unprecedented levels in recent years. The 2024-2025 budget proposes $48.3 billion over seven years and delivers on California's Climate Commitment – a bold climate agenda that fully integrates climate solutions with equity and economic opportunity. With critical investments in health, education, and jobs, the State's climate agenda is simultaneously confronting the crisis while building a more resilient, just, and equitable future for all Californians.

While California has made substantial progress in increasing climate finance to achieve its goals, more must be done. In a first-of-its-kind assessment of climate finance, the Climate Policy Initiative estimates that California will need an annual average of $62 billion from 2023 to 2035 to stay on track for its climate goals. In this context, California must focus on using public dollars to catalyze private and federal investment through pre-development and matching funding, reducing regulatory barriers, and prioritizing investment in the communities most vulnerable to climate change.

Fortunately, efforts are underway to expand the reach and impact of California's public climate investments. The 2024 SGC Catalyst Conference, hosted in collaboration with the Milken Institute, built on the success of the inaugural 2023 Catalyst Conference to bring together frontline leaders, researchers, the private sector, and government partners to identify cross-sectoral solutions to address the State's climate finance gap.

The 2024 Catalyst Conference created a unique opportunity to be part of collaborative conversations, network, and participate in interactive sessions. Over two days, conference participants heard from leaders across California and the nation about opportunities, challenges, and proven solutions to build readiness and catalyze implementation within underserved communities. Attendees made ongoing commitments to advance equitable project implementation through education and training, improve digital literacy, and create viable pathways for community access to federal funding opportunities. Finally, SGC released three new models on its Catalyst Model Hub on Iterative and Inclusive Program Design, Collaborative Governance, and Multi-Benefit Projects.

The 2024 Catalyst summary report presents a high-level overview of the themes, discussions, and conversations that took place during sessions over the two days. It is intended to reach new audiences while informing ongoing collaboration and innovation in pursuit of California's bold climate, equity, and economic goals.

Focus and Limitations of This Report

SGC was established in 2008 with a mandate to coordinate and work collaboratively with public agencies, communities, and stakeholders to achieve sustainability, equity, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all Californians. Over the past decade, SGC and its programs have evolved through a continual process of experimentation, reflection, and refinement. SGC and its programs have reached a point of maturity where, through idea incubation, the lessons learned through experience with

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interagency coordination, community engagement, and climate equity can be shared and taken to a broader scale for the benefit of communities nationwide.

The summary that follows is organized around four themes:

1. Tribal Access and Investment
2. Project and Community Readiness
3. Strategies for Successful Implementation
4. Beyond Implementation

Each theme is divided into three sections:

1. <u>What's Working</u>: a brief overview of programs, policies, organizations, and other initiatives which participants identified as successfully advancing climate equity objectives in their communities.
2. <u>Barriers and Challenges</u>: summarizes recurring themes across the different sessions; and
3. <u>Opportunities</u>: contains specific suggestions by conference participants regarding short and long-term changes with the potential to meaningfully advance climate equity objectives in underserved communities.

Comments are wide-ranging, reflecting both the diversity of participants – including government, community, tribal, finance, philanthropy, industry, academia, and advocacy leaders – and the highly varied ways climate equity challenges affect communities across California and beyond. While significant challenges remain, the opportunities identified by participants offer hope for addressing longstanding inequities and building resilience in the face of climate change.

The summaries contained in this report reflect the views shared only by those attending the conference. The content in each section is based on notes taken during the conference panels and sessions and should not be viewed as policy recommendations. The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the views of SGC, its employees, or the State of California.

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Tribal Access and Investment

The importance of tribal sovereignty and the need to strengthen tribal capacity to implement infrastructure projects was highlighted throughout the conference. Sessions featured President Rudy J. Ortega, Jr. of the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians and representatives from the California Coalition for Rural Housing's Tribal Program, Indigenized Energy, the Pala Band of Mission Indians' Housing Resource Center, and the Northern Circle Indian Housing Authority. While the discussions covered a range of topic areas, this summary report reflects only the views shared by conference participants.

