

Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program

Regional Climate Collaboratives Program Round 2 DRAFT Guidelines



CALIFORNIA
STRATEGIC
G R O W T H
C O U N C I L

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I. About the RCC Program

A. Navigating the RCC Program Process and Guidelines

These Guidelines are a step-by-step guide for learning more about, applying for, and participating in the Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) Regional Climate Collaborative Program (RCC). They reflect legislative requirements on how to use and manage RCC funds. The Guidelines also incorporate lessons learned from Round 1 and feedback gathered through an applicant survey and applicant debrief conversations.

RCC staff will post these draft guidelines and present them at public workshops to solicit public comments over 30 days. Staff will review and incorporate public workshop input and submitted public comments on the Round 2 Draft Guidelines before the SGC adopts Round 2 Final Guidelines. Currently, staff plan to present RCC Round 2 Final Guidelines to the Strategic Growth Council for adoption in June 2023. Then staff will develop and release the RCC R2 Notice of Funding Availability in July 2023. Staff will host public application workshops to provide additional information and resources to interested applicants. See *Section I - G. Timeline* below for those dates.

B. Background

About RCC

Senate Bill 1072 (Leyva, Chapter 377, Statutes of 2018) establishes RCC at SGC. Through Senate Bill 170, SGC received \$10 million to administer the program. As a capacity-building grant program, RCC enables cross-sectoral partners to deepen relationships and strengthen local coordination, leadership, knowledge, skills, and access to critical resources to drive and sustain climate action. The program aims to support both emerging and established collaboratives. RCC funding is divided into two funding tracks: small grants and large grants. Small grants will range from \$500,000 to \$999,999 and large grants will range from \$1,000,000 to \$1,750,000. SGC is committed to funding at least two Collaboratives from each funding track.

Vision for Racial Equity

SGC is committed to achieving racial equity in its operations, investments, and policy initiatives and to achieving its vision that: All people in California live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race.

C. Summary

- **Eligible Applicants:** California Native American Tribes, community-based organizations and non-profits, local public agencies, small businesses, and other organizations with a history of providing community-based outreach and technical assistance

- **Eligible Activities:** Partnership development, project and plan development, establishment of technical assistance programs or hubs to pursue climate funding, data collection, training and education
- **Funding Available for Round 2 Awards:** \$8.5M
 - Small grants between \$500,000 and \$999,999
 - Large grants between \$1M and \$1.75M
- **Project Lengths:** 36-month period
- **Grant Availability Type:** Competitive
- **Match Funding Required:** No
- **Disbursement Type:**
 - Advanced pay (available in installments up to 25% of the total grant amount)
 - Reimbursement
- **Technical Assistance:** Application support for applicants and implementation support for grantees

D. Program Contact

Community Assistance for Climate Equity – Regional Climate Collaboratives Program
 California Strategic Growth Council
 Program Email: CACE@sgc.ca.gov

E. Funding Availability

Funding is available on a competitive basis. Of the \$10M allotted to SGC, \$8.5 million is available for grant awards. The remainder of the funding supports implementation of the program through staff support and third-party technical assistance. The expected grant agreement start date is Spring 2024.

Award Amount by Funding Track

Applicants can request the amount of funding needed to carry out the work described in their proposal for the three-year grant term. Minimum and maximum award amounts will be determined based on the funding track. RCC staff may adjust the minimum and maximum award amounts based on demand or unique circumstances. Minimum and maximum award ranges are as follows:

Funding Track	Minimum Award Amount	Maximum Award Amount
<i>Small Grants</i>	\$500,000	<\$1,000,000
<i>Large Grants</i>	>\$1,000,000	\$1,750,000

F. Program Objectives

RCC invests in projects that advance the following key program objectives:

- 1. Develop Actionable Plans and Projects:** Activities conducted by Collaboratives will lead to the update and/or development of local plans as well as climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience projects that can be implemented if project funding is secured. Grant activities will build the local network capacity necessary for Collaborative members to develop competitive grant proposals.
- 2. Build Social Infrastructure:** Collaborative activities must build enduring and trusting relationships across members of the Collaborative, residents, and other stakeholder groups, and how the grant will support better regional coordination on the development and implementation of climate-related projects and applications.
- 3. Center Community Engagement & Decision Making:** Collaboratives must work with community members and stakeholders through direct engagement, involving residents and key stakeholders that have historically been excluded from decision making and implementation processes, in all phases of RCC project implementation. Collaboratives must also use proven methods of engagement to facilitate direct participation of community residents, including ensuring translation of meetings and materials, scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient to community members, and engaging community members in information gathering as well as outreach.
- 4. Develop Equity-centered Processes:** Collaboratives must demonstrate how the proposed activities will develop or improve local processes for under-resourced community residents, community-based organizations, and Tribes to co-lead decisions made about climate change-related priorities and projects at the local and/or regional level.

G. Timeline

The proposed timeline below is subject to change. The most up-to-date timeline is posted on the [RCC resources page](#).

Milestones	Dates
Draft Guidelines 30-Day Public Comment Period	March 15-April 15, 2023
Draft Guidelines Overview Webinar	March 20, 2023
Draft Guidelines Public Workshop Series	April 4-April 6 & April 10, 2023
Final Guidelines adopted by SGC	June 28, 2023
Notice of Funding Availability & Application Release	July 6, 2023
Application Workshop Series	Summer 2023 (dates TBD)
Pre-Proposals Due	September 6, 2023, 5pm

Milestones	Dates
Full Proposals Due	December 6, 2023, 5pm
Interagency Proposal Review & Scoring Period	December 2023-January 2024
Finalist Interviews	Mid-January 2024
Expected Notice of Recommended Awards Adopted	February 2024

II: Before Applying

The steps and sections below are meant to help applicants prepare their application. Before beginning the application process, SGC recommends that prospective applicants:

1. Determine whether they and their project are eligible by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements.
2. Review the Application Components & Scoring Criteria to determine what information and resources you need to gather to apply.
3. Review Program Expectations to understand what participating in RCC may involve.
4. Access application technical assistance by participating in Capacity Building Office Hours, Consultation Service Calls, optional application workshops, and direct questions to RCC staff for help.

A. Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants

Collaboratives may be comprised of the following organizations and entities:

California Native American Tribes: Native American tribes on the California tribal consultation contact list that the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) maintains per Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004 (Pub. Resources Code, § 21073).

Community-based Organizations and Nonprofits: 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations/foundations, tribal-serving organizations. Organizations, collaboratives, and networks that are fiscally sponsored by any of the organizations, and those fiscally sponsored by academic institutions, are also eligible.

Local Government Agencies: cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Councils of Governments (COGs), California institutions of higher education, special districts (e.g., school districts); public authorities; public agencies; political subdivisions; and public corporations (California GC § 811.2, excluding State Agencies).

Small Businesses: A business that is independently owned and operated; not be dominant in its field of operations; has its principal office located in California; have the

owners (or officers, if a corporation) domiciled in California; and including affiliates, be either: a business with 100 or fewer employees; with average annual gross receipts of \$15 million or less, over the last three tax years; OR, a manufacturer* with 100 or fewer employees; OR a microbusiness.

Other organizations with a history of providing community-based outreach or technical assistance: It is up to applicants to determine which organizations play this role in their community and provide justification to demonstrate this in their application. These organizations may vary according to local and regional context.

Collaboratives must have a minimum of four partners. Eligible applicants can serve as the Managing Stakeholder or a Partner (see more in the following section below).

B. Collaborative Stakeholder Structure

Together eligible applicants will establish a Collaborative Stakeholder Structure (CSS), which is how Collaboratives will organize and operationalize their shared governance model. The CSS is an innovative and foundational aspect of the program as RCC seeks to invest in diverse, cross-sectoral partnerships that facilitate consensus-oriented decision making and collective power sharing. The organizations that make up the Collaborative should work on a broad range of community priorities that span climate mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency. Each organization should bring different skills and knowledge to the CSS that allow the Collaborative to advance holistic, multi-benefit climate projects.

Managing Stakeholder

The Managing Stakeholder is the organization within the CSS who is responsible for administering the RCC Grant if awarded. To fulfill this role, the Managing Stakeholder needs to demonstrate their administrative and financial capacity to execute the grant agreement. The Managing Stakeholder may serve the Collaborative in other capacities (such as convener, facilitator, network weaver, subject matter expert, etc.).

If an organization with a fiscal sponsor is interested in applying as the Managing Stakeholder, they will need to provide a clear description in the application of their ability to effectively administer the grant and the role of their fiscal sponsor in doing so.

Partners

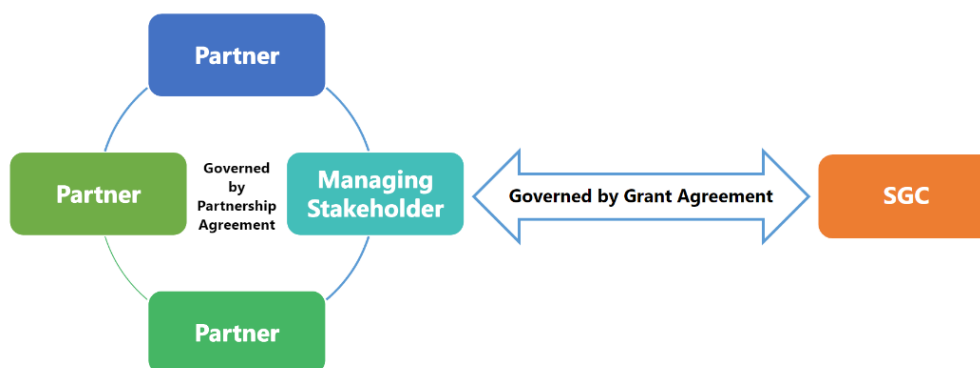
Partners are funded members of the CSS not serving in the Managing Stakeholder role. Partners will be responsible for implementing specific capacity building activities stipulated within the Collaborative's application narrative and workplan. Partners should bring different expertise and skills to deliver on their components of the Collaborative's shared work. Partners should also have established trust with the communities they will serve through RCC.

Partnership Agreement

Within the RCC application, applicants must develop a Partnership Agreement that describes the governance, organization, and financial relationships of the CSS. The

Partnership Agreement can be submitted as an unsigned draft. If awarded, SGC may request changes to the terms of the Partnership Agreement during the post-award consultation process. The Partnership Agreement will need to be executed before the Grant Agreement is signed.

The CSS will govern implementation of the entire RCC Grant. Applicants may design their CSS to best align with their needs, but the Partnership Agreement must respond to the requirements listed in Section III – D. *Application Components and Scoring Criteria*.



Supporters

SGC recognizes that applicants may choose to engage organizations in their grant activities that may not be a funded partner within the CSS. For this reason, the RCC application allows for applicants to include Supporters. Supporters are entities that the Collaborative will work with to leverage community engagement, policy making, and technical assistance opportunities. Unlike Partners, Supporters are not funded by the RCC grant and instead plan to offer in-kind time and resources to help advance the work of the Collaborative. Applicants can include Supporters within their CSS and Partnership Agreement if they would like, but it is not mandatory to do so. Including Supporters in an RCC application is optional and is meant to help applicants leverage existing relationships and efforts. Supporters may provide Letters of Support to include with the RCC application as desired.

C. Eligible Activities

Applicants should propose activities that advance a broad range of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience objectives through capacity building and technical assistance. Applicant work plans must address all of the mandatory activities below and are welcome to also include optional activities as desired.

Mandatory Activities

The RCC program includes a set of mandatory activities, categorized into four key types. The mandatory activities are intentionally broad, and applicants will be responsible for describing what they look like within their proposed work plan. Within the application

materials, applicants will complete an Activity Table that will help applicants develop tasks and subtasks that include the mandatory activities.

