CONSENT

April 26, 2023

Subject:	**Community Resilience Centers Round 1 Program Guidelines**
Reporting Period:	April 2023
Staff Lead:	Coral Abbott, Community Resilience Center Program Manager, SGC

Recommended Action

Approve the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Round 1 Program Guidelines

Summary

The CRC Program seeks Council approval of the *CRC Round 1 Program Guidelines (Guidelines)*. CRC Program staff developed the Guidelines through an extensive public engagement and research process since program launch in July 2022, including robust outreach through listening sessions, regional and audience specific workshops, focus groups, and discussions with subject matter experts and interagency partners. The Guidelines reflect input and expertise from a diverse array of communities, organizations, governments, and individuals across California seeking to build Community Resilience Centers or employ similar neighborhood-scale solutions to build community resilience to climate disasters.

The CRC program released the *CRC Program Round 1 Draft Guidelines* for public review in December 2022. The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) received a total of 750 comments from over 100 stakeholders on the draft through written letters, emails, and comments provided at seven (7) public workshops hosted by program staff. The Guidelines also incorporate input from a range of subject matter experts and interagency leads on key topics critical to program design, uptake, and success. Following Council's adoption of the Guidelines, the CRC program will issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and initiate a competitive awards process for CRC Round 1.

Background

About the CRC Program
The Community Resilience Centers (CRC) program received funds through the 2021-22 Climate Resilience Budget package and the Extreme Heat Budget Change Proposal in the 2022-23 State budget process, with the directive to build the resilience of under-resourced communities to climate impacts and as a strategy to implement the State's Extreme Heat Action Plan. Chapter 574 (A.B. 211, Statutes of 2022), signed by the Governor in late September 2022, created additional program requirements that Staff have since incorporated into the Round 1 Guidelines. The program provides funding for new construction and upgrades of neighborhood-level resilience centers to provide shelter and resources during climate and other emergencies. The program will also fund year-round services and ongoing programming that build overall

community resilience, as well as campus amenities that support usage of Community Resilience Centers, such as transportation options and community gardens.

CRC builds upon best practices and lessons learned from SGC's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) and Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) programs. Per statute, CRC includes a Collaborative Stakeholder Structure requirement that brings together community-based organizations, local residents, and other multi-stakeholder partnerships to develop and govern implementation of grants. The program seeks to build resilience of communities to climate impacts through the development of multi-benefit, resilient community serving spaces; services and programming to support communities both during disasters and year-round; support development of community-driven partnerships; expand economic opportunities; and support grassroots engagement in local decision-making processes.

- CRC Planning Grants support planning activities to develop community-informed Resilience Center proposals and are intended to support applicants seeking to develop Implementation Grant proposals for Rounds 2 and 3 of CRC.
- **NEW:** Adopted from the TCC program model, CRC will also offer Project Development Grants to fund pre-development and basic infrastructure activities needed to build readiness to access a CRC Round 2 or 3 Implementation Grant.
- CRC Implementation Grants support development of one or more facilities that can serve as Community Resilience Centers by funding capabilities needed to serve during extreme heat days, extreme cold days, and poor air quality days. Some CRCs may also include capabilities to provide overnight sheltering, and others will coordinate with partners to ensure community members they serve are notified of and transported to emergency shelters.

Background on the CRC R1 (R1) Guidelines Process
The FY22-23 budget allocated $110 million to the CRC Program from the General Fund's Climate budget. A total of $98.6 million will be available for the CRC Program's Funding Round 1 (FY 22-23), pending final budget availability.

- $5 million total for Planning Grants, each ranging from $100,000 - $500,000.
- $9.6 million total for Project Development Grants, each ranging from $500,000 - $5 million.
- $84 million dollars total for Implementation Grants, each ranging from $1 million to $10 million.

Guidelines Development
CRC Program staff launched program development in July 2022 with listening sessions to understand the needs and priorities of communities across the state, resulting in over 1,030 comments analyzed for the initial draft. SGC released the CRC Program Round 1 Draft Guidelines in December 2022 for a 45-day public comment period, during which CRC program staff held

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seven workshops that included regional and audience-specific workshops that covered all areas of the State, rural communities, and Tribes. Staff analyzed over 750 public comments to identify key topics for further research or needed expertise. Staff then convened over 30 conversations with subject matter experts and interagency partners to best address these topics in the Round 1 Guidelines. Some topics included:

- Access and Functional Needs (AFN) considerations, incorporation, and best practices
- Broadband and digital inclusion
- Building and facility maintenance
- Emergency management and operations
- Energy resilience
- Ensuring CRCs effectively equip communities for extreme heat impacts, and
- Workforce development, education, and training

Throughout program development, staff conducted intentional and targeted outreach and engagement with a wide range of community perspectives, including community-based organizations, community-serving locations, Tribes, local and regional governments, utilities and community choice aggregators, organizations serving priority populations and rural communities, and prospective partners for upcoming Community Resilience Centers. These conversations ensured thoughtful incorporation of diverse perspectives and needs into the Guidelines to the extent possible, while increasing awareness of the program and encouraging early partnership development between local entities in anticipation of the upcoming NOFA.

In addition to broad stakeholder feedback, staff convened an interagency workgroup of Council agencies that provided input and feedback throughout the Guidelines development process. Staff additionally engaged departments and offices with critical perspectives and expertise to inform the Program Guidelines, including the California Department of Aging, California Department of Social Services, California Office of Emergency Services' Office of Access and Functional Needs, California Public Utilities Commission, and California State Library.

In December 2022 Staff requested guidance from Councilmembers on two discussion topics: facility requirements for Community Resilience Centers and statewide geographic diversity. Council input, in combination with public comment and discussions, informed program changes presented in the Program Guidelines.

Summary of Public Comments and Changes to the Draft Guidelines
The CRC Round 1 Program Guidelines include many changes from the draft. Attachment B provides additional detail on feedback received and incorporated. Key changes are summarized below:

Project Development Grants
Modeled from the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program Round 5, the CRC program includes a Project Development grant type to support communities needing additional

funds for pre-development and basic infrastructure to build readiness for a CRC Round 2 or 3 Implementation Grant.

- CRC Project Development grants will prioritize applicants from Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs), Tribal communities, and rural communities.
- CRC Project Development grantees will meet fewer site readiness thresholds compared to the CRC Implementation Grants, with the primary focus of building readiness for implementation funds, including from non-CRC sources that may fund specific CRC elements (e.g. microgrid).
- Staff propose $9.6 million total for R1 Project Development Grants, with awards ranging between $500,000 - $5 million.

Grant Award Ranges and Funding Amounts

Staff originally proposed the following ranges: Planning Grants from $200,000 to $500,000 and Implementation Grants from $5 million to $10 million. Staff received feedback that the proposed award minimums were too high for projects already under development and projects seeking implementation funds for facilities needing simple retrofits.

After reducing the minimums as requested, the Program Guidelines propose the following ranges: Planning Grants from $100,000 to $500,000 and Implementation Grants from $1 million to $10 million.

With the addition of Project Development Grants, roughly $84 million total are now available for Implementation Grants and Planning Grants will remain at $5 million total. SGC retains the right to make partial awards and to reallocate funds between CRC Round 1 Grant types, in the event of undersubscription.

Eligible Costs

The Program Guidelines maintain an emphasis on funding physical infrastructure investments, while providing flexibility for other cost categories. The Draft Guidelines proposed a 65% award minimum on capital projects (CRC facility & campus amenities). Given feedback received and availability of non-CRC funds for capital projects, staff propose a 51% award minimum on capital projects and greater flexibility for most other cost categories. This adjustment will allow projects already under development to more easily layer on CRC funding given their needs and allow Implementation Grantees to use more CRC funding for Community Resilience Services & Programs, while still meeting the program's statutory intent to fund physical infrastructure.

Collaborative Stakeholder Structure

In response to feedback detailing the difficulty of producing a signed, executed Partnership Agreement by time of Application, the Program Guidelines instead require a draft Partnership Agreement and/or Memorandum of Understanding at time of application and require a signed/executed version by finalization of the grant agreement.

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Network Approach and Project Area

Many public comments advocated for a decentralized CRC approach to allow a network of CRC locations in a neighborhood or region, rather than a single CRC site. While the CRC program's enabling statute does not provide flexibility to fund a fully decentralized approach, staff have included a 'network approach' to allow applicants to include multiple proposed CRC facilities in the same application, provided all included facilities have a shared owner and can meet the program thresholds and project requirements. For this option, applicants must demonstrate coordination across networked sites and can submit one Collaborative Stakeholder Structure to govern the entire CRC grant, although services, programs, and partners may vary per site.

While the Program Guidelines still require campus amenities located within a one-mile radius of a CRC facility, Guidelines now specify that transit service to and from the facility or facilities may extend beyond the one-mile radius.

