**March 20, 2024**

# NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY – AMENDED

## Regional Climate Collaboratives Program
## FY 2022 – 2023 FUNDING ROUND

TO:       **All Potential Applicants**

FROM:    RCC Program Staff, Strategic Growth Council

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABLITY – A TOTAL OF $8.5 MILLION FOR ROUND 2 OF THE REGIONAL CLIMATE COLLABORATIVES PROGRAM**

Selection of RCC Round 2 grant recommendations is postponed until further notice due to the State's 2024/25 budget shortfall. SGC Program Staff will notify Applicants when more information becomes available on Round 2 Awards.

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is pleased to announce the availability of funding for Round 2 of the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program through this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). SGC anticipates that $8.5 million will be available for competitive awards in this funding round.

Senate Bill 1072 (Leyva, Chapter 377, Statutes of 2018) establishes the RCC Program. SGC received $10 million to administer Round 2 through Budget Act of 2021. 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 RCC program will employ a two-phase application process, including a Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal phase. All applicants are required to submit a Pre-Proposal in order to submit a Full Proposal. The Pre-Proposal allows applicants to provide a broad overview of their proposed projects, which may include information such as the project Managing Partner, Partners, Supporters, and estimated budget. The Pre-Proposal will not be scored but will help applicants, Technical Assistance (TA) Providers, and SGC staff assess project readiness. SGC will provide feedback and guidance on whether applicants are on track to submit a complete, competitive application that meets all threshold requirements.

**RCC Grant Pre-Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. PT on Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Final Grant Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. PT on Wednesday, December 6, 2023 according to the terms of this NOFA.**

Information about the RCC Program, including the Program Guidelines, application TA, and other resources can be found at the SGC website: https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/cace/resources/rcc/. Questions may be directed to RCC program staff by email at cace@sgc.ca.gov.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The RCC Program is a capacity building grant program for under-resourced communities. RCC funds community-rooted and cross-sectoral partners to deepen their relationships and develop the processes, plans, and projects that will drive and sustain climate action. The goal of the program is to strengthen local coordination, leadership, knowledge, skills, and expertise with a particular focus on increasing access to funding resources for project planning and implementation within under-resourced communities. RCC was designed to serve both emerging and established Collaboratives across the state, so applicants can tailor their proposals based on their size and community context. RCC grant terms are three years.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for a Collaborative include, but are not limited to, the following:

**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).

Please note that the RCC program does not require a waiver of sovereign immunity for tribal awardees.

**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 these types of 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**: Small businesses that can demonstrate certification or eligibility for certification with the California Department of General Services (DGS). Please visit DGS' Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services website for these requirements.

**Other organizations with a history of providing community-based outreach or technical assistance**: Applicants are responsible for determining which organizations play this role in their community and providing justification to demonstrate this in their application. These organizations may vary according to local and regional context.

Together, eligible applicants will form a Collaborative and collectively develop the application based on a shared vision. Within the application, applicants will include an unsigned draft Partnership Agreement that describes the governance, organization, and financial relationships of the Collaborative Partnership Structure. SGC may request changes to the terms of the Partnership Agreement during the Post-Award Consultation process. Any entity from the eligible applicant list can serve as the Managing Partner or a Partner on the grant. You can find more information on the Partnership Agreement and Collaboratives Partnership Structure on page 8 of the Round 2 Program Guidelines.

**Program Objectives**

All RCC Program activities must build the capacity of selected under-resourced communities within a region to secure funding for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience projects. Proposed tasks and narrative responses should provide additional detail around about the collaborative's approach to achieve desired outcomes.

