

Aug. 26, 2026

Subject: Regional Climate Collaboratives: Successes and Lessons Learned from Collective Capacity Building

Reporting Period: December 2022 – August 2026

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Summary

The first round of the California Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) Regional Climate Collaboratives Program (RCC) is coming to a close in 2026 after numerous accomplishments, successes, and lessons learned. The program funds collaboratives of cross-sectoral partners to implement capacity building strategies and align community needs with funding opportunities. This highly competitive grant program aims to establish lasting local structures and systems that can inform and advance equitable climate action within the state's most under-resourced communities.

In Round 1, SGC awarded \$8.35 million to six diverse collaboratives across the state representing 62 organizations, including 28 Tribes, 20 nonprofits, 7 local and regional governments, and 7 other community serving organizations. During their three-year grant term, the collaboratives have unlocked \$85 million in competitive grants, submitted 165 applications for a total of \$233 million, held nearly 546 events, and engaged more than 12,500 community members in their regional climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts. Perhaps more importantly, the collaboratives have built long-lasting relationships, formal partnerships, skills, and staff capacity – the social infrastructure needed to sustain their regional climate efforts for the long term.

Background

RCC was established by SB 1072 (Leyva, Ch. 377, Stats. of 2018) and invests in community-led capacity building to help under-resourced communities access statewide public and other grant moneys for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. RCC enables 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. The program objectives are to build social infrastructure, develop equity-centered processes, develop actionable plans and projects, and center community engagement and decision making in pursuing and implementing funding.

Responsive to Community Needs

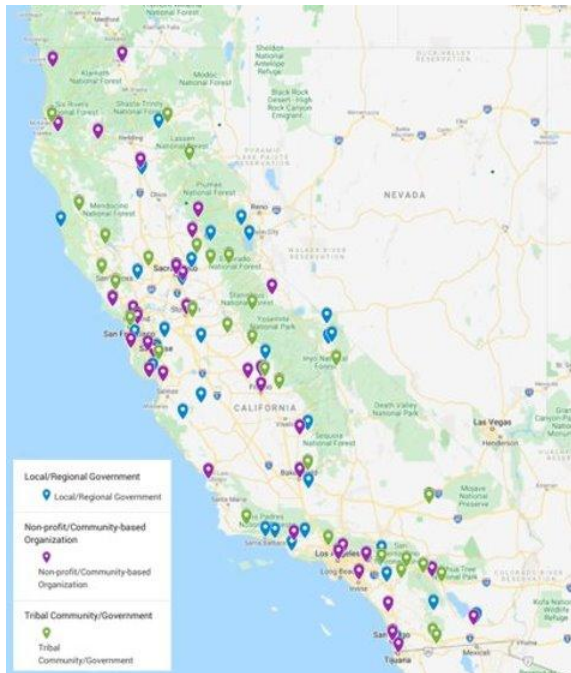


Figure 1: More than 400 individuals engaged in designing the RCC Guidelines, representing: community-based organizations and nonprofits, Tribes, philanthropy, local and regional government, academic institutions and small businesses.

The RCC Round 1 Program Guidelines were developed through a robust public engagement process and approved by the SGC Council on April 28, 2022. Before drafting any content, program staff hosted a series of listening sessions, focus groups, and key informant interviews in fall 2021. Staff then developed and released the Draft FY 22-23 RCC Guidelines in February 2022 for a 35-day public comment period. During that time, staff held a series of five public workshops to receive feedback on the Guidelines. More than 400 individuals, representing community-based organizations and nonprofits, Tribes,

philanthropy, local and regional government, academic institutions, and small businesses, engaged in the guideline development process. Please see the [RCC Guideline Development Engagement Summary](#) for more details.

A Capacity Building Program in High Demand

RCC was heavily over-subscribed in its first and only program round to date. SGC received a total of 86 pre-proposals from 56 of California's 58 counties. The Pre-Proposals included representation from over 400 organizations, including community-based organizations and nonprofits, foundations, academic institutions, local and regional governments, Tribes, and private enterprises. SGC ultimately received 45 Full Applications, representing 300 organizations across the state. The total amount requested across all the applications was \$66.6 million – nearly eight times the NOFA amount. The oversubscription of this first round of the program demonstrates an awareness across nearly every region in California of the need for this level of capacity-building support and the demand for funding that engages communities further upstream.

