

Regional Climate Collaboratives Program Round 2

Overview

This document provides considerations for Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) applicants when incorporating community compensation in their budget for the Full Proposal. Community compensation can be provided to residents and community groups who are not formal members of the Collaborative but offer their time and expertise to inform and advance the Collaborative's work.

Eligible Costs

The following are eligible costs related to community compensation. For a full list of eligible engagement, outreach, education, and training costs, please see page 13 in the [Guidelines](#).

- 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.
- Transportation stipends and provision of transportation services for community residents, such as a vanpool
- 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.

Ineligible Costs

The following costs associated with community engagement and outreach cannot be provided using RCC funds:

- Direct cash benefits or subsidies to participants
- Alcoholic refreshments
- Participant incentives, such as door prizes or swag bags. *(See below for more information on how this is distinct from participant compensation).*

Understanding the Difference Between Compensation and Incentives

SGC often receives questions about the difference between community compensation and incentives. For the purposes of RCC, Collaboratives can offer participant compensation in

exchange for services or information that advances the development of a work product. Collaboratives cannot offer incentives to encourage potential participants to attend an event or take a specific action because incentives do not always guarantee active or meaningful participation.

The distinction between compensation and incentives is the intention behind the funding and the timing when it is offered. First, community compensation cannot be offered simply to incentivize a certain behavior, such as attending an event, and must instead be offered as compensation for services rendered related to a specific RCC engagement event and/or activity. For this reason, leaflets, advertisements, and marketing materials about the events should not advertise compensation to induce participation.

Secondly, community compensation needs to be provided **after** the participant informed or contributed to an RCC activity or work product – **not before**. For example, a Collaborative can distribute gift cards at the end of an hour-long meeting with community residents or after residents thoroughly and thoughtfully complete a survey. However, a Collaborative cannot use grant funds to offer a door prize upon arrival at a community meeting before attendees have meaningfully participated in the meeting.

Details to Provide in Your Application

If an applicant includes funds for community compensation in their budget, it will be important to offer details on who will receive community compensation and the process for distribution. Applicants may consider the following questions when incorporating this into their Partnership Agreement and/or workplan and budget.

- How does your Collaborative plan to distribute community compensation payments?
- Will the Collaborative convene one or more resident committees?
 - If yes, how many meetings do you anticipate the resident committee will convene, and how will you compensate these committee members (i.e. hourly or with a stipend)?
- How many community engagement events do you anticipate having that offer compensation to participants?

Additional Tips and Resources

Best Practices

The following list highlights a few best practices when offering community compensation. These suggestions are meant to guide applicants as they decide how they will offer community compensation through their RCC project.

- Compensation for engagement in a Collaborative’s event should be provided in a way that maximizes participation and attentiveness. It will be important to consider the type of engagement that will allow the Collaborative to solicit meaningful community input that directly informs RCC work products.
- The nature of the compensation, instructions for receipt and use, any relevant restrictions, and other key information should be clearly explained to all attendees or recipients.
- The criteria a participant must meet and the activities they must carry out to receive compensation should be clearly communicated to all participants before community engagement participation begins. For example, Collaboratives should explain at the beginning of the meeting that only participants that fill out a survey at the end of the meeting will receive a gift card.
- Collaboratives may consider basing community compensation on the number of hours in attendance at community engagement activities and/or the living wage by county.

Resources

The following are additional resources applicants may consult when determining their approach to community compensation.

- [Living Wage Calculator](#): A cost-of-living calculator maintained by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The tool shows a by-county breakdown of estimated living costs, translated into an hourly subsistence pay rate for counties and metropolitan statistical areas in California.
- [Community Compensation Project](#): Case study of Kings County, Washington developing and implementing a process to provide community compensation.