

Date: August 26, 2020

Subject: Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program (CACE): California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program

Reporting Period: August 2020

Staff Lead: Kirin Kumar, CACE Program Manager

Recommended Action

Approve a \$2 million expenditure of FY 2019-2020 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program continuous appropriation funds to support continued Technical Assistance activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices.

Summary

The California Strategic Growth Council's Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program (CACE) administers the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program (CCI TA). Through these efforts, CACE provides technical assistance (TA) and capacity building support to California's most under-resourced communities, focusing on partnership and place-based programs and approaches that equip communities with the tools, resources, and skills necessary for climate action. The CACE program has also developed Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies and will administer the Regional Climate Collaboratives Program (both as directed by SB 1072).¹

The CCI TA Program supports communities in applying to the California Climate Investments (CCI) funding programs and builds the long-term capacity to successfully implement equity-driven climate solutions. Created in 2016 through a \$500,000 legislative appropriation to implement technical assistance in support of AHSC, the program has grown to focus on improving applicants' ability to successfully access CCI funds, often with a priority on the California's most disadvantaged communities.² In fiscal years 2016-2017 and 2018-2019, SGC received \$2 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to support implementation of TA across a variety of CCI programs – both within SGC and in partnership with other State agencies. In 2018, the Council approved an expenditure of \$5 million from the FY 2018-2019 AHSC continuous appropriation to expand technical assistance for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC), the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Climate Smart Agriculture programs, and the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC).

Division 44, Part 1 of the Public Resources Code, commencing with Section 75200, establishes the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program. The purpose of AHSC is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, and

¹ Leyva, 2018. Senate Bill No. 1072 (Chapter 377, Statutes of 2018); [Public Resources Code Sec. 71130 - 71132](#)

² Budget Act of 2015 ([Chapter 321, Statutes of 2015](#))



agricultural land preservation practices to support infill and compact development. AHSC also seeks to support related and coordinated public policy objectives including the following:

- Reducing air pollution;
- Improving conditions in disadvantaged communities;
- Supporting or improving public health;
- Improving connectivity and accessibility to jobs, housing, and services;
- Increasing options for mobility;
- Increasing transit ridership;
- Preserving and developing affordable housing for lower income households; and
- Protecting agricultural lands to support infill development.

Staff recommend that the Council approve an additional expenditure of \$2 million in FY 2019-2020 AHSC funds to continue existing TA efforts and implement new TA efforts in alignment with the AHSC statute. These funds will enable SGC to broaden TA to support communities throughout California in achieving their climate and environmental justice goals, while advancing the State's sustainable communities and GHG reduction objectives. Though the Council approved a TA expenditure of \$5 million in FY 2018-2019 AHSC continuous appropriation funds, this request takes into consideration the reduced amount of funding available across the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF).

Background

The Budget Act of 2015 (Chapter 321, Statutes of 2015) appropriated \$500,000 to SGC for a pilot technical assistance program for the AHSC Program. SGC contracted with three regional technical assistance teams to provide direct application assistance to selected applicants representing disadvantaged communities.³ SGC also invested a proportion of the funds was in capacity building activities for the AHSC program.

Assembly Bill 1613 (Chapter 370, Statutes of 2016) appropriated \$2 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for SGC to provide TA to disadvantaged communities. Additional \$2 million appropriations were made in both 2018 and 2019.⁴ This TA funding supported a broad range of efforts to increase the capacity of applicants in disadvantaged communities to successfully compete for CCI funds.

At the direction of SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018), SGC developed the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies, which offer best practices to help State agencies design and deliver effective TA and develop internal policies, standards, or practices to guide the ongoing provision of TA. The guidelines will encourage agencies to develop new TA efforts in partnership with SGC. To develop this guidance, SGC's CACE program convened a multi-agency work group comprising TA practitioners from 13 State agencies and departments.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed the "Funding Guidelines for Agencies that Administer California Climate Investments" (Funding Guidelines) to provide guidance on program implementation, including the performance of TA and community outreach to promote

³ As defined by CalEnviroScreen 3.0 <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30>

⁴ Budget Acts of 2018 (SB 840, Mitchel, Chapter 29) and 2019 (AB 74, Ting, Chapter 23)

program access and participation. The Funding Guidelines allow for the funding of TA for the purpose of implementing CCI programs. In 2018, the Council approved an expenditure of \$5 million from the AHSC continuous appropriation to advance the statutory goals of the AHSC statute through the CCI TA program.⁵

