

Statewide TA Assessment Findings

California Climate Investment Technical Assistance (TA) Program

TA Recipient Survey and Program Case Studies | Fall 2021

Prepared by **Harder+Company Community Research**

BACKGROUND

The California Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) California Climate Investments Technical Assistance (TA) Program (CCI TA) was established in 2016 through an initial appropriation by the Legislature to provide TA to applicants from priority populations. The program is designed with the knowledge that historic planning and investment have placed communities of color and low-income neighborhoods at a higher risk of harmful climate outcomes. Communities are supported in applying for climate impact funding programs in the areas of transportation, housing, energy, agriculture, urban greening, community-driven research, and climate resilience. In this model, community needs are addressed by making connections to crucial supports including application assistance, implementation assistance, and capacity building (see Appendix A to view the program logic model). Notably, programs aim to fulfil SGC's core principles (i.e., social equity, capacity building, trust, community engagement, cultural awareness, adaptability, and mutual learning) in the deployment of TA services.

Harder+Company Community Research conducted a statewide survey of CCI TA recipient organizations to build the body of knowledge about the TA provided to entities throughout the state and highlight the impact of TA. As part of the evaluation, the statewide survey was deployed to develop a deeper understanding of the characteristics of TA recipients (e.g., target populations served, needs, and experiences of recipients with TA) and to reveal successful strategies and recommended improvements. The survey also aimed to gauge the long-term impacts of TA and identify how to better support capacity building. To facilitate an iterative learning process and to enhance the evaluation, insights from TA providers were also included in program case studies. This report provides an overview of key findings revealed during the first phase of a two-year long evaluation. The results provided an opportunity for staff, the evaluation committee and evaluation team, and key stakeholders to deepen their understanding of CCI TA impact.

CCI TA programs included in this assessment:

- [Build, Organize, Optimize, Strengthen, and Transform \(BOOST\)](#)
- [Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities \(AHSC\) TA](#)
- [Climate Smart Agriculture TA](#)
- [Transformative Climate Communities \(TCC\) TA](#)
- [Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation \(SALC\) TA](#)
- [Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program \(TIRCP\) TA](#)
- [Low Carbon Transit Operations Program \(LCTOP\) TA](#)

Methods: Harder+Company Community Research launched an online statewide survey for CCI TA recipients in June 2021. The survey was distributed via email to over 200 recipient organizations. The survey received 84 responses, representing 72 recipient organizations. The survey captured data on TA recipient characteristics, recipient populations, strategies and services offered by TA providers, and pressing capacity building and application assistance needs of recipient organizations.

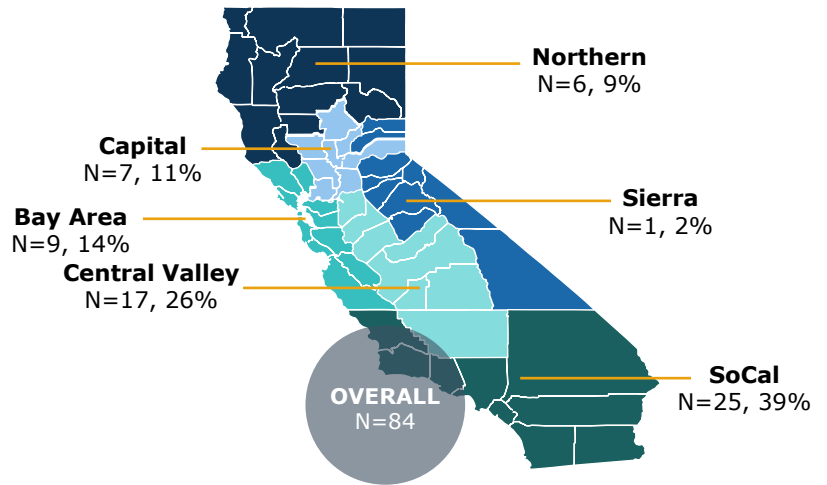
Outreach Strategy: To capture a diverse and robust sample of participants with representation across CCI TA programs, the evaluation team conducted a self-administered online survey using a recipient contact list provided by SGC. The evaluation team collaborated closely with SGC to promote the survey, sending weekly email reminders with the survey link, personalized phone calls, and a promotional video.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNITIES SERVED BY RECIPIENTS

Nearly one-third of survey responses came from CCI TA recipients that serve communities in the Central Valley region and about two-fifths came from the SoCal region. Smaller portions of survey recipients serve other regions, with 14% from the Bay Area, 11% in the capital region, and 9% in the Northern region. The smallest percentage of responses came from recipients that serve the Sierra region (1%).

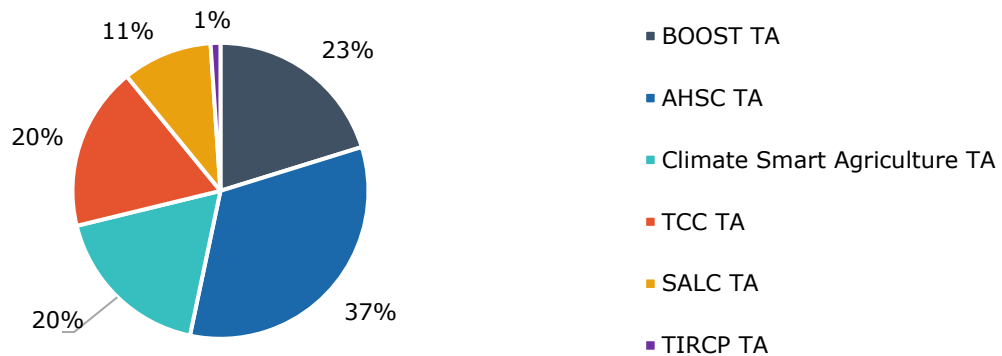
Over half (52%) of CCI TA recipients serve multiple zip codes in California.



*19 survey recipients did not provide zip code(s) that represent the communities they serve through the CCI TA program.