What's Working

Regional Climate Collaborative Program: The Siskiyou Regional Climate Collaborative highlighted collaboration between non-traditional partners as the backbone of its success, working across political divides to envision and implement a better future for this rural region. While it is still early in the grant term, the collaborative is already poised to apply for state and federal grants that it wouldn't have been unable to access without SGC's Regional Climate Collaborative Program.

Indigenized Energy: Indigenized Energy, a native-led non-profit, works with tribes to create long-term energy solutions by initiating renewable energy projects, implementing microgrids, and supporting tribal energy sovereignty. Indigenized Energy partners with tribes nationwide through building trust within communities, holistic energy planning, technical support, and program development.

Tribal Energy Sovereignty: Energy sovereignty can include energy independence, but it also includes building resilience to climate change impacts and strengthening the local economy and workforce to better protect the energy system. To achieve this, Indigenized Energy's holistic approach examines the role of energy in communities, the ways that current energy systems do or don't work, and identifies connections between energy and other initiatives like, economic development or education. As a result, communities are engaged in a long-term sustainable transformation that is responsive to their local priorities. Tribes can begin investing in their energy planning by drafting resolutions to pursue energy planning, pursuing pilot projects (e.g., small-scale solar) to generate revenue, and performing feasibility studies to establish their own Tribal Utility.

Opening funding to Tribes: During COVID-19, tribes had access to a range of funding options, including emergency grants, Home Key dollars, and emergency assistance programs from the US Department of Treasury. This was a new opportunity for tribes to succeed in these programs traditionally serving nonprofits and local governments.

Barriers and Challenges

Technical Assistance: Sessions on tribal implementation noted that many technical assistance (TA) providers have limited understanding of tribal histories, practices, and functions. In many cases, tribes must provide TA to the TA providers they work with. To address this knowledge gap, tribes must be empowered and given the capacity to deliver TA to their own people.

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Affirming Tribal Sovereignty: Speakers emphasized the importance of respecting tribal sovereignty and providing funding opportunities to enable tribes to pursue projects that support their unique needs. Speakers noted a lack of acknowledgment among non-tribal organizations of tribes as a government structure and sovereign nations. There are 110 federally recognized tribes in California and about 80 non-federally recognized tribes, each with their own organizational structures and cultures. Funding opportunities that affirm tribal sovereignty allow tribes to meet their needs and create economic development for their communities.

Lack of Education: Speakers noted that state and federal governments often lack awareness of how tribes operate, how they are created, and the cultural aspects of their people. Speakers called on state governments, TA providers, and non-tribal entities to educate themselves on tribal history to engage in a more meaningful way.

Lack of Engagement: Speakers explained that non-tribal entities must practice listening to tribes and inviting them to the table for meaningful conversation — not just consultation. It is essential to build long-term plans and programs with tribes and support their capacity to be successful.

Opportunities
Short-Term

Federal Funding: The Tribal Energy Development Grant allows tribes to pursue funding to develop their energy business or expand their energy capabilities. Other federal funding opportunities include the Energy and Mineral Development Program Grant and the federal EPA's Solar for All Grant. There are also strong incentives through the Inflation Reduction Act to invest in solar in Indian country, as it is the most cost-effective place to build renewables and the cheapest place to invest in solar.

Tribal Energy Transformation Playbook: Indigenized Energy is currently developing a Tribal Energy Transformation Playbook to organize the process of long-term energy master planning for tribal leaders. The Playbook is aligned with the wisdom of the Medicine Wheel and is informed by lessons from tribes, focusing on vision, learning, healing, and wisdom. This includes:

1. Investing in energy planning
2. Building and generating revenue through medium-sized solar at tribal meters
3. Pursuing the formation of Tribal Utilities, leading to energy independence
4. Identifying acceptable locations for solar and wind to enable large-scale project revenue

The Playbook will allow both leaders of indigenous communities to build confidence and pursue energy sovereignty, and energy professionals to be better equipped to support tribes along the path.

Long-Term

Engage with Tribal Leadership: Multiple sessions called for greater and more intentional engagement with tribal leadership and improved responsiveness to tribal priorities and concerns. Non-tribal entities can successfully implement projects benefitting tribes if they work to build trust and maintain meaningful relationships.

