



# Technical Assistance Guidelines Executive Summary



CALIFORNIA  
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## INTRODUCTION

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In California, the communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and pollution are often the least equipped to respond or prepare. To address this disparity, the State offers an array of programs that enable under-resourced, vulnerable, or disadvantaged communities to reduce local pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and implement projects and programs that increase equity and resilience. However, many communities eligible for these funds lack the capacity to access them. State-provided technical assistance (TA) is essential to ensuring under-resourced communities both know about and build the capacity to apply for and secure State funding that supports equitable community-driven transformation.

Recognizing the importance of technical assistance in meeting the State's climate and equity goals, the State enacted Senate Bill 1072 (2018, Leyva), directing the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to develop "Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies" (TA Guidelines). These TA Guidelines compile capacity building and technical assistance best practices from a variety of State agencies and serve as a resource for State agency staff seeking to provide TA for the first time, or to expand or improve their current TA services.

**For the purposes of this document, Technical Assistance (TA) is the provision of targeted support to an agency, organization, or community with a development need or resource gap. TA may be delivered in many ways, including one-on-one consultation, small group facilitation, technical resources and analysis, or through a web-based clearinghouse. TA is one of the most effective methods for building the capacity of an organization.**

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

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The TA Guidelines are a critical component of SGC's Racial Equity Action plan, which staff developed in 2018-2019 through participation in the Capitol Cohort, a one-year pilot training program for California State agencies led by the non-profit Government Alliance on Race and Equity. The plan outlines concrete actions that SGC is taking to achieve racial equity in the organization's operations, programs, and policies in order to achieve its vision that all people in California live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race. TA is a critical tool for advancing social and racial equity by increasing access to State funding programs and other opportunities for the state's most under-resourced and historically under-invested communities. By providing a roadmap for State agencies to implement effective and equitable TA and capacity building activities, the TA Guidelines build the capacity of State agencies to advance California's equity goals.

## GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

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In early 2020, SGC convened a Technical Assistance Work Group comprising of staff from 13 State agencies in order to gather input from TA and capacity building experts whose work cover a variety of sectors and issue areas (see below for list of participating agencies). SGC staff worked closely with this group to ensure the guidelines would reflect broad experience with TA in order to be both relevant and applicable to a wide range of sectors, grant types, and community stakeholders. During this time, SGC hosted listening sessions with representatives of approximately 40 entities, including local and regional government agencies, professional organizations, non-profit organizations, philanthropies, and community groups to better understand barriers to achieving community-driven climate and equity goals. These conversations both informed the development of the TA Guidelines and provided staff with information to help SGC enhance its own capacity building and TA activities.

## USING THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

The primary audience for the TA Guidelines is State agencies seeking to implement TA for the first time or refine existing TA offerings. Specifically, the document offers guidance and best practices to support State agencies in evaluating options, making key decisions, and avoiding pitfalls as they develop effective TA programs. These TA Guidelines may also help TA providers and recipients interested in better understanding the State's TA processes.

While some sections of the document focus on implementing TA related to grant funding, most of the guidance also applies to TA that supports planning and policy implementation.

The TA Guidelines do not dive deeply into any one step in the process of designing a TA program; rather they outline a variety of TA delivery and contracting models that may apply to different types of TA provision. The document also covers best practices for engaging stakeholders in TA design as well as guidance on program management, program evaluation, and communications.

### FIVE MAIN SECTIONS COMPRISE THE TA GUIDELINES:

- » **Core Principles** highlights the key values and objectives that should guide all TA efforts. These core principles are critical to ensuring that TA and capacity building efforts result in equitable outcomes and generate long-term impact.
- » **Getting Started** provides an overview of key considerations and best practices to address when designing a TA program. It includes a three-step process for TA program design: (1) analyze needs and gaps, (2) set goals and intended outcomes, and (3) determine the TA program structure. The section also includes a description of the three main types of TA addressed in these Guidelines: Capacity Building TA, Application Assistance TA, and Implementation Assistance TA.

» **Nuts and Bolts** describes the different types of contracting methods available to State agencies, as well as some contracting best practices from a programmatic perspective. It also provides guidance on project management for TA initiatives.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES WORK GROUP

Staff from the following 13 State agencies worked closely with SGC to develop the TA Guidelines:

- » California Air Resources Board (CARB)
- » California Department of Conservation (DOC)
- » California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
- » California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- » California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- » California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- » California Energy Commission (CEC)
- » California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
- » California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
- » California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)
- » California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)
- » California Strategic Growth Council (SGC)
- » California Workforce Development Board (CWDB)

» **Evaluation** offers guidance on how to implement effective evaluation for TA, providing a variety of options programs can adapt to different budgets and types of TA activities.

