

April 29, 2026

**Subject:** Final Guidelines: Tribal Housing Capacity Building Initiative  
**Reporting Period:** April 2026  
**Staff Lead:** Amar Cid, Deputy Director of Community Investments and Infrastructure  
 Hoi-Fei Mok, Deputy Director of Equity and Government Transformation

**Recommended Action**

Approve Final Guidelines for both Round 2 of the Tribal Housing Capacity Building Program and the new Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund (the Fund). Combined, these funds will support technical assistance and capacity building activities for Tribal entities interested in affordable housing and related projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices that support infill and compact development.

**Summary**

The lack of affordable housing across California is an acute statewide crisis, as noted in the [CA Executive Order N-06-19](#). Native American communities continue to face some of the most severe housing shortages in the state, and the number of Indigenous Californians who are unhoused or experiencing homelessness is two times that of the general population. As demonstrated by [CA Executive Order N-15-19](#), the administration is committed to addressing the disparities for Tribal communities. In line with these executive orders, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC or the Council) is dedicated to enhancing affordable housing and related projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices that support infill and compact development for Tribal communities via the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program.

Since Round 5, the AHSC Program Guidelines have included funding set-asides for Tribal entities. The Council has awarded a total of \$47,953,555 to three Tribal-affiliated projects to date. However, in Rounds 8 and 9, despite strong support from state-funded application technical assistance providers, multiple Tribal applicants ultimately decided *not* to submit an application due to limited capacity, and no Tribal project applied for funding in those rounds.

**Need to Expand Tribal-specific Technical Assistance**

The AHSC Program is a critical resource for addressing California’s housing crisis, however, Tribal entities have difficulty accessing the program. Many Tribes have limited or no staff capacity with housing experience and are unlikely to have a project at a stage that the current AHSC technical assistance program can support. Expanding SGC’s Tribal capacity will position Tribes to have projects ready to address their housing needs and prepare to apply for AHSC and other state housing programs. It is imperative that the state continue to alleviate barriers and



provide capacity building support to California Tribes and Tribal communities in accessing state funding.

### **AHSC Program Objectives**

As established under Senate Bill 862, SGC is required to develop and administer the AHSC Program, continuously appropriating 20% of the annual proceeds of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for the program.

AHSC program awards support:

- Reducing air pollution
- Improving conditions in disadvantaged communities
- Supporting or improving public health and other co-benefits
- Improving connectivity and accessibility to jobs, housing and services.
- Conserving agricultural land and encouraging smart growth.
- Increasing options for mobility, including the implementation of the Active Transportation Program established pursuant to Section 2380 of the Streets and Highways Code
- Increasing transit ridership
- Preserving and developing affordable housing for lower-income households

Below is a summary of goals for AHSC projects:

- Statutory Requirement: Housing Funds. A minimum of 50% of total AHSC Program expenditures must be dedicated to affordable housing.
- Statutory Requirement: Disadvantaged Communities. A minimum of 50% of total AHSC Program expenditures must also be invested to benefit Disadvantaged Communities, as identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0.
- Council Goal: Project Area Type. Ensure a minimum Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) amount is awarded to each project area type [35% Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD), 35% Integrated Connectivity Projects (ICP), and 10% Rural Innovation Project Areas (RIPA)].
- Council Goal: Geographic. Ensure at least one project is awarded in each of the eight geographic regions identified by the Council.
- Council Goal: Tribal. Ensure that at least one project is awarded to a Tribal entity and up to \$50 million in funding is awarded to Tribal projects.

## **Program Development and Engagement**

The Tribal Capacity Building Program is a grant program that provides funding and technical assistance to California Native American Tribes, enhancing staff capacity to advance Tribes' housing- and climate-related work. The Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund (the Fund) is a



grant program that provides funding to support planning, design, construction, and other activities necessary to build housing and be eligible for other state-funded affordable housing programs, particularly the AHSC program. The programs were developed through the following process:

- In 2020, the Council approved \$2 million from AHSC funds to support SGC's technical assistance and capacity building activities, which enabled staff to develop the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program.
- In April 2025, the Council allocated \$30 million of AHSC funds to create the Tribal Housing Capacity Building Initiative, which is made up of two programs: the Tribal Capacity Building Program and the Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund.
- Staff held 10 Key Informant Interviews to inform Draft Guidelines of the programs, which were posted for a 90-day Public Comment and Tribal Consultation from Jan. 6, 2026, to April 6, 2026.
- Staff held nine workshops, both in person and virtual, and more than 300 people participated. Staff sent a request for Tribal Consultation to every entity listed on the state's Native American Heritage Contact List and held nine Tribal Consultations with both federally and non-federally recognized Tribes.

Staff received the following feedback from Tribes:

- Tribes were in support of the programs, and consistently reported the need for a capacity-building program and funds for housing pre-development
- The Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity continues to be a barrier to advanced pay.
- Non-federally recognized Tribes expressed a need to be eligible for funding.
- Tribes expressed concerns regarding the limited amount of funding available.

In response to significant concerns of insufficient funds, staff released a pre-application interest survey to better understand the potential pool of applicants for the program. As of April 15, 2026, 40 Tribes have completed the survey, and anticipate requesting between \$82 million and \$120 million in funding in total.

### **Key Changes from Draft to Final Guidelines**

Tribal Capacity Building Program's Round 2 Guidelines (Attachment A) Updates:

- Tribal housing-related training was changed from a mandatory activity to an optional activity, to reduce barriers for Tribal applicants.
- The grantee scope of work was updated to require at least two customized housing-related activities rather than one, to increase the focus on housing.
- The requirement to include a Project Area Map was removed.

### Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund's Guidelines (Attachment B) Updates:

- Updated to be a competitive grant program, reflecting the expected interest and limited funds in the program.
- Includes a scoring rubric that aims to score projects equitably based on various factors such as housing and socioeconomic needs, demographics, project types, and project impacts.
- Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be released after Guidelines are posted to allow for flexibility and potential future funding opportunities.

Both Program Guidelines have clarified eligibility requirements for California Native American Tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Contact List as of February 2026.

### Next Steps

Upon approval of the Final Guidelines for the Tribal Capacity Building Program and the Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund, SGC staff will publish the Final Guidelines, and release Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and application materials for both programs in May 2026. The goal is to bring awards for both programs to Council for approval in October 2026. Once the NOFAs are released, SGC staff will hold additional workshops.

### Council Recommendation

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

Motion 1: *"I move that the Council approve the consent calendar."*

### Attachments

Attachment A: Tribal Capacity Building Program Guidelines

Attachment B: Tribal Housing Pre-Development Fund Guidelines