

*April 29, 2026***Subject:** Community Resilience Centers (CRC) Round 2 Program Guidelines**Reporting Period:** April 2026**Staff Lead:** Anna Jane Jones, Community Resilience Centers Program Manager

Recommended Action

Approve the Fiscal Year 2026 CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines.

Summary

The CRC Program seeks Council approval of the CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines. CRC staff prepared the Draft CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines based on feedback from past applicants, current grantees, program evaluators, technical assistance providers, program staff, and policy research. SGC coordinated the public engagement processes of the CRC Round 2 Draft Guidelines with the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Round 6 Draft Guidelines to increase efficiency and decrease engagement fatigue among prospective applicants. Both Programs' Guidelines were released in September 2025 for a 90-day public comment period.

CRC received 53 written public comment submissions and an additional 19 submissions addressing both the TCC and CRC programs. CRC and TCC staff also hosted four community input sessions and five focus groups to gather additional feedback, with a total attendance of approximately 364 individuals. The Guidelines also incorporate input from a range of subject matter experts and interagency leads on key topics critical to program design, uptake, and success. Following Council's adoption of the Guidelines, the CRC Program will issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and initiate a competitive awards process for Round 2.

Background

About the Community Resilience Centers Program

The Community Resilience Centers (CRC) program was created as a part of California's 2021-22 Climate Resilience Budget package and the Extreme Heat Budget Change Proposal in the 2022-23 State budget process, with the directive to establish neighborhood resilience centers that provide shelter and resources during emergencies and support year-round community services and programming. The program objectives are to fund community resilience centers that: reflect geographic diversity; advance neighborhood response to and recovery from climate emergencies; encourage meaningful collaboration between residents, community groups, and local agencies; reduce health risks from climate extremes; and prioritize under-resourced communities across California.

In Round 1, CRC offered three grant types: Planning, Project Development, and Implementation. Planning Grants fund communities in the initial stages of CRC project

development and prepares grantees for future funding to implement resilience centers. Project Development Grants fund pre-development and basic infrastructure activities for Implementation Grants. Implementation Grants fund construction and retrofits of facilities to serve as Community Resilience Centers, as well as services and programs that build overall community resilience. In Round 1, CRC awarded over \$97.5 million, with \$5,285,338 awarded across 11 Planning Grant projects, \$8,985,850 across four Project Development Grant projects, and \$83,250,226 across nine Project Implementation Grant projects.

Background on the CRC Round 2 Guidelines Process

Approximately \$55 million is anticipated to be available for the CRC Program's Round 2 (FY 26-27). This funding comes from the FY 26-27 budget allocation to the CRC Program from the *Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024*, commonly known as the "Climate Bond" (Proposition 4).

- Approximately \$5 million is available for Planning Grant awards of \$100 thousand to \$500 thousand each.
- Approximately \$50 million is available for Implementation Grant awards of \$1 million to \$10 million each.

Guidelines Development

CRC staff developed the Draft CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines based on feedback from past applicants, current grantees, program evaluators, technical assistance providers, and program staff; policy research; and a Request for Information regarding proposed changes to the structure of the Implementation Grant. The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) released the Draft *CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines* in September 2025 for a 90-day public comment period.

CRC and TCC, another SGC grant program with Climate Bond funding, coordinated the public engagement process for the two programs to increase efficiency and decrease engagement fatigue among prospective applicants. During the public comment period, TCC and CRC staff hosted four community input sessions and five focus group sessions, including dedicated sessions for applicants representing Tribes and rural and/or unincorporated communities, with a total attendance of approximately 364 individuals. CRC's written public comment submissions included 41 submissions via an online input form and 12 emailed letters.

CRC staff reviewed all feedback from the public engagement process including letters, form submissions, poll responses, verbal and written comments shared during workshops and focus groups. Staff addressed these comments through changes to the Guidelines whenever programmatically feasible. Attachment A to this staff report includes more information on the engagement process, feedback received, and changes made in response to the feedback.

Summary of Changes

The CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines include several changes from both Round 1 and from Draft Round 2 Guidelines. Attachment A provides additional details on changes made and feedback received and incorporated. Key changes are summarized below:

1) Project Development Grants

Unlike Round 1, the CRC Program will not offer a separate Project Development Grant type. Instead, Round 2's Implementation Grant will offer a new, funded "Pre-Development" Phase that will support Lead Grantees' project readiness before implementation. The pre-development phase will last no more than one year from grant execution.

2) Funding Goals and Priority Points

To further SGC's commitment to serving Tribes, rural and unincorporated communities, and previous SGC or Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) grantees, Round 2 refined CRC's Funding Goals and Priority Points.

Funding Goals

CRC intends to fund at least one Planning Grant and one Implementation Grant to a Lead Applicant who is a California Native American Tribe or a Tribally owned nonprofit ("Tribal applicant"). Applicants eligible for the Tribal Funding Goal will be evaluated in individual pools. All applicants who do not receive a Funding Goal award will also be evaluated in the general applicant pool.

SGC intends to consider geographic diversity in final award decisions using the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Fire and Mutual Aid Region. SGC aims to make one Planning Grant Award in each Cal OES Fire and Mutual Aid Region.

Priority Points

SGC will award Priority Points to applicants in three categories: 1) Tribal applicants; 2) applicants representing under-resourced communities, with additional priority points for applicants that are rural and/or unincorporated; and 3) applicants who are furthering work conducted in a previous SGC or LCI grant. An application will receive partial priority points if the Lead Applicant is a nonprofit whose mission is primarily focused on serving Tribal communities and the proposed grant activities are primarily focused on serving Tribal communities.