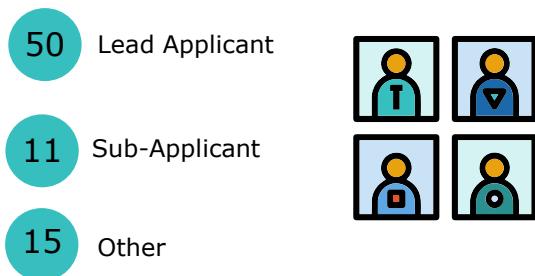
PARTICIPANTS BY CCI TA PROGRAM

AHSC (37%) emerged with the largest number of survey participants, followed by BOOST (23%) and TCC (20%). There were 0 participants from LCTOP.



PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Survey respondent roles in CCI TA projects



Across programs, more than **50** participants reported their role as **lead applicant** in the TA program followed by 11 participants stating **sub-applicant** as the next most common role. 15 participants reported that they play a role that was not listed in the survey such as developer, facilitator, farmer, or community partner.

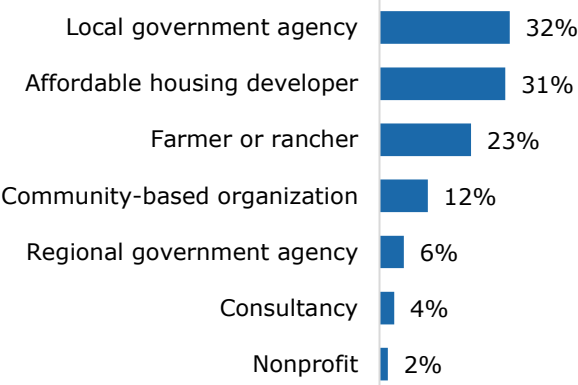
Survey respondent areas of focus and communities served:



ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS (continued)

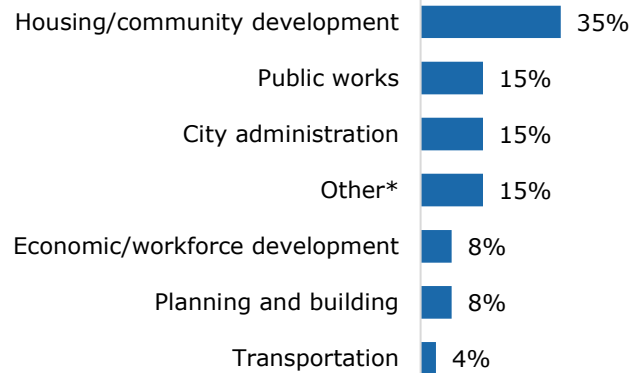
ORGANIZATION TYPE

Organization type of participants (Overall)



DEPARTMENT TYPE

Department type of participants (Local Government Agency Only)

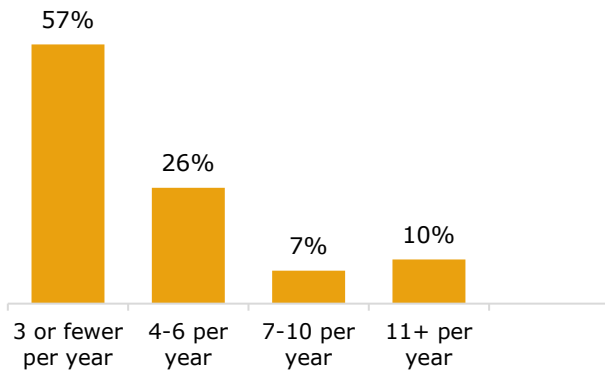


*Other includes city council, community developers, and elected officials.

GRANT APPLICATIONS AND STAFFING

TA recipients indicated the frequency of grant applications submitted. Results demonstrated that over half of participants apply for three or fewer grants per year. Furthermore, TA recipients demonstrated a range of staff sizes with most indicating 51 or more staff.

Percent of Grant Applications Submitted Per Year



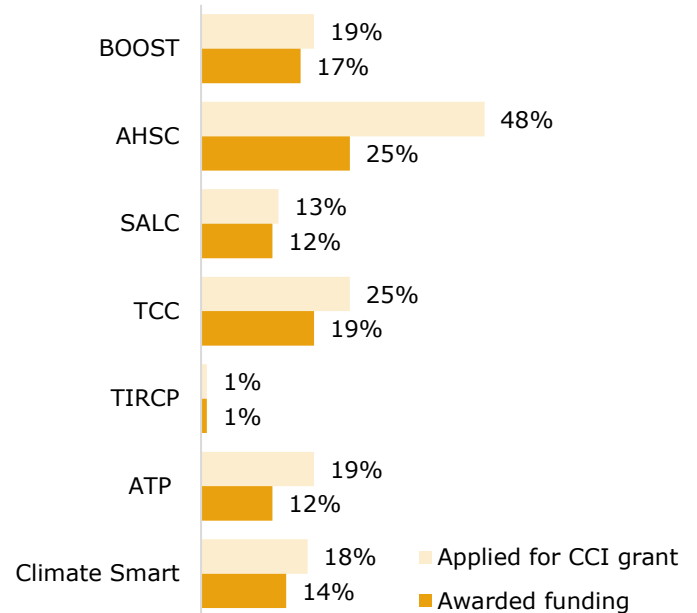
Staffing capacity with grants (Overall)

- 27%** have **fewer than five** staff at their agency
- 47%** have **fifty one or more** staff at their agency
- 22%** hire a consultant to help with grants **most or all the time**
- 32%** **Never** hire a consultant to help with grants

CCI APPLICATION EXPERIENCE

TA recipients responded to items about their CCI application experience. Participants indicated if they applied for a CCI grant (light orange row) and if that grant awarded funding (dark orange row). AHSC recipients showed the highest portion of participants who had submitted applications.

CCI Applications by TA Program



77% Plan to apply to other CCI programs since receiving TA

TA recipients reflected on their major needs since the start of their participation in CCI TA programs. Findings revealed that there are 3 main application assistance needs: (1) advice to support the development of multi-benefit projects and alignment with potential funding sources; (2) developing community-engaged plans that respond to local need; and (3) outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities. For needs related to capacity building, most participants indicated a desire for grant writing assistance, data quantification, and partnership engagement.

TOP 3 CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

- 1 Advice on the development of multi-benefit projects and identifying alignment with potential funding sources.
- 2 Developing community-engaged project plans that respond to local needs.
- 3 Outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities.