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Project and Community Readiness

Prioritizing capacity building and technical assistance for project development and implementation is increasingly regarded as a necessity for entities to successfully apply for and implement funding for climate resiliency projects. Sessions focused on project and community readiness included successful strategies to access climate-related funding, while highlighting persistent gaps limiting equitable access to funding.

What's Working

Regional Climate Collaboratives Program: Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) is a capacity-building grant program administered by SGC that funds coalitions of community-serving partners in under-resourced communities to develop a pipeline of community-led climate projects, align projects with funding opportunities, and create a technical assistance network to pursue and implement investment. Eligible applicants include California Native American Tribes, community-based organizations and nonprofits, local government agencies, small businesses, and other organizations with a history of community-based outreach or technical assistance.

Increased Funding Opportunities: Recent years have seen a wave of new federal and state competitive grant opportunities to spur climate investments in disadvantaged and underserved communities. Angie Hacker, Statewide Best Practices Coordinator at CivicWell and CEO of Prosper Sustainably, along with Julianna DeNike of CivicWell highlighted available tools and strategies for applicants with low capacity to better organize and strategically pursue private and public funding opportunities. The tools and strategies shared help maximize the likelihood of success. A panel discussion on Grounding Community in Project Implementation highlighted the importance of authentic community engagement, emphasizing that effective programs build trust and incorporate community engagement in the implementation process. SGC's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program and Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program were explicitly called out as excellent examples of programs that build trust in communities and promote long-term resiliency.

Technical Assistance: Technical Assistance (TA) is increasingly recognized as one of the most effective tools to build long-term resiliency for communities. Whether applicants are tribal, local governments, or community-based organizations, TA meets communities where they are and helps develop self-sufficiency to apply and compete for funding opportunities. Indigenized Energy, a Native-led non-profit, emphasized the importance of respecting tribal sovereignty paired with funding opportunities to enable tribes to pursue projects that support their unique needs. Grant programs, such as SGC's Tribal Capacity Building Program, actively promote tribal sovereignty while providing TA to support tribes where they are. Meeting applicants where they are is crucial to successful implementation and learning.

Networking and Collaborative Governance: Representatives from the Milken Institute, HR&A Advisors, Banyan Infrastructure, and Aces and Archers, emphasized the importance of building trust with communities. Engaging with regional and national networks is an effective practice for applicants to pursue when designing and implementing projects. Proactive networking is vital for institutions to start building critical relationships, and helps identify projects appropriate for funding resources. These

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relationships also help organically foster the relationships needed for collaborative governance models. Featured speakers from Lendistry, Elemental Excelerator, and Dream.Org showcased the different funding types currently available across the public and private climate finance landscape, connecting to collaborative governance models as effective structures for addressing the diverse needs of a community and region.

Barriers and Challenges

Lack of Capacity: Day one sessions on project and community readiness highlighted that the communities most needing funding often also need more technical experience, expertise, and staffing to pursue grant dollars. Lack of access to capital has historically prevented communities from benefiting from projects that help create high-quality, good-paying jobs, cut energy bills, and improve air quality. Without capacity-building support, communities with the most need are likely to miss out on this moment of historic federal investment, further exacerbating inequality. It is crucial to design programs that provide capacity building and give communities the tools to build organizational resiliency and self-sufficiency, and the experience needed to participate in competitive funding opportunities.

Complexity in Applications: Attendees of the "Choosing the Right Grant" session expressed concern over increasingly long applications with tighter, shorter timelines. Some applicants, such as tribes and nonprofits, require review periods from their governments and boards to get permission before beginning an application. These tight deadlines impose roadblocks and unnecessary time constraints which are increasingly taxing on applicants with low capacity. Extending application timelines and providing a flexible timeline help create equity in the application process, allowing applicants to make informed decisions to pursue funding and adequately prepare for the application(s).

Opportunities

Short-Term

Invest in Capacity Building: Invest in programs like the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) and the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program, which prioritize capacity building to get funds quickly and train underserved communities and tribes. Simplify application processes through greater reliance on formula-based programs.

