



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Regional Climate Collaboratives Program FY 2021-2022 FUNDING ROUND

DATE: May 12, 2022
TO: **All Potential Applicants**
FROM: RCC Program Staff, Strategic Growth Council
SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY – A TOTAL OF \$8.35 MILLION FOR ROUND 1 OF THE REGIONAL CLIMATE COLLABORATIVES PROGRAM**

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is pleased to announce the availability of funding for Round 1 of the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program through this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). SGC anticipates that \$8.35 million will be available for competitive awards in this funding round.

RCC is part of the state's Climate Budget (Senate Bill 170), which funds ambitious measures to build climate adaptation and resilience through planning, research, capacity building, restoration, and sustainable infrastructure. Senate Bill (SB) 1072 (Leyva, Chapter 377, Statutes of 2018)¹ established the RCC Program at the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to create new and support existing Regional Climate Collaboratives (Collaboratives) across the state that will assist under-resourced communities in accessing funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. The legislation acknowledges that under-resourced communities often lack capacity and face challenges accessing State funding to address community priorities and recognizes the necessity of providing technical assistance (TA) resources to ensure every community has the same opportunity to achieve their climate and equity goals. 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 Application phase. Submitting a Pre-Proposal is not required but is strongly recommended for all RCC Applicants. Applicants who do not submit a Pre-Proposal cannot be guaranteed TA. Pre-Proposals will not disqualify Applicants from submitting a final application or affect the evaluation of their full application. In addition, Applicants will not be beholden to the project details submitted in the Pre-Proposal for the Final Application.

The Pre-Proposal application allows Applicants to provide a broad overview of their proposed projects, which may include information such as the project Partners, Managing Stakeholder, and estimated budget. SGC staff and TA providers will provide feedback on all submitted Pre-Proposals but will not provide scores. The full application will be released following the pre-proposal deadline. Application TA will be available to support with the development of full applications.

¹ Leyva. "Senate Bill No. 1072." Bill Text - SB-1072 Regional Climate Collaborative Program: technical assistance., September 14, 2018. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2017201805B1072.

RCC Grant Pre-Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, July 15, 2022. Final Grant Applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, October 7, 2022 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 ta@sgc.ca.gov.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program is a new 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 necessarily limited to, the following:

- California Native American Tribes
- Community-based organizations
- Joint powers authorities
- Local government agencies
- Nonprofits and foundations
- Small businesses
- Other organizations with a history of providing community-based outreach or TA. These organizations may look different depending on each Applicant's local and regional context. It is up to Applicants to determine which organizations play this role in their community. Possible examples include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - Academic institutions
 - Community Choice Aggregates
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Farming cooperatives and land trusts
 - Neighborhood associations
 - Resource conservation districts
 - Tribal-serving organizations

Together, eligible Applicants will form a Collaborative and collectively develop the application based on a shared vision. Within the application, Applicants must include a Partnership Agreement that describes the governance and organization of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure. Henceforth, the MOU shall be referred to as the Partnership Agreement. Applications will be submitted by a Managing Stakeholder in coordination with and on behalf of the Co-Applicants (Partners) who are members of the Collaborative. Any entity from the eligible applicant list can serve as the Managing Stakeholder or a Partner on the grant. Together, the Managing Stakeholder and Co-Applicants are collectively referred to as "Applicants."

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. Regardless of selected strategies and activities, Applicants must ensure they address each of the following program objectives:

- **Develop Actionable Plans and Projects:** Activities conducted by Applicants will lead to the development (or update) of local plans as well as climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience projects that can be implemented if project funding is secured. Grant activities will build the local network capacity necessary for Collaborative members to develop competitive grant proposals.
- **Build Social Infrastructure:** Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed activities will build enduring and trusting relationships across members of the Collaborative, residents, and other stakeholder groups, and how the grant will support better regional coordination on the development and implementation of climate-related projects and applications.
- **Center Community Engagement & Decision Making:** Applicants must work with community members and stakeholders through direct engagement. Applicants must involve residents and key stakeholders from selected under-resourced communities within the Applicant's region in all phases of project implementation, with a focus on populations that have historically been excluded from decision making and implementation processes. Applicants must also use proven methods of engagement to facilitate direct participation of community residents, including ensuring translation of meetings and materials, scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient to community members, and engaging community members in information gathering as well as outreach.
- **Develop Equity-centered Processes:** Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed activities will develop or improve local processes for under-resourced community residents, community-based organizations, and Tribes to co-lead decisions made about climate change related priorities and projects at the local and/or regional level.