From 2016 to 2018, SGC staff worked with partner agencies to develop and administer TA efforts funded exclusively by the CCI TA program. Beginning in 2019, SGC began working with partner agencies to develop TA programs partially or wholly funded by individual CCI program funds. To support implementation of these TA efforts, SGC has provided match funding and/or contracting and project management support. Examples of this approach include TA initiatives for Caltrans' Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program, the California State Transportation Agency's Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, the California Air Resource Board's Sustainable Transportation Equity Program, and California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Climate Smart Agriculture Program. This shared-funding model enables SGC to support a larger number of TA programs across agencies while ensuring that implementation follows proven-effective best practices for TA. The goal of this collaborative approach is to provide initial support as programs get started, with the long-term objective of agencies sustaining TA on their own.

Furthering Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Staff recommend approving an expenditure of \$2 million from the FY 2019-2020 AHSC continuous appropriation to provide TA for programs that advance the objectives of the AHSC Program. The enabling statute for AHSC calls for the program to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices to support infill and compact development." (Pub. Res. Code § 75200). The TA projects funded through this expenditure will align with the AHSC statute and promote objectives related to sustainable community planning, and to reducing both greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. In the past, TA programs funded through similar expenditures by the Council have included AHSC, SALC, and CDFA's University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) collaborative project. If the Council approves this expenditure, SGC would use these funds to further technical assistance for these programs as well as for additional innovative programmatic, place-based capacity building, and tribal TA efforts for AHSC-aligned programs.

- **Programmatic TA:** Technical Assistance that furthers the objectives of specific CCI programs with a focus on supporting communities during the application phase. Programmatic TA can also include technical assistance that supports the implementation of awarded projects as well as capacity building support that engages with potential applicants earlier on in the program phase, typically outside of an application window.
- **Place-Based Capacity Building TA:** Technical assistance that engages with communities to assess challenges, identify funding sources, develop projects, engage stakeholders, and begin applying for funding. This TA approach is not specific to any

⁵ Health and Safety Code Section 39719 (b)(1)(c) provides a 20 percent continuous appropriation from the GGRF to SGC for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program.

single CCI program and helps communities develop a set of strategies to pursue a portfolio of projects and funds.

- **Tribal TA:** Technical Assistance that engages with California Tribes. Given the unique challenges faced by Tribal communities in competing for funding, this technical assistance approach focuses on working in partnership with Tribal governments and stakeholders to advance priority projects and apply for CCI funding.

Programmatic TA

As CCI implementing agencies and staff continue to expand outreach efforts and improve program accessibility, State agencies and stakeholders recognize that lower-resourced communities still face impediments to securing funds from these competitive programs. The CCI TA Program improves access to CCI programs by helping under-resourced applicants apply for funds and implement projects that reduce GHGs while centering equitable practices.

Each California Climate Investments program has its own set of goals and intended outcomes, often requiring specific technical expertise to support applicants. In many cases TA comes through a partnership between State agencies and outside organizations with expertise in a program's focus area. In addition to providing full or partial funding for these TA programs through the CCI TA program, SGC staff offer direct program management and/or strategic guidance to ensure successful implementation and ongoing program sustainability.

A description of each of the CCI programs that have participated in the CCI TA program appears in Appendix A, CCI TA Partnerships.

Recent Achievements

- In 2019 and 2020 the CCI TA Program provided TA to 661 applicants across five programs: Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation, Transformative Climate Communities, BOOST, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Healthy Soils Program.
- 23 Round 5 AHSC applicants received application assistance through the CCI TA program, 14 of which were awarded funds, including the program's first Tribal applicant.
- A key example of success with the partnership model is SGC's partnership with the CDFA to provide TA to farmers and ranchers that are applying to CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Programs. Following a successful pilot, SGC contributed partial funds to a partnership between CDFA and the UC ANR to assist growers in implementing solutions to mitigate climate change, which resulted in reduced greenhouse gas emissions as well as a number of other environmental and economic benefits. The program prioritizes assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