Long-Term

Fund Pilot Projects: Create a designated pool of funds to support smaller pilot projects that prioritize communities with the most need and use data as a part of the solution process. Establish state-led Regional Energy and Climate Hubs (REACH CA), an administrative vehicle designed to help multiple state agencies facilitate ongoing, efficient two-way communication with community partners; develop and track a cumulative understanding of regional needs; empower knowledgeable and trusted local/tribal technical assistance providers; and include environmental justice partners in related regional contracting and investment decisions.

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Strategies for Successful Implementation

Sessions focused on successful project implementation highlighted proven strategies for engaging communities and centering community benefits in capital development. Participants discussed education, tools, and techniques to prepare communities for near-term implementation challenges such as managing investment and building trust.

What's Working

Beyond the Megawatt Toolkit: Beyond the Megawatt (BTM) is a recent Clean Energy Buyers Institute initiative. BTM is a partner-driven initiative to advance a clean energy transition that is resilient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable by leveraging the power of leading energy customer voices. The Toolkit includes procurement and due diligence scorecards to evaluate and identify energy projects and suppliers that optimize environmental sustainability, social equity, and resilience criteria. The Toolkit supports clean energy buyers by maximizing impact through equity, sustainability, and resilience. It also supports access to actionable resources, and building awareness of engagement and partnership opportunities across the Clean Energy Buyers Alliance.

Center for Community Investment: The Center for Community Investment's Connecting Capital and Community (3C) Initiative and Capitol Absorption Framework work to address the racial inequities at the core of the housing ecosystem. The Capitol Absorption Framework centers around a community's ability to absorb and deploy capital in ways aligned with community priorities. This framework inspired the design of SGC's Regional Climate Collaboratives Program. One role of community capital is to increase homeownership in underserved communities, which can be achieved through split lots (SB9), tenant-in-common financing, cooperative housing, and other innovative ideas.

Power and Accountability Mapping: Dr. Sarah Rebolloso McCullough, Associate Director of the Feminist Research Institute at UC Davis, demonstrated how to use power and accountability mapping to guide decision-making and strategy. Accountability mapping allows an organization or an individual to orient themselves toward their values and the relationships that matter most to them. Mapping accountability can be particularly helpful when working within institutions with historical foundations in systems of oppression that continue to rely upon those systems. Power mapping can guide strategy toward accomplishing a specific goal and recognizing one's position in a broader system. This can reveal unrecognized assets and strengthen relationships by collaborating towards a shared goal.

Barriers and Challenges

Due Diligence Framework: Working with suppliers who follow ethical practices is crucial. Indigenous communities have spoken out against lithium mining due to human rights issues and the desecration of sacred sites. However, using tools like accountability mapping and BTM's Due Diligence Framework to evaluate supply chain partners, as well as investing in emerging fields like recycling critical minerals, can work to mitigate human rights issues.

"Missing middle" infill housing development: The session on Connecting Capital, Community, and Affordable Housing discussed the challenges of building "missing

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middle" housing, which includes a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood. While the State legislature has opened the landscape for siting smaller-scale, affordable housing through measures such as SB 9, owner-occupancy requirements make such opportunities inaccessible to most homeowners.

Development scale: Speakers in the Connecting Capital, Community, and Affordable Housing session noted that the financing ecosystem favors large-scale development. Banks want to make large loans, and mission-aligned, affordable housing developers are used to working on large-scale projects due to the financing bias. Permit processing, design, and regulations around the building also favor large-scale development. Conversely, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) favors small-scale production, leaving no financing tools or public sector funding sources for "missing middle" housing. Capital sources must be tailored to underserved communities' needs, including "missing middle" housing.

Opportunities

Unlocking federal funding through public-private partnerships: SGC aims to identify a virtual power plant provider (VPP) to enhance the resilience of SGC-funded facilities with support from the US Department of Energy's Loan Programs Office (LPO). According to the Center for Public Enterprise (CPE), this model could be expanded through coordination between green banks and the LPO under the Title 17 State Energy Financing Institution (SEFI) carveout. Emphasizing a degree of public ownership of the VPP would allow the institution to be responsive to local concerns and maximize the benefit to subscribers.