- **Develop Actionable Plans and Projects**: Collaborative activities should 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 funding is secured. Grant activities will build the ability for Collaborative members and other entities within the communities served to develop competitive grant proposals.
- **Build Social Infrastructure**: Collaborative activities must foster trusting and enduring relationships between Collaborative members and with external entities and residents across the Project Area. Building social infrastructure will enable better regional coordination on the development and implementation of climate-related plans, projects, and applications for funding.
- **Center Community Engagement and Decision Making**: Collaboratives must directly engage residents and key local entities, with a focus on under-represented and historically excluded groups, in all phases of the RCC project. Collaboratives should use proven engagement methods that facilitate direct participation of community members, such as translating meetings and materials, scheduling meetings at times and locations convenient for community members, and involving community members in project scoping, development, and implementation.
- **Develop Equity-centered Processes**: Collaborative activities should develop or improve local and regional processes that result in demonstrable benefits for under-resourced communities and enable residents, community-based organizations, and tribes to meaningfully co-lead on climate change related priorities.

For additional information on eligible activities, eligible costs, geographic scope, and other program details, please see the [Round 2 Program Guidelines](#).

# APPLICATION PROCESS

**Pre-Proposal Phase**

The goal of the Pre-Proposal phase 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. Threshold requirements are outlined on page 19 of the Round 2 Program Guidelines.

All RCC applicants are required to submit a Pre-Proposal. The Pre-Proposal components are designed to help applicants prepare to develop their Full Proposal. SGC staff will provide feedback to Pre-Proposal applicants on project readiness prior to submitting a Full Proposal so that applicants can make the best decision on whether or not to move forward to the Full Proposal Phase. SGC encourages applicants to provide as much information in their Pre-Proposal submission as possible. However, applicants will not be beholden to the project details submitted in the Pre-Proposal and the Pre-Proposal submission will

not impact the evaluation of the Full Proposal. Pre-Proposals must be submitted to SGC by **5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, September 6, 2023.**

**Activity Waiver**

Applicants can request to omit one (1) mandatory activity from activity types 1 and 2 as outlined on page 9 of the Round 2 Program Guidelines. Applicants can submit this request if they believe that one of those activities is unnecessary or otherwise inappropriate for their RCC project through an Activity Waiver form. The Activity Waiver form will be released with the NOFA and must be completed during the Pre-Proposal phase. Please see page 31 for more information on the Activity Waiver Process and Criteria in the Round 2 Program Guidelines.

**Full Proposal Phase**

All RCC applicants must submit application materials to SGC via Submittable, a free application platform available to all applicants by **5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, December 6, 2023.** No late applications or application revisions will be accepted after the application submittal deadline. No hard copies, facsimiles, electronic transmissions via email, hand-delivered copies, or any other method of submitting complete applications will be accepted.

All applications will be reviewed by RCC Program Staff to ensure that all required documentation is submitted, and the application is complete. Applicants that may be missing application information will be notified by RCC Program Staff. If applicants are contacted because of missing information, the application will be deemed incomplete if the applicant does not provide the missing information within two (2) business days.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by SGC staff, along with an interagency review panel of partnering State agencies. Eligible applications will be scored based on the threshold and scoring criteria on pages 19 – 24 of the RCC Round 2 Program Guidelines. Following the initial application review, members of the review panel will conduct interviews with top scoring applicants. Based on the interagency review of the applications and interviews, RCC Program Staff will finalize and prepare award recommendations to present to the SGC Council Members for consideration of final approval. The SGC staff will contact applicants recommended for funding. Staff recommendations will be posted for ten (10) days prior to the SGC public meeting.

Pre-Proposal application resources are currently available on SGC's website. The ultimate awarding of RCC Program funds is subject to the approval of the Council. The Council decision is final.

Applications must meet all eligibility requirements upon submission. Applications having material inconsistencies will not be rated and ranked. Modification of the application by the applicant after submission is prohibited.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is clear, complete, and accurate. After the application deadline, staff from SGC or other partnering state agencies may request clarifying information or inquire as to where the application-specific information is located provided that such information does not affect the competitive rating of the application. No information, whether written or oral, will be solicited or accepted if this information would result in a competitive advantage to an applicant or a competitive disadvantage to other applicants.