1. Relationship Building, Priority Identification, Plan and Project Development:

- Coordinate members of Collaboratives to build relationships across organizations and define shared values, vision, and principles of how to work together
- Support the development of partnerships between stakeholders and public, private, and philanthropic funding sources
- Conduct community engagement within under-resourced communities
- Convene stakeholders to discuss community needs regarding potential climate change mitigation and adaptation projects eligible for statewide or other grant programs with specific allocations for under-resourced communities
- Develop and align community and project plans that benefit under-resourced communities, including climate action plans, that demonstrate local needs and identify multiple-benefit projects for implementation
- Assist in the development of local job training and anti-displacement policies and programs

2. Serve as a Local Technical Assistance Provider/Hub

- Conduct outreach and build awareness of competitive grant programs
- Provide policy, program, and technical assistance expertise to develop and align multi-benefit projects with potential funding supports
- Offer assistance and training for grant application development, project management, implementation, and monitoring
- Serve as an intermediary between stakeholders and technical experts from State agencies and other organizations

3. RCC Project Evaluation

- Develop a project evaluation plans (with the support of third-party TA provider)
- Conduct data collection, tracking, and reporting associated with grant deliverables

4. Engage in Peer Learning

- Each Collaborative will identify members to form a peer learning team to participate in SGC-facilitated peer learning for RCC Grantees. This may include both attending trainings led by SGC and technical assistance providers as well as contributing to peer-learning sessions. Collaboratives will be surveyed on training needs and convened quarterly for virtual trainings and knowledge exchanges.

If an applicant deems that a mandatory activity is unnecessary for their proposal, they must consult with SGC to waive that specific requirement. SGC will consider such requests as long as the Proposal sufficiently complies with the overall program goals. If SGC approves an applicant's request to waive one of the required activities, the omission of this activity from the applicant's work plan will not impact scoring as long as the proposal is aligned with RCC program objectives. Consultation requests must be made during the Pre-Proposal

period. Applicants can complete a waiver if interested in a consultation. The waiver will be available on the RCC resources page on SGC's website once the NOFA and application materials are released.

Optional Activities

The following list includes two categories of optional activities that Collaboratives may incorporate into their work plan. Applicants will be required to describe what these optional activities entail within their application.

1. Data Collection and Analysis

- Conduct data collection and analysis that helps identify existing conditions, identify community priorities, and identify impact of possible projects

2. Education and Training

- Provide education and training for entities within the Collaborative and stakeholders within the communities of focus that build the region's capacity to compete for grants and implement projects in the future. This includes:
 - Educational curriculum-based courses on relevant topics and issue areas
 - Trainings on specific tools, programs, and policy topics
 - Peer learning and trainings between Collaboratives and other related regional collaboration efforts
 - Peer learning and trainings across members of an individual Collaborative

D. Project Deliverables

Project activities must result in the creation of clear deliverables. Deliverables should serve as lasting resources to support ongoing capacity building in the region. Required deliverables are outlined below.

Regular Reports

Collaboratives must submit regular invoices and high-level reports on an interval set by SGC and the Grantee. SGC will provide a reporting template for grantees to use. For more information on reporting and invoicing requirements, see *V. Awarded Applicants - A. Grant Agreements & Administration*.

RCC Action Plan

To orient the efforts of Collaboratives, partners will use the beginning of the grant term to develop an action plan that specifies key activities, identifies roles and responsibilities, and establishes timelines. Action plans should be informed by an analysis of intended outcomes, capacity building needs, and ways to maximize the impact of activities conducted through the grant. While Grantees should plan to complete their Action Plan within the first year of the grant term, they may amend the scope of the plan in consultation with SGC.

Action Plans should include, at minimum:

- Roles and responsibilities for different members of the Collaborative in achieving elements of the overall work plan
- Additional detail on activities conducted as part of the grant term
- Evaluation Plan created in concert with SGC and technical assistance providers
- Analysis that identifies the necessary additional inputs, such as data or other resources, to successfully implement and maximize the impact of grant activities.

This may include:

- An analysis used to identify the strengths, barriers, assets, relationships, and resources available to the Collaborative to accomplish the project workplan
- A review and/or analysis of existing plans, community engagement efforts, and needs assessments to help focus areas for additional engagement
- An assessment of local policies to identify opportunities to facilitate implementation of community priorities.

The RCC Action Plan must be developed by the Collaborative with community participation and using decision-making processes established in the governance structure, as detailed in the Partnership Agreement for the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure. It should build on the activities and roles submitted as part of the workplan and Collaborative Stakeholder Structure components of the RCC application. Action Plan will serve as a tool to guide project implementation and to hold partners accountable to one another and the community around activities and outcomes.

Capacity Building Toolbox

Each grantee must develop a Regional Capacity Building Toolbox that compiles capacity building outputs created over the course of the RCC grant. The goal of the Toolbox is to serve as a resource to partners in the region to access capacity building resources on an ongoing basis, support efforts to pursue grant funding, and inform further capacity building work beyond the term of the grant. The Toolbox will be due at the end of the grant term. The following list includes examples of useful items to include within the Capacity Building Toolbox.

- A compilation of climate data to understand key climate change risks and vulnerabilities facing the region, including anticipated disproportionate impacts for marginalized populations
- A directory of organizations within the region that may be able to support or partner on grant applications
- A directory of State, Federal, and other grant programs that address community needs
- Information about priority State, Federal, and other grant programs that could fund Collaboratives' priority projects, including timelines, requirements and other considerations for developing applications
- Data collected and/or analyzed that provides information on existing conditions, community needs, and any other relevant information for the purpose of developing projects
- Description and outline of community priorities identified or expanded on during the grant term

- Education and training materials developed through the grant
- Documentation of best practices and lessons learned for Collaborative, including information about community-led processes used to develop climate-related plans and projects

Community Climate Solutions Inventory

In Collaboratives must work with SGC to develop an inventory of the priority plans and projects that the Collaboratives developed or updated during the grant term and intend to seek funding to implement. Applicants can think of this as a compilation of projects that are funding ready. Collaboratives can use the Community Climate Solutions Inventory to communicate their priorities locally and regionally and to various funders. Collaboratives will have creative freedom to design this how they see fit. Formats could include an Excel spreadsheet, designed infographic, interactive dashboard, etc.