Moving Forward

If this additional expenditure is approved, SGC's CACE team will continue to work with State agencies to identify opportunities to expand upon existing TA and initiate new TA efforts for programs that align with the AHSC statute. SGC's Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies can facilitate engagement with other agencies and departments to develop and

implement new TA programs that align with proven standards. The Council's \$2 million expenditure for TA will enable staff to work more closely with partnering agencies to leverage the TA Guidelines in implementing new TA programs with a focus on supporting under-resourced communities. Further, a key opportunity exists to support communities with existing planning grants in identifying and leveraging Federal, State, and local funding sources for implementation of plan elements.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased number of applications and awards from target communities and/or regions
- Increase in cross-sector partnerships to apply for and implement CCI grants that advance AHSC statutory objectives
- Development of stronger projects that reduce GHGs and provide meaningful benefits to under-resourced communities
- Increased engagement of community-based organizations and other non-traditional partners in projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices

Place-Based Capacity Building TA

SGC's place-based capacity building initiatives have modeled an approach that assists communities in identifying funding available to address their climate priorities, while laying the groundwork needed to submit competitive funding requests. The TA programs are not specific to any individual funding program but are instead intended to equip communities with the resources necessary to pursue funds from a variety of sources to address local and regional needs.

The BOOST program, a partnership with the Institute for Local Government, has focused on building the capacity of 10 cities and two regions, to address climate-related needs such as improving air quality, supporting affordable housing development, and increasing mobility options in disadvantaged communities. The framework for BOOST includes a flexible approach to assist jurisdictions with their highest-priority needs that intersect with sustainable communities planning. In addition to explicit climate objectives, examples of complementary focus areas for BOOST communities include improving economic development, homelessness, and community engagement. The added capacity provided through BOOST has already led to nearly 50 grant applications and several awards, including a \$20 million Infill Infrastructure Grant Award to the City of Mammoth Lakes, an \$11.4 million AHSC award to the City of Arcata and the Yurok Indian Housing Authority, and a \$200 thousand TCC planning grant to Environmental Health Coalition in partnership with the City of San Diego.

Moving Forward

Beginning in 2019, SGC's CACE program conducted a listening tour to engage with over 40 stakeholder groups including local jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and statewide advocates. Nearly all stakeholders expressed a need for further investment in upstream capacity building to support under-resourced communities in successfully competing for future rounds of AHSC and other CCI programs. Given the complexity of these funding

programs, ensuring that TA that can be tailored to the unique needs of various communities can help improve access to necessary and transformative funding related for sustainable communities planning.

This \$2 million expenditure will enable SGC to further support capacity building programs that address specific local needs around climate and equity. Further, as under-resourced communities struggle to respond to the impacts of COVID-19, more flexible, tailored TA will enable SGC to respond to the unique issues these communities face – economic development and public health – while advancing strategies that increase compact development and access to affordable housing and transit. As more federal funding becomes available through the CARES Act and other funding streams, State TA can support disadvantaged communities in accessing these resources while integrating climate-smart strategies.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased participation by under-resourced communities in CCI programs that align with and advance AHSC statutory objectives
- Greater share of CCI funds awarded to under-resourced communities across CCI programs
- Development of climate and equity focused collaboratives, coalitions, and initiatives within under-resourced communities
- More established pipelines of CCI eligible projects within under-resourced communities
- Stronger peer-to-peer engagement across under-resourced communities

Expanded Tribal TA

Currently, 33 CCI programs list federally recognized Tribal governments as eligible applicants. While the State has established a clear government-to-government relationship for the purposes of Tribal consultation, it has less experience making grants to Tribes. As the State seeks to increase access to programs, especially those that seek to advance sustainable communities planning strategies, it must make available adequate resources to support under-resourced Tribal applicants. In its fifth funding round, AHSC received and funded its first application from a Tribal entity that received application assistance from an AHSC TA from a provider with robust experience working with Tribes.

Moving Forward

As detailed in a companion staff report on the Racial Equity Action Plan, SGC is supporting a contract to conduct a Statewide Gap Analysis of Tribal Lands – part of the Tribal Government Challenge Program SGC is administering in coordination with the California Energy Commission (CEC). The analysis will capture Tribes' current renewable energy, climate change, land-use, and other related needs and priorities. Certain CCI programs will arise as opportunities to address identified gaps, so it is important to ensure TA resources are available to help Tribes to secure those funds and implement projects.

