



# CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

**To:** California Strategic Growth Council Members  
**From:** Matt Read, SGC Acting Executive Director  
**Re:** **Executive Director Report to the Council – December 17, 2024**

## Staffing Updates

- Erin Curtis announced as new SGC Executive Director.
- Fabián Pérez-Gove joins as a Health and Equity Program Manager for the Health and Equity Program.
- Katie Freiberg joins as a graduate student assistant supporting SGC's Community Investment and Planning portfolio.

## Investment Program Updates

### Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC)

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

- The AHSC program is progressing in Round 9 development. Draft guidelines were released Nov. 7. AHSC program team held public workshops and offices hours December 4-10. Public Comment was due Dec. 11. The team is working with our partnering agencies to review and address comments and finalize the guidelines by Feb. 2025.
- The AHSC program teams are continuing public engagement and coordination. Recently staff presented at the San Joaquin Housing Conference, participated and presented at the Rural Housing Summit and the Tribal pre-conference summit; and presented at the HCD Tribal Finance Workshop.
- Staff are also preparing a technical amendment to the following AHSC Guidelines: Round 3, Round 4, Round 5, Round 6, Round 7, and Round 8. The amendments will remove the Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity requirement to Rounds 3-8. This is the result of extensive consultations with tribal representatives and HCD. The amendments for AHSC Rounds 3 to 8 are to increase the Supportive Services Cost Cap Limits. It aims to improve the quality of Supportive Services through a more reflect cost cap, while still encouraging projects to seek other sources of funding specifically dedicated to Supportive Services. The technical amendment will be presented for approval on consent at the Dec. 17 Strategic Growth Council meeting.

### Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Nicole Cartwright, Jennifer Kim, Sarah Newsham, Jess Ison, Chynell Freeman, Noni Ifyefobi, Joyce Tse, and California Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- Staff continued conducting the Post-Award Consultation process with the 11 grantees who were awarded a total of \$98.1 million during the December 2023 Council Meeting. **To date, three Planning Grants and three Project Development Grants have been fully executed.** We have one Project Development grant that is in the last stage of

contracting and all four of the Implementation grants are in the final phase of the Post-Award Consultation process, expected to be executed by the end of the calendar year.

- Additionally, staff assisted one Implementation Grant awardee and their partner in an expedited process to purchase property for a community land trust through a separate grant agreement. The property will serve as a mixed-use community anchor with a birthing center and affordable housing in the Barrio Logan neighborhood of San Diego.
- The full TCC team (SGC and DOC) attended a site tour with the Richmond Rising partners, a Round 4 implementation grantee. Staff got to see some of their progress since execution and discuss their exciting plans for the remainder of their grant term. The TCC team used the later half of the day to conduct some strategic planning for 2025 work planning with the passing of Prop 4 and Round 6 roll out.
- Staff continue to process advance pay requests and provide assistance for Round 4 and Round 5 grantees as authorized by AB 156 (2022) and AB 590 (2023). To date, staff have submitted three advance pay requests to LCI Accounts Payable.
- SGC submitted an initial Corrective Action Plan (CAP) in response to the Advance Payment Pilot Program audit report dated July 26, 2024. The California Department of Finance, Office of State Audits and Evaluations, reviewed and determined the California Strategic Growth Council's CAP dated Sept. 23, 2024, addresses the findings and recommendations noted in the audit report and reports full implementation of all corrective actions. No additional CAPs are required to be submitted, DOF considers this audit closed.

#### Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

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

- Staff reported one easement closing between Oct. 16 and Nov. 25, 2024. The project conserved 2,443 acres of grazing land in one county.
- Between Oct. 11 and Nov. 25, 2024, SALC staff submitted 22 invoices totaling \$6.46 million to DOC Accounting for payment. This includes one acquisition invoice, payments for associated costs related to acquisition transactions, payments for capacity and project work, and payments for planning work.
- Staff will host three pre-proposal and application workshops on Dec. 10 and 11 to provide potential SALC applicants with guidance on filling out their pre-proposal and application documents. The workshops will be recorded, and the recordings made available to those unable to attend.
- Staff are preparing a technical amendment to the Round 9 and 10 Guidelines to address capacity concerns for tribes and grantees whose primary purpose is to serve priority populations and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The amendment will provide a narrow pathway for reimbursement of appraisal costs incurred in good faith by these groups, even if their project falls through. The technical amendment will be presented for approval on consent at the Dec. 17 Strategic Growth Council meeting.



### Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Hoi-Fei Mok, Elizabeth Grassi, Emely Anico, and Natalie Obaldia

- CCR collaborations with academic leaders in the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) and California State University (CSU) system's Chancellor's Office continues to further the study and practice of participatory research.
- The CCR team continues to lead the engagement efforts of California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment and the development of the Assessment more broadly. SGC staff's end of year efforts are focusing on the development of the Assessment's 2025 Engagement Strategy.

### Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Program

Staff: Amar Cid, Anna Jane Jones, Dora Monterroza, Jessica Cervantes, Jess McCool, and Jin Zhang

- The Community Resilience Program has executed seven Round 1 Planning Grants, with three Grants (two Planning and one implementation) circulating for signatures. The remaining 14 awardees, including two Planning, four Project Development, and eight Implementation awards, are engaged in the Post Award Consultation process and are set to be executed soon.
- Planning grantees with executed grant agreements will attend a program orientation on Dec. 4.
- Program Staff are collaborating with technical assistance (TA) provider, Civix, to conduct the Post-Award Consultation process for Grantees and prepare for Grant Implementation.
- Program Staff are undertaking a variety of engagement and capacity building opportunities with CRC Round 1 applicants (both unawarded and awarded). In November, staff traveled to Anza to meet with the Cahuilla Band of Indians (a Round 1 Planning Grantee) to meet the Tribe's new staff and support them with grant execution. On Dec. 4 and 5, staff met with the City of Coachella (Round 1 Implementation Grantee) and participated in the Regional Energy and Climate Hub (REACH) Inland Empire convening in Cabazon to connect with regional stakeholders on place-based energy, land use, and climate progress.
- Staff are working closely with LCI's Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grants Program to develop a cross-program legislative reporting framework. Additionally, program staff have onboarded a graduate student intern from the University of California's Urban and Regional Planning program to help build the program's evaluation framework for the Round 1 Implementation Grants.



## Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

Staff: Hoi-Fei Mok, Ena Lupine, Blanca Escobedo, Catherine Foster, Markie Price, and Nancy Cheng

- **Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program:** CACE staff finalized RCC Round 2 applicant profiles for the SGC website and are currently exploring federal and philanthropic funding opportunities and partnerships to help applicants access other sources of funding. Staff also provided feedback to RCC Round 2 applicants, recognizing the time, energy, and resources that applicants devoted to their applications. CACE staff continue to manage the Round 1 grantees and have uploaded RCC Round 1 Annual Reports to the SGC website that summarize milestones achieved in the first year. These reports serve as a communication resource for demonstrating program success to funders and legislators.
- **Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program:** The program was approved for an advance pay exemption to allow for provision of 100% of grant funds to eligible tribes in installments of up to 25% of the total funds (\$200-250K), amounting to \$50-62.5K per installment. Final grant agreements with the advance pay exemption language are in the process of being signed by grantees. The technical assistance provider team contracted to support grantees have prepared a needs assessment to begin work with grantees at the start of their grant terms.
- **BOOST Imperial Valley:** SGC staff continue to schedule check-in calls with County of Imperial and City of Imperial. A blog post about the Oct in-person convening in Imperial was published on Nov. SGC is in conversation with GO, CEC, and key staff around potential broader coordination actions for SGC. The Institute for Local Government, the BOOST TA provider, is currently assisting the Cities of Calipatria and Westmorland apply for the EPA Community Change Grant and USDA Disaster Relief Grant respectively.

## Collaborative Policy Initiatives

Health and Equity Program (HEP)

Staff: Hoi-Fei Mok, Fabián Pérez-Gove, and Michael Jimenez

*Health in All Policies (HiAP)*

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

- **HEP Onboards Program Manager.** SGC has welcomed its newest program manager for the Health & Equity Program, Fabián Pérez-Gove. Fabian will be supporting program administration and planning for HEP, implementing deliverables for SGC's Council Priority 2, and representing SGC in key interagency health advancement partnerships. Fabian's first day at SGC is Dec. 9, 2024.