**Application Scoring**

Applications will be evaluated according to the process and scoring criteria found on page 20 of the Round 2 Program Guidelines. The top scoring applicants will be recommended to the Strategic Growth Council for an RCC grant award. Applications will be evaluated based on the scoring criteria in the RCC Program Guidelines.

**Basis of Appeals**

1.  Upon receipt of a notice that an application is determined ineligible, fails threshold review, or is not awarded based on final scores, Round 2 RCC Grant applicants may appeal such decision(s) to SGC pursuant to this section.
2.  No Applicant shall have the right to appeal a decision by SGC relating to another Applicant's eligibility, point score, aware, denial of award, or any other matter related thereto.
3.  The appeal process provided herein applies solely to the decision by SGC pursuant to this NOFA and does not apply to any decisions made with respect to any previously issued NOFAs or decisions not-yet made pursuant to future program NOFAs.

**Appeal Process and Deadlines**

1.  Process: To file an appeal, RCC Grant applicants must submit to SGC, by the filing deadline set forth below, a written appeal, which states all relevant facts, arguments, and evidence upon which the appeal is based. Furthermore, the applicant must provide a detailed reference to the area or areas of the application that provide clarification and substantiation for the basis of the appeal. No new or additional information will be considered if this information would result in a competitive advantage to an applicant. Once the written appeal is submitted to SGC, no information of materials will be accepted or considered thereafter. Appeals submitted to SGC at cace@sgc.ca.gov according to the deadline set forth in SGC review letters.
2.  Filing deadline: Appeals must be received by SGC no later than five business days from the date of SGC's threshold review or score letters, representing SGC's decision made in response to the application.

**Appeal Decision**

Any request to appeal to SGC's decision regarding a RCC application shall be reviewed for compliance with the RCC Guidelines and this NOFA. All decisions rendered shall be final, binding, and conclusive, and shall constitute the final action of SGC.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

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.
After the Pre-Proposal phase, applicants will be paired with an individual TA provider to support applicants in the development of a Full Proposal. SGC cannot guarantee technical assistance to all RCC applicants. Depending on the volume of Pre-Proposals received, SGC will prioritize third-party technical

assistance (TA) to applicants that have demonstrated readiness and applicants focusing on a high percentage of under-resourced communities and/or Tribal Lands. TA providers can provide application support through review of any application components, including:

- Mapping support
- Workplan and budget development
- Application coordination
- Review of narrative responses
- Interview Support, if needed
- Collaborative Partnership Structure Development

RCC Program staff will host application workshops from July 13-July 26, 2023. RCC Program staff will guide prospective applicants through the different components of the RCC Round 2 application and answer any questions about the application. Register to the workshop(s) you would like to attend by clicking the buttons below.

- Thursday, July 13, 1:00 – 2:00pm: **RCC Application Overview Webinar** | [Register Here](#)
- Tuesday, June 18, 1:30-3:00pm: **RCC Application Workshop Tribal Communities**| [Register Here](#)
- Thursday, July 20, 1:30-3:00pm: **RCC Application Workshop for Rural Communities**| [Register Here](#)
- Tuesday, July 25, 1:30-3:00pm: **RCC Application for all Audiences|** [Register Here](#)
- Wednesday, July 26, 1:30-3:00pm: **RCC Application for Tribal Communities #2|** [Register Here](#)

## OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Disclosure Application of Information

All submitted applications may be disclosed under a California Public Records Act request.

### Right to Modify or Suspend

SGC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to suspend, amend, or modify the provisions of this NOFA at any time, including without limitation, the amount of funds available hereunder. If such an action occurs, RCC program staff will notify all interested parties via email and will post the revisions to the RCC program website.

### Conflict

In the event of any conflict between the terms of this NOFA and either applicable state or federal law or regulation, the terms of the applicable state or federal law or regulation shall control.

**RESOURCES AND QUESTIONS**

Information about the RCC Program, including the Round 2 Program Guidelines, application resources, technical assistance, and other resources can be found at the following website: https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/cace/resources/rcc/. Questions may be directed to the RCC Program by email at cace@sgc.ca.gov.