State Tools for Implementation: Besides funding, the state provides a wide range of tools to support communities' implementation projects. A session on **State Tools for Implementation** featured staff practitioners behind numerous State initiatives, including:

- California Climate Investments (Air Resources Board)
- Community Air Protection Program (AB 617) (Air Resources Board)
- Active Transportation Resource Center (Department of Transportation, Department of Public Health)
- Office of Transportation Equity & Community Engagement (Caltrans)
- Cleanup In Vulnerable Communities Initiative (Department of Toxic Substances Control)
- Energy and Climate Unit and Regional Economic Engagement (Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development)
- Climate Financing (California Infrastructure and Development Bank)
- Judicial Streamlining (Governor's Office of Planning and Research)
- Housing and Community Grants and Funding (Department of Housing and Community Development)
- Community Engagement (Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Tribal Climate Change Program (Department of Public Health)
- Build.CA.gov (Infrastructure Strike Team)

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Beyond Implementation

On Day Two, presenters discussed the needs for communities to access historic public climate funding while recognizing that current opportunities are insufficient to meet long-term needs. Speakers explored what is required to support communities and organizations to sustain efforts toward equitable climate resilience now and in the future across social and physical infrastructure funding. They also discussed and identified actionable, creative strategies to achieve project outcomes within the current funding environment.

What's Working

Engaging Youth: Lil Milagro Henriquez, Founder and Executive Director of [Mycelium Youth Network](), outlined the need to engage youth (K-12 and college-aged) and early career professionals in climate adaptation and mitigation as part of the state's efforts to combat climate change and foster a climate-resilient economy. They emphasized the current opportunity to provide pathways for workforce development, leadership roles, and other methods to explore conversations on a climate-hopeful future for youth. Recognizing that this next generation often struggles with climate anxiety as they are deeply aware of climate change and its negative impacts. Including their perspectives and providing spaces for their participation in climate mitigation is necessary.

Community Collaboration: Speakers in the session on [Ensuring a Strong Climate Justice Ecosystem]() discussed using Community Benefit Plans (CBPs) as a valuable tool for communities to develop a clear list of priorities and make informed decisions when pursuing funding opportunities. Various project partners have different perspectives on what constitutes risk/risk-tolerances and needs and wants. The session on "[Negotiating Non-negotiables]()" discussed CBPs explicitly and proposed reframing CBPs as the baseline non-negotiables and moving beyond "jobs" as a community benefit. Presenters also discussed the incredible opportunities and risks of energy transition and carbon capture, particularly for the Central Valley.

Barriers and Challenges

Existing funding models: Representatives from the [Climate and Community Project]() and [Just Solutions]() critically examined key provisions of Federal Programs, including the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and Direct Pay and their ability to pave the way for further state-level ambition on infrastructure, climate, and healthy, safe communities. Participants reflected on the types of projects that may be suited for a blended finance/public-private partnership approach to climate action and community investment, and the limitations of private finance in meeting climate equity objectives.

Understanding Tribal Culture and Practices: On [Ensuring a Strong Climate Justice Ecosystem,]() panelists expressed concern that the state is not sufficiently organized, prepared, or informed to consult with tribes. Panels recommended the state should consider how tribes make their decisions, such as their need to go to their tribal governments, elders, and ceremonial leaders before beginning consultation. A member from the Karuk Tribe shared that, in most cases, projects are not as beneficial to tribes as the agency/project organizer would like to think, illustrating the need to understand a tribe's culture, practices, and needs.

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Lack of Opportunities to Empower Youth: Mycelium Youth Network, an organization dedicated to proactively organizing and equipping youth to respond to climate-related disasters, expressed that many opportunities to engage with youth on climate issues are performative rather than empowering. Opportunities for youth to lead in climate mitigation spaces are very limited, especially in paid positions.

Opportunities
Short-Term

Models from Existing Programs: Use programs as movements with engaged and trusting partners that envision programs such as Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) and Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) as models to build trusting partners and community collaboration.