For additional information on eligible activities, eligible costs, geographic scope, and other program details, please see the [RCC 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 25 of the [RCC Program Guidelines](#).

Submitting a Pre-Proposal is not required but is strongly recommended for all RCC Applicants. Applicants who do not submit a Pre-Proposal cannot be guaranteed TA. Pre-Proposals will not disqualify Applicants from submitting a final application or affect the evaluation of their full application. In addition, Applicants will not be beholden to the project details submitted in the Pre-Proposal for the Final Application. Pre-Proposals must be submitted to SGC by **5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, July 15, 2022**.

SGC staff and TA providers will provide feedback on all submitted pre-proposals but will not provide scores. The full application will be released following the pre-proposal deadline. Application TA will be available to support with the development of full applications.

Full Application Phase

All RCC Applicants must submit application materials to SGC via a file-sharing platform by **5:00 p.m. PT on Friday, October 7, 2022**. 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 in Section XI of the [RCC 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 public review ten (10) days prior to the SGC public meeting.

Pre-Proposal application resources are currently available on [SGC's website](#). Full application materials, including application instructions and templates for the work plan and budget will be posted on or before the Pre-Proposal submission deadline on July 15. The anticipated date of announcement for the selection of RCC grant recommendations is December 2022. 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 set forth in Section IX of the [RCC Program Guidelines](#). The top scoring Applicants will be recommended to the Strategic Growth Council to receive RCC Grants. 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 has been determined to be ineligible, fail threshold review, or not awarded based on final scores, RCC Grant Applicants under this NOFA may appeal such decision(s) to SGC pursuant to this section.
2. No Applicant shall have the right to appeal a decision of SGC relating to another Applicant's eligibility, point score, award, denial of award, or any other matter related thereto.
3. The appeal process provided herein applies solely to the decision of SGC made in this program NOFA and does not apply to any decisions made with respect to any previously issued NOFAs or decisions to be 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 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 ta@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

All Applicants who submit a pre-proposal application will be eligible to receive no-cost technical assistance (TA), provided by a team of SGC-funded third-party TA providers. TA providers will be available to respond to questions and provide light support to Applicants on an as-needed basis during the Pre-Proposal phase. Once Pre-Proposals have been submitted and reviewed, SGC staff will assign Applicants to a TA provider to work with them on integrating feedback and developing a full RCC application. **Applicants who do not submit a Pre-Proposal cannot be guaranteed TA.**

Technical assistance providers will work with each RCC Grant Applicant to create a work plan for the development of their RCC application. The technical assistance provider will meet regularly with the RCC Applicant and will be able to provide supportive services, including but not limited to:

- Responding to Applicant questions and providing clarity around program goals and requirements;
- Providing guidance on stakeholder engagement and outreach to develop work plan elements;
- Supporting Applicants in facilitating an effective partnership development and Collaborative Stakeholder Structure;
- Providing mapping support as needed;
- Supporting the Applicant in preparing for SGC interviews during the selection process

An application workshop webinar series providing an overview of the RCC Program including program objectives, program requirements, the application process, and grant administration, and virtual networking sessions will take place on the following dates:

- Wednesday, May 18, 2-3pm: **RCC Guidelines and Application Overview Webinar** | [Register Here](#)
- Wednesday, June 8, 10am-12pm: **RCC Application Workshop & Networking Session – Unincorporated & Rural Communities** | [Register Here](#)
- Thursday, June 9, 10am-12pm: **RCC Application Workshop & Networking Session – Tribes & Tribal-serving Organizations** | [Register Here](#)

- Friday, June 10, 10am-12pm: **RCC Application Workshop & Networking Session - General Audience** | [Register Here](#)

OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Disclosure Application of Information

Information provided in RCC applications will become a public record available for review pursuant to the Public Records Act. As such, any materials provided will be disclosable to any person making a public records request. Applicants should use discretion in providing information that is not specifically requested, including, but not limited to bank account numbers, personal phone numbers and home addresses. By providing this information in an application, the Applicant waives any claim of confidentiality and consents to the public disclosure of all submitted material. Awarded applications will be posted on the SGC website.

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 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 ta@sgc.ca.gov.