Annual Reporting

Collaboratives must submit an annual report to SGC that includes all of the following:

- The members of the Collaborative
- Populations served
- An outline of all the activities conducted as part of the project workplan
- Project and grant development, application, and completion
- Meetings and actions taken by the Collaborative
- An accounting of the administration and expenditures made by the Collaborative
- The outcome of each activity, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - Technical assistance provided
 - Success of grants applied for
 - Projects commenced and completed
- The efficacy of capacity building within the region based on outcome indicators included within the Collaborative's Evaluation Plan.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF TRIBAL DATA

Tribal data and Traditional Ecological Knowledge may be excluded from all project deliverables to ensure confidentiality. SGC will work with the Grantee to ensure a clear process for excluding confidential Tribal data in the Grant Agreement.

E. Eligible Costs

The list below provides eligible costs for using grant funds. Applicants must ensure that the costs proposed in the project budget are eligible for funding. Costs deemed ineligible in the application review process will be removed and the project's recommended total award will be adjusted accordingly.

Staff Costs

Grant recipients, subgrantees, and their contractors' staff costs, including salary at an hourly rate, benefits, taxes, and leave. Staff may be full or part time employees.

If Applicants wish to use grant funds to pay for interns, fellows, or other positions that are not on an organization's payroll, these costs should be classified in the budget as a direct cost via a consultant contract (more below).

Consultants

Collaboratives may reserve up to 10% of their budgets for consultant costs. The purpose of this allowable expense is to enable Collaboratives to access specific technical expertise to assist with components of the Collaborative's work plan as needed.

Collaboratives may also opt to include consultants as a formal partner within their CSS. If that is the case, applicants must describe how the consultant firm meets the applicant eligibility criteria. Consultants who are formal partners may have budgets that exceed the 10% cap.

Travel Costs

Travel reimbursements must adhere to the State rates and conditions established on the CalHR website, with the exception of "incidentals" and out-of-state travel, which will not be reimbursable under this grant.

Tools, Subscriptions, and Software

Subscriptions to tools and other software that will help increase capacity, facilitate communication, or otherwise facilitate implementation of the project such as project management software, video conferencing technology subscriptions, and mapping software.

Engagement, Outreach, Education, and Training

Costs related to the development and administration of engagement, outreach, education, and training activities under the grant, including, but not limited to:

- Materials developed for outreach events, trainings, and other grant activities
- Access to proprietary data or research materials
- Facilitation for meetings
- Translation and interpretation for meetings and written materials
- Marketing and advertisements
- Participant compensation that is an exchange of payment for services rendered in the development of community work products, and appropriately documented with deliverables such as sign in sheets or written surveys. Note that leaflets, advertisements, and marketing materials about the events should not advertise compensation to induce participation.
- Transportation stipends and provision of transportation services for community residents, such as a vanpool
- Rental costs of equipment, facilities, or venues
- Provision of childcare services for community residents at Collaborative sponsored events

- Food and refreshments that are determined to be an integral part of the event. Examples of activities where it would be appropriate to approve food purchase would include a design charrette held in the evening, where the meal is consumed as part of the event and replaces a meal otherwise missed by attending the event.

Peer Learning

Applicants must set aside 3-5% of their total direct costs for peer-to-peer learning across selected Collaboratives.

Evaluation

Applicants must set aside 3-5% of their total direct costs for evaluation costs. The amount should be decided depending on the existing capacity of the applicants to participate in evaluation activities including coordinating with third-party TA provider.

Collaborative Stakeholder Structure Partners

Applicants may set aside up to fifteen percent (15%) of total direct costs from the budget to account for new Partners added during the grant term.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant activity but are necessary for the general operation of the organization. These are costs incurred by the recipient to administer the grant, or costs incurred by subgrantees to perform the tasks necessary to fulfill the deliverables outlined in these guidelines. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Office space
- Supplies
- Legal or management oversight
- Prorated general liability, workers' compensation (may be included in payroll), and automotive insurance.

Ineligible Costs

- Costs that occur outside of the Grant Agreement term
- Direct and indirect construction costs
- Direct lobbying: behavior that seeks to influence an elected or public official on an issue, such as passage of a legislative bill.
- Indirect costs in excess of 30 percent of total direct costs
- The following costs associated with community engagement and outreach:
 - Direct cash benefits or subsidies to participants
 - Alcoholic refreshments
 - Participant incentives, such as door prizes or swag bags. This is distinct from participant compensation where participants are providing data or service to the program through their participation.
 - General meetings that do not specifically discuss or advance implementation of the RCC Project

F. Eligible Project Area

There are two components to the project area: Region and Communities of Focus. The purpose of this is to foster both place-based capacity building and enhance regional coordination.

Region

The Region is the boundary of the Collaborative's focus. For RCC, applicants should identify the region they are working within. A project's region should be defined by shared natural, political, and built environment systems; climate risks; and/or other shared challenges or dynamics. Applicants may choose to work within a 'region' that is pre-defined by another initiative to the extent that it is helpful to accomplishing their workplan. However, doing so will not receive any preference in scoring or award selection. **However an applicant determines their regional boundary, the region must be contiguous and should not exceed eight counties.**

Communities of Focus

The Communities of Focus are the census tracts representing the communities and neighborhoods where the Collaborative would conduct its place-based work. A Community of Focus could be a single census tract or a cluster of census tracts. **Collaboratives must serve a minimum of two Communities of Focus, and at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the census tracts identified within the Communities of Focus must meet SB 1072's definition of under-resourced:**

- Census tracts identified as disadvantaged by the California Environmental Protection Agency; **OR**
- Census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code; **OR**
- Census tracts with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average

SGC will provide RCC applicants with a mapping tool to support determining eligible Communities of Focus. The mapping tool will be released with the NOFA.