Long-Term

Youth Workforce Development Program: Establish a Youth Workforce Development Program to create quality green jobs while ushering in the next cohort of climate leaders into the workforce. This can include internships, leadership roles on advisory boards, and partnering with Civic Well to start the Civic Spark program, replicating the model across the state.

Resources for Tribal Consultation: Develop resources to help State agencies develop tribal consultation skills and connections, such as creating a Tribal Liaison, training on tribal engagement, and other means to improve current practices and relationships.

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Conclusion and Next Steps

Throughout the conference, participants shared proven examples of approaches to invest in clean energy, transit, affordable housing, good-paying jobs, and the reduction of legacy pollution in underserved communities. While significant challenges remain, the opportunities identified by participants offer hope for addressing longstanding inequities and building resilience in the face of climate change.

Additionally, partners called for additional solutions and strategies to expand and catalyze funding for California's underserved communities. Commitments announced by conference participants include:

Accelerator for America: Economic and Community Development Practitioners' Network: The network is a national group of senior city officials and economic and community development leaders regularly accessing top thought leaders and experts, peer communities nationwide, and opportunities to access new resources and tools. Customized technical assistance and capacity building to scale up new opportunities that promote equity, economic resilience, entrepreneurship, and community infrastructure and maximize this moment of historic new investment.

California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC): CCEC, a program of CivicWell, will continue to partner with the state to create forums and systems that catalyze impactful knowledge, relationships, opportunities, and best practices to advance local energy and climate action for all. CCEC invites state and local partners to participate in the 2024 CCEC Forum, improve state and local energy and climate coordination via quarterly SLECC meetings, and join CCEC's monthly LERN meetings to share and shape timely/relevant opportunities. Local governments can also request a one-time meeting to identify custom funding applications that align with near-term funding opportunities (ahacker@civicwell.org). Visit CCEC's Funding Resources page or sign up for CCEC's Weekly Update for more information.

California Housing Partnership, Wells Fargo, and LeSar Development: Multisector Roadmap for Housing & Decarbonization: To help build inter-agency collaboration on housing and decarbonization, CHP, the Global Policy Leadership Academy (a LeSar company), RMI, and Community Sustainability Partners, are hosting a workshop series for agencies focused on housing and decarbonization to understand priorities and build alignment within programs and partners. In addition, GPLA and CHP will provide technical assistance to non-profit and NOAH owners on incorporating decarbonization funding into new and existing affordable properties. This effort aims to substantially leverage state money and money coming in from the federal government with the Inflation Reduction Act to improve the lives of low-income households in California.

California Resilience Partnership: The California Resilience Partnership (CRP) brings together multi-sector practitioners to increase investments in a pipeline of high-impact projects for the state. CRP is collaboratively led by Resilient Cities Catalyst, the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA), and CivicWell. CRP has helped catalyze and implement the Boyle Heights Resilience Hub, the San Diego Region Coastal Resilience Roadmap, the Yolo Food Hub, the RE:BEACH international design competition, and the Binational Resilience Initiative. Learn more about this dynamic partnership and how to get more involved at https://www.rcc.city/california.

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Climate Policy Initiative: Produced by Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) in partnership with the California Strategic Growth Council and the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank, the first-ever California Landscape of Climate Finance fills a gap in comprehensive data on climate finance and climate investment needs in California. This analysis will help policymakers and private sector actors identify opportunities, establish priorities, measure progress, and develop coordinated plans to meet the scale of the climate challenge, including for budgets, regulations, tapping into federal funding, and investment plans.

Dream.Org's Transformative Communities Program: The Transformative Communities Program empowers frontline communities across the United States to unlock historic amounts of climate funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to ensure that communities most impacted by climate change are the first to benefit from these funds. Based on SGC's Transformative Climate Communities Program, this program leverages public-private partnerships to direct climate investments to communities that need them most, emulating SGC's Centering Communities in Place-Based Investment model.