- **HEP represents California HiAP Task Force at Pan American Health Office (PAHO) Intersectoral Experts Meeting on Health, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.** Michael Jimenez, Health & Equity Program Analyst, attended a meeting of experts Dec. 2 – 4, 2024, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The meeting, hosted by the Pan American Health Office (of the World Health Organization), brought together representatives from over 20 health agencies from around the world to share best practices and inform tangible advancement initiatives around intersectoral collaboration and monitoring of health equity.
- **HiAP Task Force hosts quarterly interagency convening.** On Dec. 18, HEP hosted a quarterly interagency convening of the Health in All Policies Task Force. As the fourth and final quarterly meeting for 2024, HiAP focused on reflection of progress to date and work to come in the year ahead. A key focus of this hybrid (in-person, in Sacramento, and virtual) meeting included a presentation from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which has led research and evaluation of HiAP at a global scale – including California.
- **2024 Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) Membership Meeting.** Deputy Director Hoi-Fei Mok attended Governing for Racial Justice, the 2024 Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) Membership Meeting at the Facing Race National Conference in St. Louis, MO from Nov. 20-22. This event convened racial equity practitioners and government officials to explore the challenges and opportunities for advancing racial equity towards a just multi-racial democracy. Fei will participate in a working session for the California Innovation Cohort as part of the convening.

*Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP)*

Staff: HEP and SGC Program and Administrative Managers

- **HEP attends 2024 Tribal Climate and Health Adaptation Summit.** HEP joined SGC and LCI staff at the 2024 Tribal Climate and Health Adaptation Summit, from Nov. 6 – 7, 2024, in Pala, California. The summit was hosted by the Tribal Climate Health Project, a program of the Pala Band of Mission Indians. HEP staff received valuable information during the summit, including active and impactful tribal-led climate initiatives across California and the US, information on the health impacts of climate change and the disproportionate burden on tribal communities, and the role health agencies must play in honoring and understanding the ways tribes define and strive for health and wellbeing. HEP summarized team’s learnings and presented to all SGC staff at a following staff meeting, alongside other SGC staff who had recently attended other tribally-led convenings.
- **HEP coordinating annual SGC racial equity updates.** HEP has prepared SGC’s annual Racial Equity Action Plan Council update for the Dec. 17, 2024, Council meeting. This update includes a written staff report and presentation to the council on SGC’s REAP implementation and impacts from December 2023 to December 2024. HEP facilitates quarterly check-ins (and more frequent meetings, as needed) to support SGC programs and leadership in accountably tracking and meeting their REAP commitments. HEP directly supported each SGC team in crafting key racial equity messages about their



work this year, and hosts an organization-wide tracking tool to centralize SGC’s racial equity strategies, priorities, and impacts.

#### *Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)*

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

- **Application now open: CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort!** Applications for the Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC) of the Capitol Collaborative on Racial Equity are open through December. TLC centers the experiences of racial equity practitioners, workers, and learners who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Over the course of seven months, learners from a diverse array of state and community organizations come together for a comprehensive learning and peer-exchange experience that supports their individual growth as well as their capacity to advance racial equity in their own lives and institutions. Applications close on Dec. 31, 2024 and the first session will be held in February 2025. Access the application here. Please email questions or requests for information: [CCORE@phi.org](mailto:CCORE@phi.org).
- **CCORE Learning Cohort 2024 Season underway.** The 2024 Learning Cohort launched in June 2024 and will convene through December. This foundational racial equity capacity building program for California State entities is facilitated by State of Equity (a program of the Public Health Institute) and the Strategic Growth Council is the state co-host. Participants in the 2024 cohort represent First 5 CA, the Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks & Recreation, Department of Social Services, and the Department of Public Health. Upcoming sessions will focus on race conscious policymaking and leadership for racial equity. For more information about the CCORE Learning Cohort visit: <https://stateofequity.phi.org/learning-cohort/> or email [CCORE@phi.org](mailto:CCORE@phi.org).