Additionally, as part of the TA Guidelines for State Agencies, SGC has developed a Tribal Appendix that provides specific guidance for agencies designing TA for Tribes. As CCI-administering agencies seek to implement this guidance, the State must make resources available to support the development and implementation of TA to meet the unique needs of Tribal communities in competing for funding. SGC will proactively reach out to Tribal-eligible programs to identify TA needs and support the development of Tribal specific TA with a focus on advancing AHSC statutory objectives.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased participation of Tribal communities in CCI programs that advance land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices
- Higher number of Tribal applicants and awards across Tribal-eligible CCI programs aligned with AHSC's objectives
- More established relationships between Tribes and State agencies through TA

Next Steps

Following Council approval of this expenditure, staff will maintain and build on existing partnerships with State agencies and pursue new opportunities to implement technical assistance programs in alignment with the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies. Staff will collaborate with relevant CCI programs and departments to identify TA gaps and needs, particularly related to Tribes and under-resourced communities responding to Covid-19. SGC will enter into new partnerships and contracts to advance the goals of the AHSC statute.

Through an existing contract with SGC's CCI TA evaluation team, SGC is assessing the historic effectiveness of the TA program, identifying opportunities to refine and strengthen the program, and developing standardized metrics for evaluating CCI TA programs. SGC will integrate these metrics and other findings into TA program design and update the TA Guidelines based on these findings. On an annual basis, SGC will report to the Council on the outcomes of the CCI TA program and the use of these funds.

Council Recommendation

Approve a \$2 million expenditure of FY 2019-2020 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program continuous appropriation funds to support continued Technical Assistance activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices.

Appendix A: CCI TA Partnerships

CCI Program	Approach to TA	Agency
Active Transportation Program (ATP)	<i>Localized assistance to five disadvantaged communities to prepare bike lane/sidewalk projects, cultivate partnerships between community and local jurisdictions, and prepare to apply for ATP and/or various CCI funding sources</i>	Caltrans
Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP)	<i>Ten statewide convenings to inform transit agencies and community members about formula-based transportation funding and conduct strategic discussion on LCTOP projects that meet community-identified needs.</i>	Caltrans
Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)	<i>Assistance to four TIRCP awardees, and coordination with local community-based organizations, in preparing key transportation and transit station access provisions that serve disadvantaged communities.</i>	CalSTA
Community Solar Program	<i>Phase I – Community engagement sessions focused on partnership development to prepare for future solar projects. Phase II - Assistance in implementing community solar that addresses community needs.</i>	CSD
Low Carbon Transportation Investments (LCTI)	<i>Eleven convenings organized in partnership with CBOs to increase awareness of LCTI funding opportunities, and build community capacity to identify potential projects, build local partnerships, and find appropriate programs and funding relevant to community needs.</i>	CARB
Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP)	<i>Application assistance and implementation support for applicants and awardees of the STEP program.</i>	CARB
CCI Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Application Assistance	<i>Services provided in the scope of this TA included holding workshops, GHG quantification, grant writing, and providing computer and internet assistance to applicants.</i>	CDFA
TA Partnership with UC ANR	<i>Ten Community Education Specialists hired throughout the state to grow the adoption of science-based climate smart farming and ranching practices and support farmers applying for CDFA’s Climate Smart Agriculture Programs.</i>	CDFA
Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC)	<i>Direct application assistance and capacity building activities directed at disadvantaged communities to prepare competitive AHSC applications.</i>	SGC
Deep Dive Technical Assistance	<i>Education on all CCI program opportunities for three jurisdictions, followed by direct application assistance to programs of interest to each jurisdiction.</i>	SGC
Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)	<i>Project development and application preparation services to develop TCC concept and full applications, as well as assistance with implementation of the project.</i>	SGC & DOC
Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)	<i>Outreach on the SALC planning grant program, followed by application assistance and implementation assistance for three communities in the San Joaquin Valley and</i>	SGC & DOC

CCI Program	Approach to TA	Agency
	<i>Southern California to build capacity around planning for agricultural land conservation.</i>	
BOOST Program	<i>Partnership with the Institute for Local Government to help 12 under-resourced communities (10 cities and two regions) create a framework for sustainable community planning that is customized and tailored to their specific needs. Through BOOST, ILG offers one-on-one support to each community that includes staff trainings, stakeholder and community engagement, and development of a realistic and sustainable implementation plan.</i>	SGC
Partners Advancing Climate Equity Cohort (PACE)	<i>PACE is a climate and equity learning collaborative with the objective of expanding community-based leadership around climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience planning and grant readiness.</i>	SGC
CCI TA Evaluation	<i>Evaluation of the effectiveness of the SGC’s technical assistance and capacity building efforts.</i>	SGC
Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) Community Science Fellows	<i>Collaboration with TEX on a new initiative to launch a cohort of California Community Science Fellows. The fellows will work with low income and disadvantaged communities to create collaborative, impactful community-driven research projects.</i>	SGC