Connecting the Regional and Place-Based Components

The purpose of the program is to enable meaningful capacity building activities to advance climate action in under-resourced communities. Collaboratives must conduct place-based capacity building work within their Communities of Focus to identify and pursue climate projects to implement within these census tracts. The regional aspect of the program aims to help Collaboratives leverage, complement, and build on existing regional efforts. It also provides an avenue for the Communities of Focus to engage in region-wide coordination and policymaking as well as share best practices and lessons learned from their place-based projects.

Both at the regional and place-based levels, Collaboratives can support public engagement to inform planning efforts, build effective relationships between government entities and communities, build the capacity of community-based organizations to engage in planning and policy initiatives, and provide technical assistance to inform specific elements of plans or policies. This work is integral to establishing a policy environment that informs a steady stream of projects, directs funding and resources to specific community needs, and supports competitiveness for funding.

III. Preparing and Submitting an Application

Applicants will submit applications electronically. SGC will provide additional information about the application process with the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and application materials.

A. Application Process

RCC includes a two-step application process, both of which are required.

1. Pre-Proposal: Applicants must submit a Pre-Proposal by September 6, 2023. The purpose of the Pre-Proposal is to help applicants, TA providers, and SGC assess whether applicants are on track to submit a complete, competitive application that meets all threshold requirements and to identify sections of the application that will need increased support. While Pre-Proposals are not scored, SGC will provide feedback on Pre-Proposals to help applicants strengthen their Full Proposal. Submitting a Pre-Proposal is required to move forward to the Full Proposal phase.

2. Full Proposal: Applicants must submit a Full Proposal by December 6, 2023. Building off the Pre-Proposal, the Full Proposal requires more detail and final versions of the budget and work plan. Applicants can modify their project between the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal.

B. Application Help/Technical Assistance

SGC will provide third-party technical assistance (TA) to support application development. The third-party TA team includes the following organizations: Estolano Advisors, Better World Group, California Coalition for Rural Housing, and the Institute for Local Government.

Capacity Building Office Hours

The TA team is offering bi-weekly Capacity Building Office Hours on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Pacific time. These are a space for previous and prospective applicants to ask questions about program requirements and workshop application concepts. Capacity Building Office Hours started on February 22, 2023, and will continue through July 19, 2023. Please join using this [Zoom link](#).

Consultation Service Calls

The TA Team will host a limited number of one-on-one Consultation Service Calls for applicants who submitted a Pre-Proposal or Full Application to Round 1 of the RCC Program. Priority will be given to applicants from Tribal, rural, and unincorporated communities. Applicants who meet these criteria can contact SGC for more information at CACE@sgc.ca.gov.

Application Workshops

RCC staff will hold the optional application workshops via Zoom in mid-to late July. The dates and Zoom registration links will be available with the NOFA.

C. Threshold Criteria

The following threshold criteria must be met in order for an application to be thoroughly reviewed and scored.

General Completeness

- All application materials are submitted and complete
- Requested funding amount falls within the funding track award range

Eligible Applicants

- The Managing Stakeholder is an eligible applicant
- The Managing Stakeholder provides appropriate documentation, confirming ability to apply for and receive RCC funds if awarded (letter of authorization, resolution, etc.)
- All Partners are eligible applicants

Eligible Project Area

- The Region is contiguous and does not exceed eight counties
- 75% of the Communities of Focus are under-resourced and comprised of a minimum of two census tracts

D. Application Components and Scoring Criteria

Application Components

To be considered eligible for funding, the application should be fully complete and submitted before the application deadline. The application includes the components listed below.

- **Narrative Responses:** Applicants will respond to a series of questions that offer detailed description of the applicant's project proposal.
- **Work Plan, Timeline and Budget:** Applicants will complete an Excel workbook that outlines the proposed work, timeline of work, and budget breakdown.
- **Project Area Map:** Applicants will provide a map that identifies their Region and Communities of Focus.

- **Draft Partnership Agreement:** Together the Managing Stakeholder and Partners will develop a draft Partnership Agreement that details the organization and decision-making processes of their CSS. The Partnership Agreement does not need to be signed unless awarded.
- **Letters of Commitment for all Partners:** All Partners must submit a signed letter to demonstrate their commitment to and ability to contribute to their RCC project if awarded.
- **Resolution or Letter of Authorization for the Managing Stakeholder:** Managing Stakeholders must verify their ability to accept and execute the grant if awarded through one of these two forms of documentation. Please see the paragraph below for more details.

If the Managing Stakeholder is a public agency, they must provide evidence of a passed formal resolution in the RCC Proposal that includes an authorization to apply for and accept an RCC Grant, and authority to execute all related documents if awarded. If the Managing Stakeholder is a Tribe or an eligible applicant that is not a public agency, they must include either an authorization in the form of a formal letter OR a resolution passed by the organization's governing body that includes authorization to apply for and accept an RCC Grant, and authority to execute all related documents if awarded.

Scoring Criteria

The following scoring criteria will be applied at the Full Proposal stage, following the Pre-Proposal. The table shows the maximum amount of points each component of the application can earn, and the text below describes how each of these components will be evaluated. Additional information on the application process will be provided in the Notice of Funding Availability.

Application Components	Total Points Possible
Vision	5
Project Need and Region	40
Program Objectives and Activities	40
Collaborative Stakeholder Structure	40
Workplan and Budget	25
Interviews	10
Full Proposal Total	150 points
Proposal & Interview Total	160 points

Vision – 5 points

The vision statement communicates a concise set of desired outcomes for the Collaborative's work. Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the vision statement effectively communicates the capacity building needs of under-resourced communities served by the Collaborative, demonstrates how the proposed activities would address those needs, and reflects the RCC Program Objectives with achievable outcomes.