Dimensions Renewable Energy: Dimension Renewable Energy recently made a $5 million commitment to train folks in our markets for careers in clean energy, with a current focus on California. We are looking for insights on maximizing the impact of that funding and helping people build careers, not just get their next job. What best practices in workforce program design have been most effective? Where is the highest need for this investment in California? And how might we contribute to existing initiatives to move the ball forward quickly and in partnership?

CivicSpark: Training the next generation of leaders and cultivating a climate workforce are top priorities from the SGC Catalyst Conference. For the last decade, CivicSpark has built local government and community capacity to address emerging and entrenched community resilience challenges. This AmeriCorps program powered by CivicWell recruits, trains, and supports Fellows embedded in government agencies and community organizations, implementing a needed sustainability and resilience project while building long-term capacity. Partner applications are now open for the next service year, which begins in September 2024

Farallon Strategies: Technical Assistance (TA) is essential to support communities who are building capacity to get work done in this time of abundant resources and minimal staff. As a TA provider, Farallon Strategies are quickly learning lessons and are committed to finding ways to share these learnings with our community of practice. We are looking for partners to develop a white paper to continue to push our community of practice to do better. We would like to scale great materials like SGC'S Technical Assistance Toolkit to have a deeper understanding of challenges and opportunities for TA providers in California and across the nation.

NextGen: Digital Equity Plan: The California Department of Technology (CDT) recently released its draft Digital Equity Plan required by AB 2750 (Bonta). The plan's recommendations focus on expanding and improving digital access, inclusion, and literacy – critical components to closing the digital divide in California. The recommendations in the final digital equity plan will be transmitted to the federal

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government and help California with tens of millions in Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program and other federal infrastructure funding. NextGen (NGP) will work with the SGC, philanthropy, community-based organizations, and local government to ensure that those regions, communities, and populations in California most in need of digital equity funding are reached and receive the necessary technical help to access this funding. NGP is committed to working with the SGC, Milken Institute, philanthropy, and other community-based partners to convene Milken federal funding platform demonstrations.

Reluvotion: Reluvotion is launching the "Green/Impact Economy Jobs Board," the "My Green/Impact Jobs Resume," and a "Green/Impact Jobs Recruitment" feature for governmental agencies, cause-driven organizations, and companies. Governmental agencies, cause-driven organizations, and private companies will be able to post their Green/Social Impact Jobs. The "Green/Social Impact Employee Recruitment" feature will allow governmental agencies, cause-driven organizations, and companies to search directly on our platform to find and recruit employees with specific Green/Social impact skills in particular locations.

SGC: Connecting Communities Initiative: SGC has launched the new Connecting Communities initiative, which seeks to support SGC grant applicants access to federal resources. The initiative launched in January 2024 and is actively working with SGC Transformative Climate Communities Grant Applicants to access the U.S. EPA Change Grant program now.

SGC: Unlocking Federal Funding for State Grantees through Virtual Power Plants: SGC is identifying a private sector partner to form a public/private partnership with SGC and SGC Grant Recipients to build a Virtual Power Plant. Accessing U.S. DOE resources, the partnership will help bring renewable energy investments to communities throughout California that have already received SGC resources.

Smart Growth California: On March 4-6, 2024, Smart Growth California will host its annual Funder Summit. The Summit aims to spark connection and collaboration among funders within Smart Growth California's network and working groups, explore intersectional issues such as climate resilience in the context of power-building, create a green, inclusive economy alongside environmentally sustainable communities, and ensure equitable implementation of federal and state infrastructure funds.

UC Davis Environmental Justice Leaders Program: Applications are open for the UC Davis Environmental Justice Leaders Program. This allows established California environmental justice professionals to collaborate with UC Davis researchers. Participants will grow their understanding of how research can be used to further community goals. The theme for 2024 is "Mobility Justice." The program includes three visits to Davis/Sacramento and a stipend. Applications are open through February 29th. More details can be found at https://fri.ucdavis.edu/.

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Resources

Resources developed for the Conference and shared throughout it are hyperlinked below.