TOP 3 APPLICATION ASSISTANCE NEEDS

- 1 Grant writing assistance.
- 2 Data quantification, such as GHG quantification.
- 3 Partnership engagement.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE TA NEEDS BY CCI PROGRAM

| Program | Top Capacity Building Needs | Top Application Assistance Needs |
|---------------|---|---|
| AHSC | Advice on the development of multi-benefit projects and identifying alignment with potential funding sources. | Data quantification, such as GHG quantification. |
| BOOST | Developing community-engaged project plans that respond to local needs. | Partnership engagement and grant writing assistance. |
| Climate Smart | Outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities | Grant writing assistance. |
| SALC | Tools and processes to support sustained action at the community scale, and outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities. | Public outreach workshops and grant writing assistance. |
| TCC | Developing community-engaged project plans that respond to local needs. | Data quantification, such as GHG quantification. |

41%

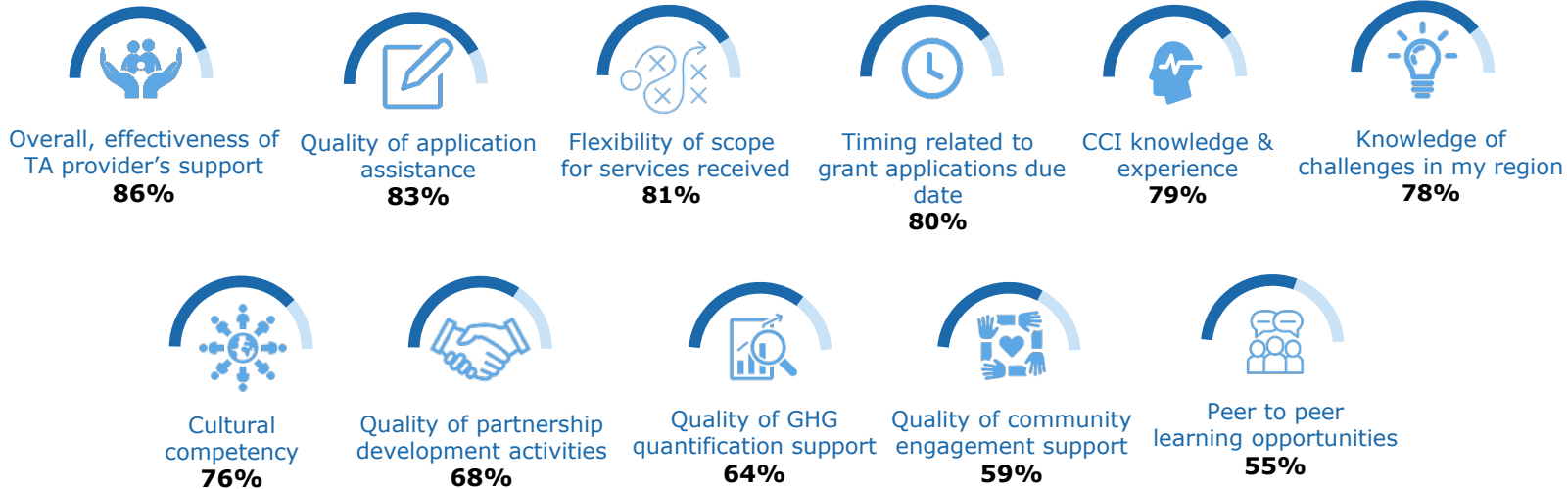
Agree or strongly agree that **their organization's TA needs changed** during the time they received TA

"TA provided an overview schedule, helped develop milestones and schedules for the team to keep our application development on track." – **TA Provider**

TA EXPERIENCE

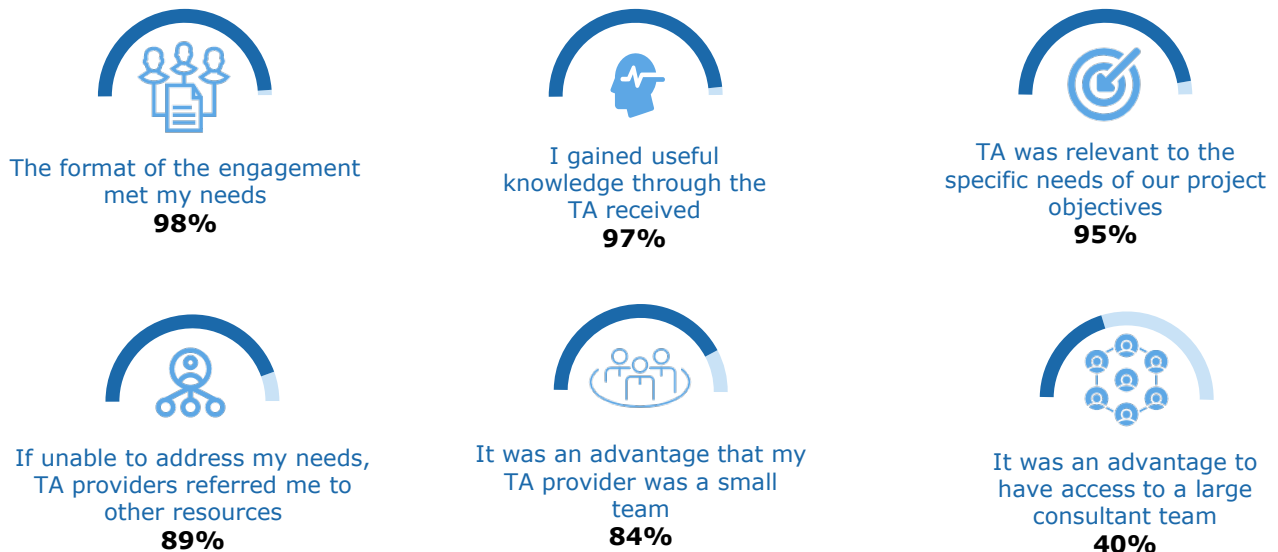
TA recipients shared their experiences and indicated their level of satisfaction with the TA received. Recipient survey participants were most satisfied with the overall effectiveness of their TA provider's support and quality of application assistance, and less satisfied with the quality of community engagement support and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Percentage of TA recipients who are "very satisfied" with:



TA recipients reflected on their overall experience receiving TA through indicating their agreement with the following seven statements. The results are generally positive, with most TA recipient survey participants indicating that the format of the engagement met their needs, and they gained useful knowledge relevant to the specific needs of their project goals through the TA received. Fewer survey participants reported that their organization's needs changed throughout receiving TA. Similarly, a minority of participants thought that it was an advantage to have access to a large consultant team.