3) California Native American Tribes

Round 2 builds upon Round 1 and includes several changes to serve Tribes. Specifically, Round 2:

- Refines the Program's Tribal Funding Goal and priority points for Tribal applicants, as described above
- Allows Tribes to apply as Lead Applicants without any Partners

- Expands on the list of program requirements that Tribes can request modifications to
- Adds a notification process to inform California Native American Tribes of CRC applications received prior to award decisions
- Additional processes to ensure Tribal applicants' data sovereignty

4) Multi-Site Proposals

In Round 1, the CRC program allowed applicants to include multiple CRC facilities in the same application, provided all facilities shared an owner and met all of the program's required functions and features for a CRC Facility. Program Guidelines required campus amenities to be located within a one-mile radius of a CRC facility but allowed transit service to and from the facility or facilities beyond the one-mile radius.

In Round 2, many public comments advocated for a decentralized resilience approach to allow a network of CRC locations (also known as a hub and spoke model) in a neighborhood or region. In particular, public comments advocated for striking the single-owner requirement and allowing some funding to flow to supportive sites rather than concentrating funding on one or two comprehensive CRC sites.

In response to public comments, Staff have amended Round 2 Guidelines to allow Implementation Grants' Project Area to include Partner Sites, where grantees may host community services and programs and fund minor capital improvements. There is no defined radius for these sites in relation to the main CRC Facility. Partner Sites are not considered CRCs and do not need to meet the program's required functions.

5) Partnerships and Collaborative Governance Agreement

Community resilience is the ability of a community to withstand, recover from, and learn from adverse events (climate or otherwise) and to strengthen its capacity to respond in the future. To ensure all applicants embed community resilience as a core component, CRC Round 2 Guidelines include updates to Partnership and Collaborative Governance requirements. Round 2 introduces stronger partnership requirements at application compared to Round 1. In Round 1, Planning Grant applicants were not required to have a formal Partner at the time of application. In Round 2, applicants must apply with at least one Partner. In Round 2, Implementation Grant applicants must apply with at least two Partners. At least one Partner must be a community-based organization (CBO) unless the Lead Applicant is already a CBO.

While the Program has strengthened its partnership requirements, Staff have worked to decrease the barriers to apply for funding. In Round 1, Implementation and Project Development Grant applicants were required to submit a Partnership Agreement describing the governance, organizational and financial relationship with their Partners at application. However, public comments, particularly from applicants with limited staff and resources, indicated that completing a full Partnership Agreement before receiving an award placed an undue burden on lower-capacity organizations.

In response, Round 2 replaces the Partnership Agreement at the application stage with a new Collaborative Governance Agreement worksheet for Implementation Grant applicants. This streamlined worksheet guides applicants in outlining a governance structure. If awarded, applicants will then use this worksheet as a foundation to develop a full Collaborative Governance Agreement by the end of the Pre-Development Phase.

6) Eligible Lead Applicants

Round 2 Guidelines updated the list of eligible Lead Applicants and Partners to align with Climate Bond requirements. The Lead Applicant must be a public agency, local agency, nonprofit organization, special district, joint powers authority, Tribe, Tribally owned nonprofit, public utility, local publicly owned utility, or mutual water company. Private shareholder corporations are ineligible.

7) Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect cost rates will be capped at 15%, up from 12% in Round 1. Indirect cost rates exclude equipment purchase with a per unit cost of \$5,000 or more and capital costs. California Native American Tribes and Tribally owned nonprofits have additional flexibility.

8) Close Scores Protocol

In the event of close scores, SGC will use a tiebreaker to determine which application(s) are awarded. Implementation Grant applications within 1 point of each other and Project Development Grant applications within 0.5 points of each other will be subject to the Close Scores Protocol. The tiebreaker will be an additional reviewer to score each application creating a new average to act as the tiebreaker.

9) Application Technical Assistance

Round 2 introduces new strategies to better serve our potential applicants. This year SGC staff pursued a Local Assistance contract with a nonprofit as the lead to serve both TCC and CRC applicants. CRC is prioritizing Application Technical Assistance for California Native American Tribes, Tribally owned nonprofits, and applicants with Project Areas in disadvantaged and/or rural or unincorporated communities. To best serve the needs of our priority communities, we have contracted with organizations that have extensive experience working with Tribes and disadvantaged unincorporated communities to provide context-specific and culturally relevant support.

Next Steps

Upon Council approval of the CRC Round 2 Program Guidelines, the CRC Program will issue the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and initiate a competitive awards process starting in May 2026. Below is the anticipated timeline for the Round 2 funding cycle.

- May 29, 2026: NOFA Release
- Spring 2026: Technical Assistance Request Form opens
- Summer 2026: Applications open

- Summer/Fall 2026: Final Applications due
- Spring/Summer 2027: Round 2 CRC awards adopted by Council

Eligible applicants may request free Application Technical Assistance for all grant types by completing the Technical Assistance Request Form which is available on the CRC application webpage. Application Technical Assistance will be provided by a third-party technical assistance provider through a contract with SGC.

Council Recommendation

Should the Council agree with Staff’s recommendation, the following motion language is suggested:

“I move that the Council pass the consent calendar.”

Attachments

Attachment A: CRC Summary of Public Engagement and Impact on Final Guidelines

Attachment B: CRC Round 2 Final Guidelines