## Natural and Working Lands

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Staff: Sean Kennedy, Camille Frazier, Tessa Salzman, Caleb Swanson

- The Task Force hosted its fifth quarterly meeting in Salinas on Nov. 14 and 15.
  - Task Force members voted to increase the per diem allowance for public members to \$500 per day’s attendance at an agendaized Task Force meeting, as enabled in SB 1448 (Hurtado).
  - In addition to presentations on cooperative land ownership, subcommittee updates, and a “year-in-review” discussion, the meeting included an interactive working session in which Task Force members worked to develop previously shared ideas into recommendations for potential inclusion in the final report.



- At the request of Task Force members, SGC staff developed a Land Access Experiences Survey for farmers, food and fiber producers, and land stewards in California. The survey is now live. An initial analysis of survey results will begin on Jan. 31, 2026.
- On October 31, SGC staff released an Advisory Committee Interest Form that will close on Dec. 15. Staff will review submissions and select 6-10 individuals to serve as members of the Advisory Committee to the Task Force. Advisory Committee members will serve as a resource to Task Force members by sharing and building knowledge, and drafting, reviewing, and providing feedback on the Task Force’s draft recommendations.
- The six subcommittees will meet in December and January. Members will discuss updates on research requests, hear from guest speakers, and consider language to be included in a first draft of recommendations in advance of the February 2026 Task Force meeting.
- The sixth quarterly Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 12 and 13, 2025.

## Federal Funding Initiatives

### Connecting Communities

Staff: Adrienne Moretz and Aatisha Singh

- To meet the Initiative's goal of supporting SGC grantees and unawarded applicants in accessing federal funding through technical assistance (TA), SGC contracted with HORNE to deliver wrap around technical assistance to SGC Partners. To date, 23 applications have been submitted, across two federal grant programs, with three applicants from Round 5 of TCC’s Implementation Grant selected for award for the U.S. EPA’s Community Change Grant Program (CCG).
- SGC, in partnership with the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation – LCI (formerly the Office of Planning and Research - OPR), will plan a series of regional roundtables in 2025 as a continuation of the commitments made at the 2023 and 2024 Catalyst Conferences. The goal of the roundtables is to integrate local perspectives into state policy contexts and identify concrete steps to better align the long-term vitality of these communities. This place-based approach will facilitate greater collaboration between local stakeholders to achieve local and regional objectives. Insights from the series will inform future convenings. SGC & LCI hosted a virtual meeting with stakeholders on Dec. 13 to discuss plans for the 2025 roundtable. The Roundtables, named Catalyst Convenings, will kick off on February 5 in Los Angeles. This work is part of the Connecting Communities Initiative’s goal to accelerate community-led climate projects and demonstrate best practices in centering communities burdened by pollution and other structural harm.

### Factory-Built Housing Pre-Development Pilot Program

Staff: Sean Kennedy, Justin DeWaele, Shep Wilbun

- The first round of applications for the Factor-built Housing Pre-development Program was due on Oct. 15. SGC received one application by the submission deadline that met the program’s threshold requirements.

- In October and November, SGC led an interagency review of the application, with the Interagency Review Panel composed of representatives from agencies including CARB, HCD, and CEC, among others.
- Through convening the IA Panel to debrief their reviews, it was determined that the application submitted for the initial round would not be awarded, however the applicant will be encouraged to re-apply.
- The Program will accept rolling applications every two months thereafter until March 2026.

## Prop 4- Climate Bond

- Proposition 4 –Climate Bond approved by voters in November. In the bond TCC and CRC are approved for legislative appropriation. TCC is authorized to receive up to \$150 million and CRC \$60 million. We are working closely with DOF/CNRA/GO as we progress through this budget year to develop the program funding rounds.

## News Media Clips

### Transformative Climate Communities

- [“On the agenda: updates and decisions on climate, education, and infrastructure”](#) (Grandview Independant) Nov. 15, 2024: “Highlights include an update on the Richmond Rising Transformative Climate Communities Grant, which has funded multiple initiatives to enhance transportation, energy efficiency, and community resilience.”