Percentage of TA recipients who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that:



TA Provider:

"We determined that our biggest role [as TA providers] was to make sure that every applicant had access to the same information. And along the way that involved... getting applicants with less experience up to speed."

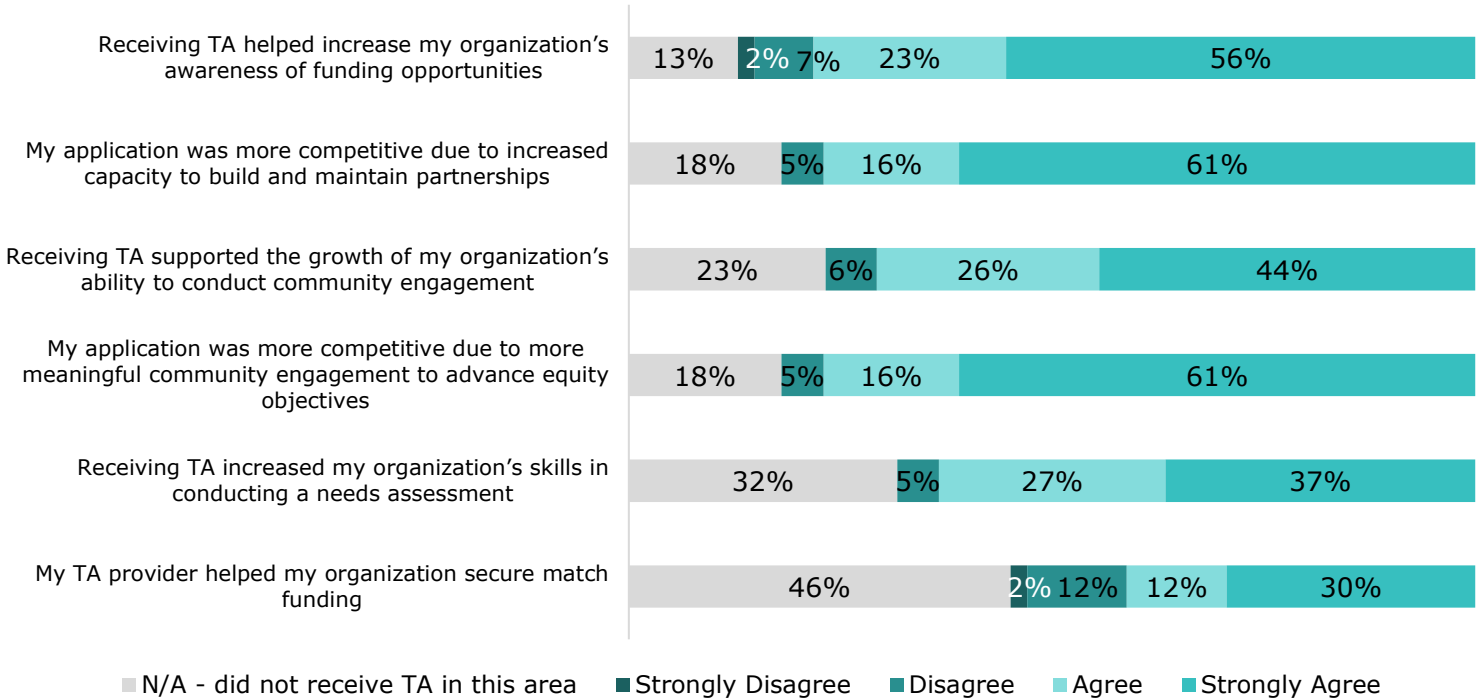
TA Recipient:

"[The TA provider's] knowledge of the process and the application guidelines was very important for being able to establish the necessary partnerships."

CAPACITY BUILDING

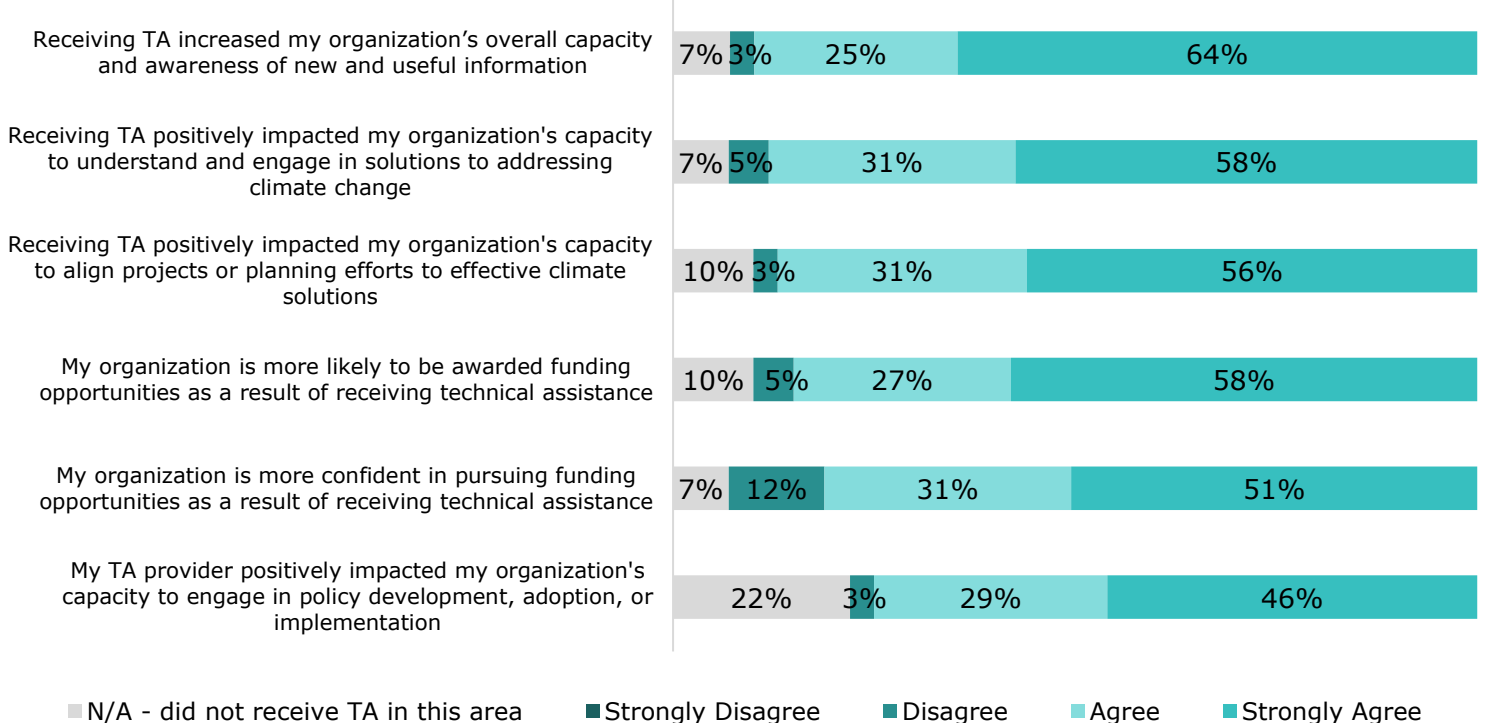
FUNDING AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Participants working in the climate equity system had varying perspectives and insights. Results showed that SGC CCI TA support was essential for developing more inclusive and equitable application processes, and for increasing awareness of the opportunities for projects that benefit communities by addressing needs related to climate change.



INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

TA increased recipient's organizational capacity and awareness of new and useful information. Specifically, SGC CCI TA support was shown to be most effective in increasing understanding of solutions to address climate change and increasing competitiveness for funding opportunities.



SUCCESSSES OF TA PROVIDERS

TA recipients had positive feedback about the support they received through TA:

"It was a truly informative experience and I highly recommend it to my colleagues in the industry."

"Our TA provider was instrumental in helping us quarterback such a complicated project application!"

"[Our TA provider] was great! They were very helpful, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with them again."

Most effective types of support:



Familiarity with CCI TA programs, grant applications, and eligibility requirements



Effective communication, attentiveness, and availability



Connections with stakeholders and others who have implemented the same grant

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

TA recipients identified three areas for improvement:

1 Earlier engagement and communication

"Be introduced to the grantee prior to grant execution."

"Having the GHG calculations earlier would have been beneficial."

2 Longer term support throughout implementation

"If possible, more time for assistance...this is a bit unfair to ask, but we would always like more. Ongoing support – long-term."

3 More frequent meetings with different formats

"The only thing that could have been improved is if we could have had more in-person meetings, but COVID restricted that..."

"Have mini sessions."

"Workshops, phone calls."

Only a couple of TA recipients identified supports as not effective:

"Because of staffing levels, sometimes it was difficult to get through grants and applications."

"While extremely valuable, it was hard for me to keep up with all the different webinars/workshops on topics of interest."

Factors external to TA also hindered TA recipients' ability to develop a grant application that would ultimately be awarded:



"Due to other funding issues, housing projects were not able to apply for AHSC funding and dropped out of the application cycle."



"Staff capacity is always a factor. But we consistently pull through. The state has so many opportunities right now, it is hard to manage them all! This is both good and bad."



"The limiting of equipment purchases for potential projects."

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

The CCI TA program model by design is adaptive to meet communities and TA recipients where they are in their journey to confront the effects of climate change. This section explores how CCI TA impacted recipient organizations' knowledge, approach, and actions to ultimately increase equity across California communities in accessing resources to plan for and create healthy and sustainable communities.



TA recipients were asked to reflect on the outcomes and impact resulting from the TA. The top 3 outcomes relate to advancing climate-change, community change, and equity-related goals. As a result of TA, recipients report the following:



Organization's increased ability to **advance climate-related goals** (90% strongly agree or agree)



Organization's increased ability to **combat climate change** and **advance community change** (84% strongly agree or agree)



Organization's increased ability to **advance equity-related goals** (82% strongly agree or agree)



TA directly informed their organization's **approach to cross-agency collaboration** (80% strongly agree or agree)



Strengthened partnerships with local stakeholders and/or nontraditional partners (80% strongly agree or agree)

When reflecting on top outcomes and impact from TA, Other less frequently-cited outcomes by participants included those related to:



Organization's increased ability to advance changes in **policy to achieve community goals** (76% strongly agree or agree)



TA directly informed their organization's **approach to city planning** (63% strongly agree or agree)

Examples of how CCI TA increased recipient's understanding of climate change issues facing their communities

pursuit of funding opportunities ***increased awareness***

"We now continue to look for opportunities to advance the City's climate and housing goals. These state resources have been invaluable in those efforts."

"The AHSC application and the TA program greatly increased our organization's awareness and knowledge of climate change issues. As a result, we will look to implement project design features that combat and are better suited to deal with climate change."

intersectionality of climate change

"[TA improved our] understanding the intersection of housing and climate change."

inclusive practices

"It helped me understand how much more can be accomplished with TA support. Also, the public outreach capacity was helpful to get more resident opinions to the table."

climate action across the state

"My participation informs me just how serious California really is about climate control."

mitigation strategies

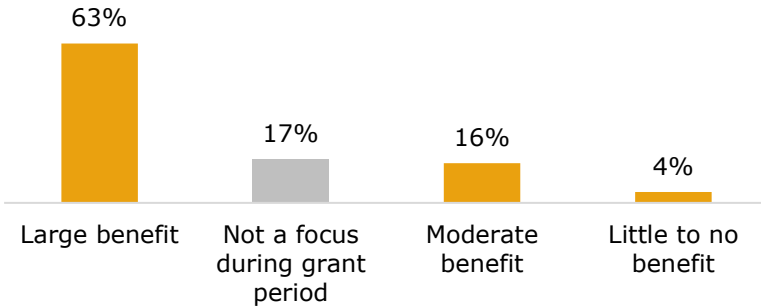
"I learned a lot about the climate issues and what can be done to mitigate future conditions."