» **Communications** discusses the importance of communicating about your agency's TA and capacity building activities and provides recommendations on how to work with public affairs staff as well as TA providers, TA recipients, and evaluators to support the development of useful communications materials and promote compelling storytelling.

The following appendices provide additional guidance and resources for implementing TA:

» **Appendix A: Tribal Technical Assistance Guidance** offers a robust overview of important considerations and recommendations for providing TA to California Native American Tribes, as well as key definitions and additional resources to consult in order to better serve Tribal Governments. Due to the historical context and unique considerations related to state engagement with Tribes, SGC chose to dedicate a full appendix to this topic, rather than spreading this guidance across the document. A Draft of the Tribal Appendix will be open for Tribal comment in summer 2020 and the final version will be added to the TA Guidelines in the fall (after the August Council meeting).

» **Appendix B: Case Studies** includes a curated compilation of TA program profiles that provide examples of diverse models of TA and capacity that State agencies have implemented thus far.

» **Appendix C: Resources** provides a list of other helpful manuals, toolkits, and reports that provide more detailed information on topics addressed in the TA Guidelines.

» **Appendix D:** Glossary

» **Appendix E:** Acronyms

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR AGENCIES INTERESTED IN PROVIDING TA

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SGC staff will present the final TA Guidelines for adoption at the August 2020 Council Meeting. Following the Council Meeting, SGC will create a web-based toolkit including the TA Guidelines, a number of case studies highlighting various State-funded TA and capacity building projects, and other resources and templates that can help inform the development of effective TA initiatives.

In order to effectively implement the TA Guidelines, SGC will continue to support State agencies in implementing TA and capacity building activities. SGC's Community Assistance for Climate Equity team is available to advise any agencies interested in such activities and connect them with members of the TA Guidelines Work Group to access additional expertise and support. Contact Kirin Kumar at [Kirin.Kumar@sgc.ca.gov](mailto:Kirin.Kumar@sgc.ca.gov) for more information.

## SGC'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS TO DATE

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SGC established the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program (CCI TA) in 2015 with an initial appropriation by the Legislature to support TA for applicants from disadvantaged communities to apply to SGC's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program. Building on the success of that effort, the Legislature expanded its appropriation for TA in 2016 to support grant applicants across the suite of California Climate Investment grant programs, which are funded through the State's Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds. Since its creation, CCI TA has supported low-income and disadvantaged communities in applying for a variety of funding programs spanning transportation, housing, energy, agriculture, urban greening, community-driven research, and climate resilience. Through this program, SGC provides TA adapted to the needs of each grant program, including application assistance, implementation assistance, and capacity building support. The table below provides a short description of each of SGC's TA efforts to date.

<b>CCI Program</b>	<b>Approach to TA</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Active Transportation Program (ATP)	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	<b>Caltrans</b>
Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP)	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.	<b>Caltrans</b>
Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)	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.	<b>CalSTA</b>
Community Solar Program	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.	<b>CSD</b>
Low Carbon Transportation Investments (LCTI)	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.	<b>CARB</b>
Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP)	Application assistance and implementation support for applicants and awardees of the STEP program.	<b>CARB</b>
CCI Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Application Assistance	Services provided in the scope of this TA included holding workshops, GHG quantification, grant writing, and providing computer and internet assistance to applicants.	<b>CDFA</b>
TA Partnership with UC ANR	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.	<b>CDFA</b>

<b>CCI Program</b>	<b>Approach to TA</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC)	Direct application assistance and capacity building activities directed at disadvantaged communities to prepare competitive AHSC applications.	<b>SGC</b>
Deep Dive Technical Assistance	Education on all CCI program opportunities for three jurisdictions, followed by direct application assistance to programs of interest to each jurisdiction.	<b>SGC</b>
Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)	Project development and application preparation services to develop TCC concept and full applications, as well as assistance with implementation of the project.	<b>SGC &amp; DOC</b>
Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)	Outreach on the SALC planning grant program, followed by application assistance and implementation assistance for three communities in the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California to build capacity around planning for agricultural land conservation.	<b>SGC &amp; DOC</b>
BOOST Program	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.	<b>SGC</b>
Partners Advancing Climate Equity Cohort (PACE)	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.	<b>SGC</b>
CCI TA Evaluation	Evaluation of the effectiveness of the SGC's technical assistance and capacity building efforts.	<b>SGC</b>
Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) Community Science Fellows	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.	<b>SGC</b>

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