Round 1 Grantees

After a rigorous interagency review process, the Council awarded the six top scoring RCC Round 1 applicants. The six Grantees represent:

- 7 counties from around the state including the Bay Area, North State, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.
- 2 Tribal-led Collaboratives and a total of 28 Tribal partners
- 62 total organizations represented across the six collaboratives:

- 28 Tribes
- 20 Nonprofits
- 3 Small Businesses/Private Entities
- 2 Special Districts
- 2 Regional Governments
- 3 Local Governments
- 3 Academic Institutions
- 1 Health Center

Grantee Accomplishments to Date

The collaboratives' regional capacity building efforts have been highly effective, achieving significant outcomes in terms of community visioning and engagement, developing projects and plans, providing technical assistance and capacity building support, and accessing grant funding.

To date, outcomes across the six RCC Round 1 grantees include:

- \$85 million accessed in competitive grant funding
- 165 competitive grant applications submitted for a total of \$233 million*
- More than 250 convenings and community engagement events held
- More than 12,500 community members engaged through Collaborative activities

*The Collaboratives' success rate in accessing federal funding was impacted by recent cuts in federal funding as well as state budget cuts in the 2024-25 FY.

Regional Climate Collaboratives Grantee Descriptions

2030 Resilient Networks Collaborative

Partners: Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Perez-Pacheco Consulting, Inc., Climate Resolve, Council for Watershed Health

Grant Amount: \$799,993

Grantee Description: The Tribal-led 2030 Resilient Networks Collaborative intends to build the capacity of Tribes and Tribal-led organizations in partnership with environmental experts in the Los Angeles County region. The Collaborative has identified a need that intentionally and strategically supports Tribes' needs for self-sufficiency to successfully apply for grants and funding. The Collaborative will create a blueprint for Tribes in California to expand their capacity to be "on par" with those of a large organization with experience in climate-related projects, and to become primary contenders for upcoming climate-resilience funding. The Collaborative aims to successfully apply and receive funding for a climate-resilience infrastructure project in the region, such as a Climate Resilience Hub.

Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative (GCRCC)

Partners: Gateway Cities Council of Governments, SELA Collaborative, Tree People, GRID Alternatives, Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office, AltaMed

Grant Amount: \$1,750,000

Grantee Description: The Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative (GCRCC) strengthens and formalizes the relationships between five community partners that have worked together in the Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) region for more than five years to leverage skills, knowledge, and networks to ensure community-driven action to combat climate change in SELA communities. Residents in the SELA region are primarily low-income communities of color who experience extreme heat, limited park space, low tree canopy coverage, and high levels of pollutants due to the movement of goods from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The GCRCC aims to address these issues by increasing access to new and existing resources through a process that prioritizes community engagement, engaging in data collection to identify regional climate needs, and developing publicly available reports that benefit under-resourced communities to expand the capacity of the SELA region.

Marin Climate Justice Collaborative

Partners: Canal Alliance, Marin City Climate Resilience and Health Justice, Multicultural Center of Marin, Play Marin, Marin City Community Services District, San Rafael City Schools, Marin Audubon Society, Community Action Marin, Greenbelt Alliance, Marin County, City of San Rafael

Grant Amount: \$996,390

Grantee Description: The Marin Climate Justice Collaborative (MCJC) works to build capacity and climate resilience to ensure a safe and equitable future for low-income residents and communities of color in Marin County. The communities in the Canal District of San Rafael and unincorporated Marin City have a shared history of underinvestment. They are building on a strong foundation of years of partnership to address socioeconomic and climate impacts such as displacement, sea level rise, and flooding, and equitable planning and decision-making. MCJC works to transform the local decision-making dynamic by educating, empowering, and activating residents to drive placemaking and planning projects that build climate resilience, to leverage this power for more effective and generous collaboration. MCJC looks forward to achieving climate justice for Marin County's most vulnerable communities.

San Joaquin Regional Climate Collaborative

Partners: San Joaquin Council of Governments, Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton, GRID Alternatives North Valley, Public Health Advocates, Stockton Service Corps, University of the Pacific Center for Business and Policy Research

Grant Amount: \$1,750,000

Grantee Description: The San Joaquin Regional Climate Collaborative (SJRCC) envisions a region where communities live in healthy places filled with equity and economic opportunity and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change. The San Joaquin County region faces extreme heat, air pollution impacting public health, and high flood risk. Additionally, the region lacks key infrastructure and investments that impact quality of life such as mobility options,

housing, economic development, grocery stores, etc. The Collaborative brings residents, community stakeholders, researchers, and local government together to create community-led solutions that meet the needs of San Joaquin County communities. These partners have a strong history of working together, having previously worked on the Transformative Climate Communities program in south Stockton that created Sustainable Neighborhood Plans that led to implementation funding. The SJRCC partners hope to replicate this effort in additional under-resourced communities of San Joaquin County; Tracy, Lodi, and North Stockton while increasing community capacity to advance climate solutions.