OUTCOMES & IMPACT (CONT.)

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Participants were asked a series of questions about the extent to which the projects they received TA for benefitted disadvantaged communities and how their organization's ability to carry out TA impacted their communities. Overall, most participants indicated that receiving TA had a large benefit to disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, open ended responses expanded on this benefit indicating support with housing and financial assistance, for example.

Perception of TA project benefit for disadvantaged communities:



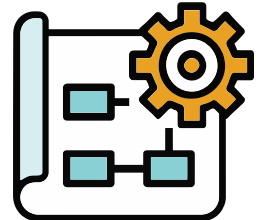
96%

Of participants believe the TA was **very or somewhat important** to their organization's ability to carry out projects with greater impact on the community

"This project targeted our most disadvantaged community... It also allowed us to ask the community what types of displacement avoidance policies would be best to prevent future potential displacement in our disadvantaged community." – TA recipient

SUMMARY

The CCI TA Statewide Survey gathered data on over 70 CCI TA recipient organizations across the state of California. Results showed that CCI TA model components are grounded in responsiveness; flexibility of scope and format of engagement; institutional, and local knowledge; and attention to high quality application assistance. These defining features are impactful and contribute to intended outcomes described in the Program's logic model (see Appendix A). The results offer a cross-sectional view of the TA recipient capacity building and application assistance needs. Case studies were also developed to highlight insights about the components that contribute to effective and quality technical assistance within the individual CCI TA programs; recommendations for improvements; and early indicators of successful outcomes and accomplishments. Other key highlights from the statewide survey include:



Capacity built across multiple areas. Most participants reported increased capacity in their organization's awareness of funding opportunities; increased competitiveness of application due to capacity built and ability to maintain partnerships; increased overall capacity and awareness of new and useful information; and increased capacity to understand and engage in solutions addressing climate change.



Support understanding of climate change issues facing communities. TA providers helped TA recipients see the nexus between topics and issue areas. It also helped recipients identify more inclusive processes to address climate change issues and viable mitigation strategies.



Early indicators of success in the areas of climate equity and community-centered goals. Indicators include recipient organization readiness to advance climate change efforts, community change, strengthened partnerships, and cross-agency collaboration informed by TA. Much of the TA was focused on better engaging communities to advance community-benefit projects.



Inconsistent quality of TA services. This is most evident when comparing the TA experiences of larger well-funded recipients to that of smaller and rural recipients organizations. Areas for improvement include timing of TA in relation to the grant period with earlier engagement, longer term support throughout implementation, and more frequent meetings with different formats to meet the needs of recipients.

Case Study #1

Build, Organize, Optimize, Strengthen, and Transform

California Climate Investment TA Program | Fall 2021

Prepared by **Harder+Company Community Research**

Background: To help under-resourced communities secure climate equity funding, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) partnered with the Institute for Local Government (ILG) to administer the BOOST Program (2019 – 2021). During the 18-month pilot, BOOST helped to build the capacity of 12 communities across California to initiate planning efforts, apply for and obtain funding, establish collaborations with community residents and other stakeholders, and train agency staff on engagement strategies. From January through July 2021, BOOST stakeholders participated in evaluation activities to provide feedback about the technical assistance. Eighteen recipient organization representatives from BOOST participated in the California Climate Investment Technical Assistance (CCI TA) Statewide Recipient Survey. Other stakeholders participated in key informant interviews. This case study highlights the experiences of BOOST TA program recipients.

BOOST TA Recipient Needs



Top application assistance need:
Developing community-engaged project plans that respond to local needs.



Top capacity building need:
Partnership engagement and grant writing assistance.

46%

Agree or strongly agree that **their organization's TA needs changed** during the time they received TA.

"I think that was the biggest thing is just having somebody to kind of keep an eye out for what we'd be competitive for and encourage us to apply and offer that support..." – TA recipient

BOOST TA Experience

Percentage of BOOST TA recipients who are "very satisfied" with:



Quality of Application Assistance
90%



Quality of partnership development activities
90%



Flexibility of scope for services received
90%



Cultural Competency
100%

Recommendations for Improvement

- Quality of **community engagement support** (70% were "very satisfied")
- **Peer-to-peer learning** opportunities (60% were "very satisfied")

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The BOOST Program's flexibility made it possible to meet communities where they are to provide adaptable technical assistance support that was responsive to their specific needs and local contexts. Through the BOOST program, ILG provided individualized technical assistance to communities that was responsive and tailored. During the pilot period, COVID-19 presented unprecedented challenges for the communities involved in the BOOST program. ILG was able to pivot with the communities to offer flexible, virtual support during the initial months of the pandemic.

The TA provider's connections with different entities and stakeholders across the state helped BOOST communities to see the broader connections of their objectives with the state's goals regarding climate change and sustainability. By providing tailored support to communities across several interactions, the TA increased the recipients' capacity to conduct public engagement efforts.

TA recipients were asked to reflect on the outcomes and impact resulting from the TA. The top 2 outcomes relate to climate goals and partnerships. As a result of TA, recipients report the following:



Organization's increased ability to **advance climate-related goals** (90% strongly agree or agree).



Strengthened partnerships with local stakeholders and/or nontraditional partners (100% strongly agree or agree).

Another less frequently-cited outcome related to planning goals:



TA directly informed their organization's **approach to city planning** (78% strongly agree or agree).



Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments of the BOOST pilot program include:

- 1 Provided grant writing assistance on 59 grants to support planning, affordable housing, equitable transportation, and climate mitigation and resilience projects, contributing to more competitive applications.
- 2 Helped recipients identify grant opportunities, helping them secure funding for climate equity projects.
- 3 Provided customized community engagement trainings or services for many of the BOOST-partners to facilitate meaningful, inclusive and authentic public engagement.
- 4 Helped build partnerships between BOOST communities and State agencies.
- 5 Assisted six BOOST communities with developing or updating their Climate Action and/or Resilience Plans.
- 6 Trained 78 individual staff members on public engagement and outreach.