Project Need and Region – 40 points

This section should provide readers with a clear justification of the geographic focus and capacity building activities proposed by the Collaborative. The project need should be specific and clearly outline the climate, environmental, and socio-economic, and community-wide factors that necessitate capacity building at the various scales proposed by the Collaborative. This application component will be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. Applicant makes a clear case for their definition of the Region and Communities of Focus as proposed, with an explanation of the factors that identify them as a region, and why the selected under-resourced communities within the region were selected. Applicant provides a clear map of the geographic region and under-resourced communities of focus identified to justify project area focus. (8 points)
2. Proposed workplan demonstrates focus on the communities with the most need. Applicant considers both the proportion of under-resourced communities served above threshold requirements and the proportion of under-resourced communities within the overall region. (8 points)
3. Applicant provides a clear description of priority climate issues experienced by communities within the region as well as any gaps in data or knowledge about climate issues or potential impacts facing the region. (8 points)
4. Applicant provides a clear description of the Region and Communities of Focus' previous success in receiving climate-related funding, as well as the extent to which the funded projects address under-resourced communities' climate-related needs. (8 points)
5. Applicant demonstrates awareness of existing capacity building efforts within the region and alignment with existing activities. Applicant additionally explains how the Collaborative will add value to and leverage existing efforts. (8 points)

Program Objectives and Activities – 40 points

Program objectives and activities should reflect and build upon the vision statement. Activities should provide more specificity around necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes. Activities should align with overall RCC program objectives: developing actionable plans and projects, building social infrastructure, centering community engagement and decision making, and developing equity-centered processes. This application component will be evaluated by the following four criteria:

1. Develop Actionable Plans and Projects (10 points)
 - Proposed activities will lead to the development and alignment of climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation plans and projects.
 - Proposed activities should support the creation and/or refinement of policies and processes at the local/regional government level to support proposed projects.

- Proposed activities should focus on aligning plans, policies, funding resources, and other necessary inputs to support communities in pursuing competitive funding.
2. Building Social Infrastructure (10 points)
 - Proposed activities should build enduring and trusting relationships across members of the Collaborative, residents, local governments, and other stakeholders that will better position communities to coordinate on the development and implementation of climate related projects.
 - Proposed activities should develop new skills, competencies, knowledge, and partnerships within communities to inform climate related projects development and implementation.
 3. Centering Community Engagement and Decision Making in Collaborative Activities (10 points)
 - All activities of the Collaborative should promote and center effective community engagement and decision making.
 - Community engagement activities are included in the Work Plan, with descriptions of diverse and appropriate community engagement activities that will be used throughout the duration of the grant, including how the public will remain engaged and informed in Collaborative activities.
 4. Develop Equity-Centered Processes within the Community (10 points)
 - Proposed activities will develop or improve local processes for under-resourced community residents, community-based organizations, and Tribes to co-lead decisions made about climate change-related priorities and projects at the local and/or regional level.

Collaborative Stakeholder Structure – 40 points

The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure is the way in which the applicant, partners, and other stakeholders organize themselves, facilitate project management, and work to build network capacity. This structure should have a strong and diverse partnership with a Managing Stakeholder who has sufficient capacity to lead implementation of the workplan. Finally, the processes, tasks, and features that guide the functioning of the stakeholder structure demonstrates the Collaborative’s commitment to equity, ability to self-govern, and likelihood of sustaining itself beyond the grant term. This application component is evaluated on the following five aspects:

1. Collaborative includes a diverse representation of stakeholders that bring different skills and knowledge to advance holistic, multi-benefit climate projects. (8 points)
2. Managing Stakeholder demonstrates the experience and organizational capacity necessary to implement the RCC proposal. (8 points)
3. Applicants provide a clear and compelling description of existing partner relationships and how these existing or emerging relationships will contribute to the success of the partnership. (8 points)
4. Applicants demonstrate subject matter expertise and commitment to community engagement and partnership. (8 points)
5. Application includes a partnership agreement with effective and equitable governance structures, protocols, and other strategies to effectively sustain the partnership. (8 points)

Workplan and Budget – 25 points

The workplan is a set of capacity building activities that align with program objectives and collectively work to achieve the Collaborative’s vision. The applicant should provide a workplan that includes a description of activities and associated tasks, a timeline for completion of key tasks and deliverables, and Collaborative members involved in implementing tasks. The budget table should provide reviewers with a clear understanding of how the applicants have allocated time and funding resources to various elements of the workplan. The budget should allocate resources across entities within the Collaborative to lead or support on specific activities that reflect their strengths and experience. The budget strikes a balance between programmatic and staff costs and direct expenses to ensure effective project implementation. This application component will be evaluated by the following three criteria:

1. Applicant provides a comprehensive work plan that includes a description of activities and associated tasks, and Collaborative members involved in implementing each task and subtask. Workplan provides sufficient description of how tasks will advance program objectives. Workbook includes a feasible timeline for completion of key tasks and deliverables. (8 points)
2. The workplan addresses a diversity of climate-related issues and each Collaborative partner’s respective capacity, strengths, mission, and area of focus have been taken into consideration. (8 points)
3. Budget and budget justification demonstrate meaningful costs, are well-aligned with the workplan, and correspond to project objectives and RCC program goals. Sufficient funding has been allocated to ensure effective implementation. (9 points)

IV. After Applying

A. Confirmation of Application Submission

After the state receives a submitted application, RCC staff will email applicants confirming that SGC has received the submittal. Applicants missing application information will be notified by RCC Program Staff. If applicants are contacted because of missing information, the applicant will have two (2) business days to provide the missing information, otherwise the application will be deemed incomplete. Note that this process does not act as a deadline extension. Applicants should submit complete application packets. Evidence of purposeful submission of an incomplete application to acquire more time will result in disqualification of the application.

A participating applicant may request to change or withdraw a proposal before the deadline by e-mailing RCC staff. More details about this will be provided in the NOFA.

B. Public Records Act

All applications and submitted materials are subject to the Public Records Act ([GC § 6250](#)) requirements and certain information may be publicly disclosed under those requirements. Materials will remain confidential through the evaluation process, after the applicant submits a proposal. However, all submitted documents can be made publicly available records after SGC posts the awards or the solicitation is cancelled.