Session Fact Sheets

Session leads developed factsheets sharing outcomes and resources for each session. More information on the 2024 Catalyst Conference can be found here: sgccatalyst.org/2024-conference/

Session 1: Project & Community Readiness

- 1.1 Supporting Tribal Energy Sovereignty
- 1.2 Preparing Communities for the Federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF)
- 1.3 Choosing The Right Grant
- 1.4 Navigating the Climate Finance Ecosystem

Session 2: Strategies for Successful Implementation

- 2.1 Connecting Capital, Community, and Affordable Housing
- 2.2 Beyond the Megawatt: Expand your Toolbox to Maximize Clean Energy Benefits
- 2.3 Mapping Power and Accountability for Equitable Climate Investments
- 2.4 State Tools for Implementation

Session 3: Beyond Implementation

- 3.1 Empowering the Next Generation of Climate Leaders
- 3.2 Negotiating Non-Negotiables: A Framework for Community Benefits Plans
- 3.3 What's Next? Thinking Above and Beyond Current Funding Opportunities
- 3.4 Ensuring a Strong Climate Justice Ecosystem

Tribal Access and Investment
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Tribal Playbook
- Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Indicators Platform
- Federal Funding Opportunities for Tribes
- Healthy Places Index Extreme Heat Edition
- Indigenized Energy
- Tribal Climate and Health Technical Assistance

Project and Community Readiness
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
- CA Grants Portal (CA State Library)
- Choosing The Right Grant - California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC)/ Civic Well
- Community Infrastructure Center
- Free Grant Writing Support - Institute for Local Government - BOOST Program
- Funding Wizard - California Air Resource Board (CARB)
- Housing and Community Development (HCD) Open Data Tools

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- Housing Planning Hub Site
- Prosper Sustainably's Grant Templates
- San Diego State University's Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice (CCEEJ)
- Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Regional Climate Collaborative

Strategies for Successful Implementation

- California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC) Funding Resources
- Empower Innovation - California Energy Commission (CEC)
- Funding Resource (CivicWell)

Beyond Implementation

- A Dynamic Theory of Public Banks (and Why it Matters)
- About Community Benefits Plans (Department of Energy)
- "Accountability & Apology in a Feminist & Anticolonial Science Lab." (CLEAR Lab)
- Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP)
- Active Transportation Program (ATP) Technical Advisory Committee
- Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC)
- Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) Mailing List
- Beyond the Megawatt Toolkit
- Blue Green Alliance
- Build.Gov
- California Climate Investments
- Caltrans Office of the Federal Liaison
- Caltrans Office of Strategic Investment Planning
- Caltrans Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards
- Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants
- California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC) Monthly Local Energy Resources Network (LERN) Meeting
- CCEC Weekly Update
- Clean Energy Buyers Institute (CEBI)
- Climate and Community Project's Analysis of the Inflation Reduction Act's (IRA) Good, Bad and Ugly
- Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund
- Community Air Protection Program Resource Center
- Community Benefit Agreements Toolkit (Action Tank)
- "Community Investment: Focusing on the System" (Center for Community Investment)
- Community Ownership for Community Power (Common Counsel Foundation)
- Community and Place Based Solutions (CPBS)
- California Transportation Commission (CTC) 2025 Active Transportation Program (ATP) (Cycle 7)
- Dream.Org
- Equitable Community Revitalization Grant
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Permit

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- Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) CPBS
- Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) Federal Funding Opportunities
- Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV)
- IBank Factsheet
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Resources
- Infrastructure State Revolving Loan Fund (ISRF)
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Resources
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Tax Credits
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Elective Pay Eligible Tax Credits
- Mycelium Youth Network
- Pedestrian & Bike Funding Opportunities
- "Power and Power Mapping: Start Here" (The Commons Social Change Library)
- "Power Mapping Your Way To Success" (Union of Concerned Scientists)
- Principles for Purpose-Driven Energy Procurement (CEBI)
- Small Business and Climate Tech Finance Loan Guarantee Program
- "Structural Change: 3C Initiative Promotes Housing Affordability and Racial Equity in Five U.S. Cities" (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy)
- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG)
- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Factsheet (Spanish)
- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Guidelines
- UC Davis Feminist Research Institute
- US Department of Energy (DOE) State and Community Engagement Programs (SCEP)
- Varieties of Derisking

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