Case Study #2

Climate Smart Agriculture by UCANR

California Climate Investment TA Program | Fall 2021

Prepared by **Harder+Company** Community Research

Background: The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) partnered with the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources to offer technical assistance (TA) in the form of hands-on application assistance to farmers and ranchers to implement Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs – Alternative Manure Management Project, the Healthy Soils Program, and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program. From January through July 2021, UCANR TA stakeholders participated in evaluation activities to provide feedback about the technical assistance. Seventeen recipient organization representatives from Climate Smart Agriculture participated in the California Climate Investment Technical Assistance (CCI TA) Statewide Recipient Survey. Other stakeholders participated in key informant interviews. This case study highlights the experiences of TA recipients and TA providers in the CSA TA program.

Climate Smart TA Recipient Needs



Top application assistance need: Outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities.



Top capacity building need: Grant writing assistance.

38%

Agree or strongly agree that **their organization's TA needs changed** during the time they received TA.

Recommendation for Improvement

- More intentional targeting in different languages is needed if the goal is to reach socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Peer to peer learning opportunities (only 67% were "very satisfied")

Climate Smart TA Experience

Percentage of Climate Smart TA recipients who are "very satisfied" with:



Quality of application assistance
92%



Flexibility of scope for services received
91%



Timing of TA in relation to when the grant application was due
91%



Overall, effectiveness of TA providers' support
91%

"It's building that trust on the ground that lets growers go, 'Yeah, okay, I'll give this a try on my land and take a chance.'"
– TA provider



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL



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Climate Smart Agriculture TA providers' regional and local knowledge of farming is essential for CSA TA and contributes to the effectiveness of the TA. TA providers shared that agriculture is unique and every farmer faces different problems and constraints, such as differences in weather and soil conditions. **One advantage of the cooperative extension model is that there are offices and advisors in every county who have local knowledge of agricultural conditions and growers in the area.** Cooperative Extensions have been a part of the community and farming industry in regions across the state for so long that people depend on them as a messenger from a trusted institution. Farming is recognized as a relationship-driven industry, and trust and relationships are key drivers to how information is transferred and new techniques are adopted. The relationships between the UC Cooperative Extension and local growers are the bedrock of the technical assistance program.

Challenges and tradeoffs limit the reach of the CSA TA program with key audiences. The challenge is reaching disadvantaged communities and socially disadvantaged farmers¹ and ranchers, gaining their trust, and being able to work with them. The tradeoff is whether to work with large growers that manage many more acres of farmland or work with a larger number of smaller, socially disadvantaged growers. TA providers have limited time and resources to make the greatest impact.

Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments of the Climate Smart pilot program include:

- 1 The focus on benefits to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers has been key to the successful implementation of the CSA programs. The CSA TA program was successful in helping hundreds of smaller farmers, many who are non-English speaking farmers, throughout their grants.
- 2 Trust and relationship-building are cornerstones to the success of the CSA TA.
- 3 TA is responsive to smaller farmers where in-person communication is much more important, especially when learning new practices and techniques that may require additional support to implement.

TA recipients were asked to reflect on the outcomes and impact resulting from the TA. The top 2 outcomes relate to climate goals. As a result of TA, recipients reported the following:



Organization's increased ability to **advance climate-related goals** (100% strongly agree or agree).



Organization's increased belief in their abilities to **combat climate change and advance community change** (100% strongly agree or agree).

"I see a lot of those farmers probably would not have been successful otherwise...I think there's just a huge need for first of all, the outreach in communities, especially to smaller family farmers and farmers who don't speak English. Who just would never, ever hear about it otherwise. So, I think that's been a huge success."– TA provider

Key Challenges

- It became more difficult to meet in person during the COVID-19 pandemic and many farmers lacked access to technology needed for online communication, such as broadband internet.
- Language barriers impede engagement with farmers and ranchers whose primary language is not English.
- Intentional outreach is difficult. Smaller growers have different needs and constraints that need to be taken into consideration.

Case Study #3

Transformative Climate Communities

California Climate Investment TA Program | Fall 2021

Prepared by **Harder+Company** Community Research

Background: The Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) provides technical assistance (TA) throughout the application, implementation, and evaluation of the program at no cost. The TA aims to provide TCC applicants with support developing their project scope, calculations of greenhouse gas emissions, and developing the application. From January through July 2021, TCC stakeholders participated in evaluation activities to provide feedback about the technical assistance. 17 recipient organization representatives from TCC participated in the California Climate Investment Technical Assistance (CCI TA) Statewide Recipient Survey. Other stakeholders participated in key informant interviews. This case study was developed to demonstrate the areas for improvement for TCC informed by the experiences of TCC TA program recipients from multiple technical assistance rounds.

TCC TA Recipient Needs



Top application assistance need: Tools and processes to support sustained action at the community scale.



Top capacity building need: Data quantification, such as GHG quantification.

60%

Agree or strongly agree that **their organization's TA needs changed** during the time they received TA.

"Providers were remotng in from other places...When you hire outside help you don't expect them to have local flavor. [Partnering remotely] would have been helpful but not technically feasible." – TA recipient

TCC TA Experience

Percentage of TCC TA recipients who are "very satisfied" with:



Quality of application assistance
64%



Timing of TA in relation to when the grant application was due
36%



Flexibility of scope for services received
46%



Overall effectiveness of TA providers' support
46%

Recommendation for Improvement

- Quality of community engagement support (73% were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied)
- TA provider's CCI program knowledge and experience (82% were "very satisfied")

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

TCC has evolved from year one to year three. Recipients and TA providers credit SGC for taking actions that were responsive to recipients by streamlining the process in round three. However, challenges with the complexity of the application were significant and unable to be addressed fully by the TA. Generally, TA recipients were “somewhat satisfied” with the effectiveness of various components of the TA, but a smaller percentage of survey participants expressed being “very satisfied.”

Recipients valued the project scoping and application feasibility aspects of technical assistance. Other recipients reported the value of TA in increasing their awareness of other climate equity funding sources that are appropriate for projects in the pipeline.