Siskiyou Climate Collaborative

Partners: Siskiyou Economic Development Council; Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance; Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District; UC Cooperative Extension, Siskiyou; Nathan Johnston, Facilitator; Siskiyou County SMART Workforce Development; Karuk Tribe Department of Natural Resources

Grant Amount: \$1,500,000

Grantee Description: The Siskiyou Climate Collaborative (SCC) brings much needed social infrastructure for coalition and leadership building in a rural region of California that has historically received little state investment. SCC leverages local knowledge and diverse partnerships to develop, prioritize, and implement sustainable climate adaptation and capacity-building strategies that support climate resiliency plans and projects throughout Siskiyou County. These projects focus on supporting rural, Tribal, and under-resourced communities in the region who are facing increasingly devastating impacts of wildfires, drought, and other extreme climate events. Utilizing an equity-centered community process, SCC plans to produce an actionable Climate Resiliency Plan that will bring crucial funds to the region's communities of focus. Additional priorities for the Collaborative include relationship-building, advocacy, community investment and funding, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building to support, and fund, initiatives that uplift rural voices and center resiliency.

Tribal Energy and Climate Collaborative (TECC)

Partners: Pala Band of Mission Indians, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, Prosper Sustainably, LLC, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Barona Band of Mission Indians, Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians, Campo Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel, Inaja-Cosmit Band of Indians, Jamul Indian Village, La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, La Posta Band of Mission Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians, Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

Grant Amount: \$1,749,910

Grantee Description: Historically, Tribes in California have been at the frontline of the climate crisis yet lack the resources and capacity to adequately respond to this threat. The Tribal Energy Climate Collaborative (TECC) is an unprecedented first step at bridging this gap by building a collective voice centered on Tribal needs that advance climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience goals of the 24 diverse member tribes of the Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association. TECC evaluates the climate priorities of each Tribe, matches this with available funding and other assistance, and provides comprehensive support to acquire funds, resulting in a continuous stream of successfully completed Tribal climate change plans and projects that are rooted in resiliency. Throughout this work, TECC supports Tribal priorities in ways that also address other important community needs, such as Tribal sovereignty, culture, health, and economy. Other priorities of the collaborative include policy & regulatory engagement, equity & inclusivity, training & capacity building, partnerships, and technical/grant writing assistance. Ultimately, this collaborative is focused on enabling Tribes to forge their own path in developing a more climate resilient future for their respective communities.

Next Steps

SGC staff and technical assistance providers have worked closely with RCC grantees throughout the grant term to identify opportunities to access additional funding and sustain collaborative activities over the long term. Staff plan to preserve a close relationship with the RCCs and connect them to strategic partners such as other state agencies or philanthropic partners even after the grant term ends. SGC’s Deputy Director of Equity and Government Transformation is also an ex-officio member of the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA)’s Executive Committee and plans to continue to leverage this role to facilitate collaboration between the RCCs and other larger climate collaboratives statewide.

Future Funding

SB 1072 specifies that SGC must “establish collaboratives a minimum of two times over the course of the program,” which sunsets Jan. 1, 2030. SGC was appropriated \$10 million for RCC Round 2 in the Budget Act of 2022 (SB 154), but these funds ultimately reverted as a budget solution in response to the 2024-2025 budget crisis. Before the release of the FY 24-25 budget, SGC staff had already received applications from 31 applicants, including a total of 294 partner organizations. These organizations included:

- 15 tribes/tribal serving organizations
- 170 nonprofits/community-based organizations
- 55 local governments/special districts
- 14 academic institutions
- 7 small businesses
- 3 regional governments
- 30 other organizations, including philanthropies and fiscal sponsors.

SGC had planned to make awards on Feb. 28, 2024, and developed [RCC Round 2 Applicant Profiles](#) for those who wished to post information about their projects on SGC's website. SGC staff continues to share the applicant profiles with philanthropic partners and seeks ways to support applicants through non-monetary approaches such as connecting them with our Connecting Communities team to receive no-cost technical assistance, sharing information about funding opportunities and platforms such as [10k Communities](#), and providing other types of in-kind support.

Discussion Questions

- What capacity and technical assistance needs have you heard from the partners and communities your agency serves?
- How has your agency utilized SGC's resources and lessons learned to advance technical assistance and capacity building?
- How can we best tell the story of capacity building and demonstrate success?