This adjustment will allow SGC to fund networks of CRCs serving priority populations within an area or region under one application.

Funding Targets

Given the total anticipated number of R1 awards, Tribes requested an increase in the Tribal funding target, proposed in the Draft Guidelines as at least two. The Program Guidelines increase the Tribal funding target to at least five projects where a Tribe or similar entity is a Lead Applicant.

While few public comments focused specifically on statewide geographic diversity of awards, to ensure the program meets the statutory requirement to prioritize projects that represent statewide geographic diversity in R1 awards, the Program Guidelines include a funding target of a minimum of one CRC R1 award in each California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid region.

Project Requirements – Facility Features & Requirements

Staff originally proposed a range of required functions and features for each CRC facility by the end of the Implementation grant term. Program Guidelines maintain some facility requirements, while softening others and allowing partnerships with local organizations and facilities to meet designated requirements.

This adjustment will allow a broader range of applications from community-serving locations. The change also allows grantees to leverage existing networks of disaster response organizations and facilities that can provide resources to CRCs and community members served during emergencies.

CRCs can partner with other organizations or facilities to provide the following services:

- Sheltering for people and animals
- Food preparation
- Laundry
- Showers

- Emergency drinking water supplies
- Portable restrooms

CRCs that elect to partner with a nearby facility to provide emergency shelter must demonstrate an ability to stay open seven days a week in the case of an emergency that does not require shelter, such as a heat wave.

Rural communities may request modifications to specific project requirements that present a hardship, in combination with a relevant and feasible alternative; staff will review requests on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency Plan & County Coordination

Given the role of counties in coordinating emergency response on the local level, and the associated impacts for reimbursement and liability coverage, the Program Guidelines incorporate requirements for coordination between CRCs and County agencies involved in emergency management activities. Applicants who do not include the County as a partner on the application must send a Notice to Apply to their County and produce a signed Letter of Commitment or signed Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement by the end of the grant term that outlines emergency activation procedures for the CRC or that identifies the CRC as a shelter resource in a county/regionally developed Emergency Operations Planning document.

Long-term Use of CRCs

Due to feedback received, the Program Guidelines reduce the required number of years of usage as a Community Resilience Center from 30 years to 15 years, with additional points to applicants demonstrating an ability to exceed the 15 years of facility usage as CRC.

Scoring Criteria

The Program Guidelines include more granular scoring breakdowns, including key sections:

Climate Impacts: All Applicants will use the Cal-Adapt Local Climate Snapshot tool to provide an initial baseline of comparable data. Applicants will include best available and local relevant data, inclusive of quantitative, qualitative, narrative, or spatial data, to provide additional detail on needs and conditions experienced during climate disasters, particularly for priority populations and compounding impacts.

Priority Populations: Proposals that include organizations that represent and serve priority populations in their Collaborative Stakeholder Structure will receive additional points.

Workforce Development: Proposals that include partnerships with a workforce development organization and that can pursue additional workforce and labor measures, like a Project Labor Agreement, will receive additional points.

Next Steps

Upon Council approval of the CRC Round 1 Program Guidelines, the CRC Program will issue the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and initiate a competitive awards process in May 2023. The

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forthcoming NOFA will include a more detailed grant timeline, including Pre-Proposal and Full Application deadlines.

Staff are securing a third-party technical assistance (TA) provider to support a subset of applicants during the Full Application period. The TA provider will support applicants in understanding program objectives, establishing workplans and partnership structures, and submitting applications.

SGC will also release application templates, sample language, and updated FAQs during the application period to support applicants during application design and development.

Staff will release an RFI to inform the approach to the program evaluation and R1 evaluation, following which SGC will secure a third-party evaluator to develop the framework and support grantees with evaluation.

Staff will continue to develop a curriculum for R1 grantees focused on topics like utility coordination, Access & Functional Needs principles and networks, and emergency management and coordination. Staff will identify partners, trainings, and resources useful to R1 grantees to support successful, ongoing use of CRCs beyond the grant term.

Below is an anticipated timeline:

- NOFA Release: May 2023
- Application Workshops: Summer 2023
- Pre-Proposals Due: Summer 2023
- Full Applications Due: Fall 2023
- Round 1 CRC Awards adopted by Council: December 2023

Council Recommendation

Should the Council agree with Staff's recommendation, the following motion language is suggested:

"I move that the Council pass the consent calendar."

Attachments

Attachment A: Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Round 1 Program Guidelines

Attachment B: Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Round 1 Program Guidelines Memo

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