C. Application Review Process and Scoring

After the submission due date, the SGC and an interagency review panel will review and score the applications submitted.

SGC staff will recommend awards to the two top-scoring applications from each funding track. In order to ensure geographic diversity after designating funds to these four projects that meet the grant size targets, the remaining available funds will be awarded to the next highest scoring applications located in counties that have not yet received an RCC award (in either Round 1 or Round 2), regardless of award size.

D. Unselected Applicants

If your application is not selected, RCC staff will be available to provide application debriefs. If another grant program may be a better fit for you or your project, RCC staff will try to direct your application accordingly.

V. Awarded Applications

This section outlines elements of RCC that Grantees should expect to meet.

A. Grant Agreement and Administration

Applicants are responsible for carefully reading these guidelines, asking appropriate questions promptly, and drafting and submitting their applications consistent with these guidelines. Grant recipients will commit to implementing their proposal as described in their application as a part of a grant agreement. The final grant agreement will reference these guidelines. SGC will send the agreement, including the general Terms and Conditions and any additional terms and conditions, to the grant recipient to review, approve, and sign. SGC reserves the right to negotiate with grant recipients to change the project work plan, the level of funding, or both.

SGC, through its programs, is dedicated to transparency and compliance with state auditing requirements and applicable records retention/disclosure rules. Applicants should expect that grant agreements will reflect consistency with these standards and ensure compliance with applicable rules and requirements.

Grant Agreements will be executed between SGC and the Managing Stakeholder only. SGC will not enter contractual relationships with Partners. The Managing Stakeholder will be responsible for compiling and submitting all advance payment requests, invoices, and reporting documents for themselves and all Partners. Upon receipt of appropriate documentation, funds will be paid to the Managing Stakeholder, who will be responsible for dispersing payment to Partners, as approved by SGC. The Grant Agreement is considered fully executed once the Managing Stakeholder and SGC's authorized signatories sign the agreement. Once the grant agreement is fully executed, SGC will issue a Notice to Proceed, and then work can begin. Grantees cannot request reimbursement for any costs incurred or work completed before grant execution.

B. Disbursement and Reporting

Advanced Payment

SGC may provide advanced payments to reduce barriers and ensure RCC activities are initiated in a timely manner. Advance payments can be up to 25 percent of the total grant award, which will be spread across a series of smaller installments. All Collaboratives will be required to prioritize Partners that experience low cash flow to receive advances. To receive advance pay, the Grantee must do the following:

At the time of the grant agreement:

- Demonstrate good standing with the IRS
- Provide a spending plan for each Partner receiving advance payment
- Sign an agreement that they will:
 - Revert all unused moneys to the state if they are not liquidated within the timeline specified in the grant agreement or in the case of non-compliance/misuse of funds
 - Communicate and document changes to spending plan

Before payment

- Complete an advance payment request form that includes an itemized budget for the period of the grant the costs will cover and to provide a spending timeline including anticipated spend down over a set period of time

After prior advance pay is expended, the Grantee will provide a progress report that includes:

- A high-level summary of work completed
- Itemized Receipts
- Invoice for grant activities that were not covered by the advance payment (if applicable)
- Their next advance payment request form (if applicable)

Reimbursement

The remaining 75% of grant funds will be reimbursed. SGC will work with Grantees to determine the invoicing frequency (monthly, quarterly, etc.) that best works for them. Per the Prompt Payment Act, SGC is required to pay properly submitted, undisputed invoices within 45 calendar days of the initial receipt.

Reporting

SGC will provide templates for the advance payment request form and summary report, work plan, budget table, and invoice form. These documents are required to record the project's expenditures and assess general progress on deliverables. The Managing Stakeholder, as the liaison between SGC and the Partners, will participate in more frequent check-in meetings with SGC. Scheduling of the Grantee check-in meetings will align with the invoicing frequency. Partners will participate in two full collaborative check-ins each grant year. These touchpoints are to provide a more expansive opportunity for Grantees to

describe their work and receive iterative feedback and guidance on draft deliverables. During each check-in meeting, RCC Program staff will take notes on accomplishments, challenges, and learnings to help capture emerging trends, best practices, opportunities for greater support, and success stories.

Grantees must also submit Annual Reports as outlined in II Before Applying – D. Project Deliverables.

C. Implementation Technical Assistance

Third-Party Support

As a capacity building grant program, the RCC Program has multiple technical assistance (TA) components. The TA that Collaboratives will conduct as a grant activity is distinct from the TA that Collaboratives will receive from SGC and the third-party TA team. The third-party TA provider will deliver high-touch support to each Collaborative, focused on operationalizing the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure, facilitating the statewide evaluation, and fostering peer-to-peer learning.

Operational TA

This TA will support Collaboratives with formalizing their partnerships. This entails helping with the creation of the RCC Action Plan and the development and iterative refinement of the collaborative governance processes.

Evaluation TA

Grantees will receive assistance with the evaluation components of their RCC project, including development of the Evaluation Plan and tracking and compiling data for the Annual Reports. Collaboratives must allocate 3-5% of their direct cost budget to support evaluation costs, such as staff time to collect data and participate in focus groups, surveys, and structured reflection discussions with the evaluator.

Peer Learning

SGC and the third-party TA team will host quarterly peer learning sessions. Collaboratives are required to hold 3-5% of their total direct cost budget to participate in these virtual trainings.

RCC Program Staff Support

RCC program staff will provide additional implementation assistance to Collaboratives. This includes support with administrative requirements, strengthening organizational capacity to integrate program activities, identifying funding opportunities, and building relationships with State agencies.

VI. Appendix

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Applicant - The Managing Stakeholder and Partners are collectively referred to as “Applicants.”

Application or Proposal - A submittal comprised of responses and supporting documents to apply for the grant.

Awarded - An agency commits funding to implement projects (e.g., executed a grant agreement with a Grantee; transferred funds to another agency or program administrator).