“You will see that only larger cities have ever received [the grant]. Only larger cities have the capacity to apply. I’ve been a grant writer for 30 years, unlike anything I’ve ever seen...TA was helping cities understand the unique technical aspects of the grant in particular.”
– TA provider

Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments of the TCC TA program include:

- 1 TA providers successfully provided all applicants their GHG calculations after recipients submitted their application. Close collaboration and communication with the California Air Resources Board contributed to this success.
- 2 Round three had a more streamlined process after adjustments were made from round one and two.
- 3 Helped prospective recipients understand feasibility of application for planning vs implementation grants.
- 4 Increased awareness about other climate equity grant opportunities for recipients to consider in the future.

TA recipients reflected on the outcomes and impact resulting from the TA. The top 2 outcomes relate to climate equity goals and cross-agency collaboration. As a result of TA, recipients reported the following:



Organization’s increased ability to **advance climate-related goals** (82% strongly agree or agree).



TA directly informed their organization’s **approach to cross-agency collaboration** (82% strongly agree or agree).

Other less frequently-cited outcomes included those related to:



Organization’s ability to advance changes in policy to achieve community goals (55% strongly agree or agree).

Key Challenges

- While significant improvements were made to streamline the application process, communities awarded grants hire external consultants to help manage the process and assist with grant writing, in addition to the TA provided.
- The project timeframe is too short to put together the large framework required. Time constraints leave applicants without a lot of ability to make adjustments.

Case Study # 4

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities

California Climate Investment TA Program | Fall 2021

Prepared by **Harder+Company** Community Research

Background: The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) builds healthier communities and protects the environment by increasing the supply of affordable places to live near daily needs, like jobs and schools and making easier for residents to get out of their cars to walk, bike, or take transit. California Climate Investment Technical Assistance (CCI TA) supported the AHSC participants secure funding and approach capacity building in creative and innovative ways. The AHSC TA program was able to reach rural and remote communities by partnering with local media stations, public transit services, and with community-based organizations. As a result, AHSC communities' TA providers were able to craft competitive and winning grant applications. From January through July 2021, AHSC stakeholders participated in evaluation activities to provide feedback about the technical assistance. 31 recipient organization representatives from the AHSC program participated in the CCI TA Statewide Recipient Survey. Other stakeholders participated in key informant interviews. This case study highlights the experiences of the AHSC TA recipients and providers in the AHSC program.

AHSC TA Recipient Needs



Top application assistance need: Advice on the development of multi-benefit projects and identifying alignment with potential funding sources.



Top capacity building need: Data quantification, such as GHG quantification.

36%

Agree or strongly agree that **their organization's TA needs changed** during the time they received TA.

"The TA provider kept us on task and helped with prioritizing all critical path items needed for the application."

-TA recipient

AHSC TA Experience

Percentage of AHSC TA recipients who are "very satisfied" with:



Quality of application assistance
92%



Quality of partnership development activities
81%



Flexibility of scope for services received
89%



Cultural competency received
85%

Recommendations for Improvement

- Quality of community engagement support (only 69% were "very satisfied")

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

TA recipients reflected on the outcomes and impact resulting from the TA. The top 2 outcomes relate to advancing change. As a result of TA, recipients report the following:



Organization's increased ability to **advance changes in policy** to achieve goals (89% strongly agree or agree).



Organization's increased impact to **combat climate change and advance community change** (89% strongly agree or agree)

Another less frequently-cited outcome related to:



TA directly informed their organization's **approach to cross-agency collaboration** (82% strongly agree or agree)

"The AHSC application and the TA program greatly increased our organization's awareness and knowledge of climate change issues. As a result, we will look to implement project design features that combat and are better suited to deal with climate change." - TA recipient

HIGHLIGHTING THE CITY OF COACHELLA'S AHSC APPLICATION

After applying unsuccessfully to the AHSC program, the City of Coachella was able to develop a competitive application in 2019 with support from AHSC TA providers from the Chelsea Development Group. In addition to building 105 units of affordable housing in Coachella's downtown, this project will significantly improve the regional transportation landscape of the Coachella Valley by building a bus hub and funding additional transit.

The TA recipients indicated that the provider's knowledge of the challenges unique to the region was the most beneficial aspect of receiving TA. Participants indicated that the providers had "expansive knowledge" and strong communication skills that helped the TA recipients to meet their goals. One City official explained that the TA helped ensure that the scope of the project was responsive to community needs, saying "We discussed, we implemented what the community was asking for, but then we also had to tailor things a little bit so that they would fit within our budget." The TA provider also helped to bridge the objectives of their application with the overall goals of the AHSC project."

Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments of the AHSC City of Coachella include:

- 1 Built new partnerships with community-based organizations, transit agencies, and local media to strengthen their application, and more importantly, the quality and impact of their project.
- 2 Shared strategic advice from the TA provider on how have more successful and meaningful community engagement efforts, such as offering meetings during times that were most convenient to people, providing food and childcare, and providing language translation.
- 3 Strengthened elements of the project scopes – such as the units per acre net density, availability of public transit options in the project areas, and urban greening elements – that ultimately led to both a greater impact on mitigating climate change and a higher score against multiple criteria on the funding application.

California Climate Investment Technical Assistance Program



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

Challenges

Historic and ongoing inequities in investment and planning processes have limited under-resourced communities' access to funding, institutions, and infrastructure.

Communities of color and low-income areas are disproportionately impacted by climate impacts and other environmental hazards.

Target Populations

Under-resourced CCI program applicants and community members

Community partners

TA providers

State agency partners

Our Strategies and Activities

Capacity Building

- Outreach
- Partnership development
- Project scoping
- Community engagement

Application Assistance

- Grant writing
- Mapping
- GHG quantification
- Application review

Implementation Assistance

- Project management
- Partnership development
- Community engagement
- Reporting

Impact Assessment

- Data collection
- Mapping

Outcomes

Short Term

Increased knowledge of state funding opportunities in under-resourced communities (URC)

Increased CCI applications from URC

Higher quality CCI applications from URC

Increased community engagement on CCI projects

Increased local and regional collaboration

Medium Term

Increased investment in URC

Greater capacity in URC to apply for state grants

Greater capacity in URC to employ community climate mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies

Long-standing partnerships between public agencies and stakeholders

Increased collaboration and decreased silos within public agencies

Long-Term Impact

Increased equity across California communities in accessing resources to plan for and create healthy and sustainable communities