Capacity Building - The process of strengthening local coordination, leadership, knowledge, skills, expertise, and access to resources in vulnerable communities to help to develop or increase the ability of that community to independently compete for grants and implement projects in the future. Capacity building activities include, but are not limited to, identifying and planning for needed climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in a given region and identifying the tools and resources needed to successfully access, apply for, and receive grant funding.

California Native American Tribe – California Native American Tribes include either a federally-recognized California Tribal government listed on the most recent notice of the Federal Register or a non-federally recognized California Tribal government on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the California Native American Heritage Commission.

Climate Adaptation - Adjustment in natural or human systems to a new or changing environment. Adaptation to climate change refers to adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

Climate Mitigation - A human intervention to reduce the human impact on the climate system; it includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions and enhance greenhouse gas sinks.

Climate Resiliency or Climate Resilience - The capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organization, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, recover from shocks and stresses, and adapt and grow from a disruptive experience.

Collaborative Stakeholder Structure - The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure is a model for collaborative or shared governance. For the purposes of RCC, the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure guides the Collaborative’s organization, decision-making processes, financial relationships, and execution of the scope of work.

Communities of Focus - The Communities of Focus are the census tracts representing the communities and neighborhoods where the Collaborative would conduct its place-based work. A Community of Focus could be a single census tract or a cluster of census tracts.

Community-Based Organization - A public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.

Community Engagement - The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

Direct Costs - Costs directly tied to the implementation of the RCC grant, including, but not limited to personnel costs, subcontracts, equipment costs, travel expenses, etc.

Disadvantaged Communities - Designation of census tracts and physical locations used to identify the areas most affected by pollution and the people most vulnerable to its effects, based on geographic, socioeconomic, public health, and environmental hazards criteria. The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) historically bases designations on analyses conducted by the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) but can also exercise discretion in developing other criteria and methods.

Fiscal Sponsor - A legal entity with legal authority, history, and capacity to administer state funds. If a Managing Stakeholder has a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor would receive the funds and administer the grant on behalf of the Collaborative.

Grant Agreement - Arrangement between the State and grantee specifying the payment of funds to be used for grants by the State for the performance of specific RCC Program Objectives within a specific grant performance period by the Grantee.

Grantee - Designated Managing Stakeholder that has an agreement for grant funding with the State.

Indirect Costs - Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant activity but are necessary for the general operation of the organization. These are costs incurred by the recipient to administer the grant, or costs incurred by subgrantees to perform the tasks necessary to fulfill the grant requirements. May account for up to 30% of the total RCC award.

Interagency Review Panel – The panel responsible for reviewing and scoring RCC applications; will be comprised of a various state agency partners.

Local Government Agencies - Include cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), and Councils of Governments (COGs). Public entities may also include California institutions of higher education, districts, public authorities, public agencies, political subdivisions, and public corporations (California GC § 811.2).

Multi-Benefits – Also referred to as “co-benefits.” These are added benefits that go beyond meeting a policy’s main goal, like climate change mitigation. For example, most policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also indirectly benefit the economy, air

quality, public health, and reduce energy costs (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Co-benefits may fall under the following topics: public health, land use, transportation, economy, housing, public infrastructure, public safety, social equity, environmental conditions (e.g., carbon sequestration, natural resource management, water quality, air quality), energy, and agriculture.

Nonprofit Organization - Any nonprofit corporation qualified to do business in California and qualified pursuant to subdivision (c)(3) under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Partner - Entities other than the Grantee that enter into a partnership with the Managing Stakeholder and other organizations to implement RCC grant activities. Can be considered as “Co-Applicants.”

Partnership Agreement - A Partnership Agreement is an agreement between four or more parties that is not legally binding and outlines the responsibilities of each of the parties to the agreement. This is required of all members of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure.

Peer Learning – The transfer of knowledge, skills and experience between entities in facilitated training and network sessions.

Post-Award Consultation - Prior to the execution of the grant agreement, a period where terms and conditions of the grant agreement are determined and finalized.

Program Objectives - Program objectives are statements that describe the desired outcomes of the program. RCC includes the following four Program Objectives: develop actionable projects and plans; build social infrastructure; center community engagement and decision-making; and develop equity-centered processes.

Region - A region is defined by shared natural, political, and built environment systems; climate risks; and/or other shared challenges or dynamics. For the purposes of the RCC program, a region must be contiguous and cannot exceed the size of eight counties.

Small Business - Small businesses are those that are independently owned and operated; not be dominant in its field of operations; have its principal office located in California; have the owners (or officers, if a corporation) domiciled in California; and including affiliates, be either:

- A business with 100 or fewer employees; with average annual gross receipts of \$15 million or less, over the last three tax years;
- A manufacturer* with 100 or fewer employees; or
- A microbusiness - A small business will automatically be designated as a microbusiness if gross annual receipts are less than \$3,500,000.

Supporters - For the purposes of the RCC program, Supporters are entities that the Collaborative will work with to leverage community engagement, policy making, and technical assistance opportunities. Unlike Partners, Supporters are not funded by the RCC grant and instead plan to offer in-kind time and resources to help advance the work of the Collaborative.

Technical Assistance - The process of providing the necessary education and resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects for any of the following:

- Project development
- The successful and appropriate expenditure of grant money for the successful completion of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.
- Post-application and project implementation assistance

Traditional Ecological Knowledge - Although it is common to refer to "traditional knowledge(s)" as individual pieces of information, this term also refers to traditional "knowledge systems" (TKs) that are deeply embedded in indigenous ways of life. These guidelines use the phrase "traditional knowledges" deliberately in plural form to emphasize that there are diverse forms of traditional knowledge and knowledge systems that must be recognized as unique to each tribe and knowledge holder because knowledges are emergent from the symbiotic relationship of indigenous peoples and places – a nature-culture nexus.

Under-resourced Communities - A community identified pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code, subdivision (d) of Section 39713 of the Health and Safety Code, or subdivision (g) of Section 75005. This includes:

- Census tracts identified as 'disadvantaged' by the California Environmental Protection Agency; or
- Census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code; or
- Census tracts with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average

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