

Deriving Community Benefits from Climate Investments: Gathering Inspiration from California Place-Based Programs

December 7, 2023 | 9:30 – 11:30am PT, Via Zoom

Webinar Handout

Introduction

California is embarking on significant new energy infrastructure development, including development of offshore wind and large-scale solar projects that will increase the State's clean energy capacity so that it can meet its climate change and clean electricity goals. As California prepares to deliver these projects, there is an opportunity to ensure that these projects deliver meaningful benefits to host communities and those nearby.

Over the past fifteen years, California has developed a suite of climate change investment programs, including through the California Climate Investments (CCI) program and other state funds. Many of these investment programs take a place-based approach, which means that they are designed to center and elevate community vision, goals, and priorities. The federal government is also deploying place-based investment approaches in the climate arena.

The California programs – several of which are highlighted in the December 7th forum – have structures, procedures, and outcome measures that can inform future development projects and make California's clean energy transition a catalyst for community benefits. The State's development of many of these place-based investment programs was informed by locally-led efforts to establish local and regional climate programs. The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) is an early leader in these regional efforts, and this handout also provides an overview of the NCRP initiative.

During the December 7th webinar, speakers will share experiences from the planning and implementation of [place-based efforts](#). Place-based approaches to planning and project development focus on tailoring solutions to local context and on supporting impacted and priority communities. The speakers will share experiences working in three areas of the State: Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), Stockton (Stockton Rising and North San Joaquin CERF), and the North Coast (The North Coast Resource Partnership). In addition, we will hear a federal perspective on the role of place-based investments.

Common Elements of Place-Based Programs

Community Vision	Collaborative Stakeholder Structure	Community-Informed Outcome Measures
Clearly articulated mission statements and goals that assert a commitment to guiding community-led development .	A set of structural components and core functional procedures that place community leaders and local priorities at the center of project decision-making .	Evaluation criteria for project outcomes that embody the values and attributes of local communities .

Transformative Climate Communities

Program Overview

The [Transformative Climate Communities](#) (TCC) program, established in State legislation ([AB 2722](#) (Burke, 2016) and administered by California’s Strategic Growth Council, provides grants to support catalytic, integrated, community-led infrastructure and development projects in California’s most disadvantaged communities.

Community-Led Program Vision

TCC focuses resources and decision-making capacity in highly localized areas. The program guidelines require that applicant communities establish a community vision and a collaborative stakeholder structure to help realize that vision.

Holistic Grant Structure and Collaborative Development

- TCC offers **Planning** and **Implementation** grants.
- Implementation Grant applicants must develop several transformative elements, including a **Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity Plan (WDEOP)**, to provide economic opportunity pathways for local citizens.
- TCC provides *technical assistance* – including application support, financial management, and implementation assistance for awardees.
- Each grant applicant must develop a **collaborative stakeholder structure** to ensure that project planning and implementation reflect local needs.

Locally-Informed Outcome Measures

Each awardee supports a TCC evaluation team to track investment outcomes that are tailored to each grantee community. These metrics track each community's progress on health, environmental, and economic goals.

Regional Climate Collaboratives

Organization Overview

The [Regional Climate Collaboratives](#) (RCC) Program is a grant program administered by the California Strategic Growth Council. Established by [Senate Bill 1072](#) (2018, Leyva), the goal of the Regional Climate Collaboratives program is to support capacity building and cross-sectoral coordination in California's under-resourced communities.

Community-Focused Mission

RCC's goal is to "strengthen local coordination, leadership, knowledge, skills, and expertise with a focus on developing and accessing funding for local and regional climate projects."

Grant Requirements and Collaborative Structure

- Grant applicants apply as a collective set of community groups (a "Collaborative") with a shared vision and a **Partnership Agreement**, which documents governance and coordination principles. Collaborative membership is restricted to public or private entities that closely reflect and serve local needs.
- Applicants must present comprehensive plans to build capacity in targeted communities by addressing each of the following project components: **Actionable** Plans and Projects; **Social Infrastructure** Development; **Community-Centered** Engagement and Decision-Making; **Equity-Centered** Processes and Leadership Opportunities.
- RCC provides third-party **technical assistance** to teams in the development of application components, the maintenance of operations, and project evaluation.

Locally-Informed Outcome Measures

Project outcomes are evaluated with reference to the individual project objectives and broader RCC program goals, which are derived from localized interests.

Community Economic Resilience Fund

Organization Overview

The [Community Economic Resilience Fund](#) (CERF) is a grant program jointly administered by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency that supports strategies to develop regional economic development throughout California.

Regionally-Focused Mission

CERF's articulated purpose is to "build an equitable and sustainable economy across California's diverse regions and foster long-term economic resilience in the overall transition to a carbon-neutral economy."

Regional Governance and Grant Structure

- **Planning Investment:** CERF distributed planning grants to 13 state-identified California regions to help build and maintain inclusive, locally-representative governance entities called *High Road Transition Collaboratives* (HRTCs). Planning grants can be used broadly to support capacity-building, community engagement and expert research.
- **Regional Governance:** Each individual region develops its own *Economic Development Strategy* to localize recovery and transition plans and integrate projects with existing economic development efforts.
- **Implementation Investment:** CERF distributes funds to eligible entities (e.g., Nonprofits, Public Agencies, Tribal Governments) that propose projects consistent with the regional economic development strategy and/or acquire written support from the HRTC.

Locally-Informed Outcome Measures

Designated *Evaluators* consider the following project operations and outcomes, among others: *Inclusive Representation* and Decision-Making; *Community Outreach/Engagement*; *Job Quality* and Access; *Climate-Responsive and Sustainable Industry* Development; *Community Resilience*.

North Coast Resource Partnership

Organization Overview

The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP), founded in 2005, is a multi-stakeholder organization that provides "regional collaborative infrastructure" among Northern California

Tribes, counties, and a diverse range of other stakeholders in the implementation of projects related to watershed management and broader ecosystem health.

Community-Focused Mission Statement

NCRP's mission is to "enhance the watersheds and communities of the North Coast region through collaborative, multi-objective planning and project implementation led by Tribes and counties." The organization's *Memorandum of Mutual Understandings* outlines a set of community-oriented principles that establish the basis for collective action among stakeholders.

Locally-Embedded Structure and Procedures

- **Leadership Council (LC):** Decision-making body composed of elected Tribal and county representatives from the North Coast region.
- **Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC):** Composed of technical experts; reviews and evaluates NCRP plans alongside other technical staff and advises LC to enhance project scope, pace and scale.
- **Core NCRP Staff Team:** Core staff is composed of representatives from Sonoma Water, Humboldt County, California Indian Environmental Alliance and West Coast Watershed. Staff reports to LC and performs core functional tasks in collaboration with TPRC, Ad Hoc Committees, funding agencies, partners and community.
- **Workshops, Input Sessions and Quarterly Meetings:** NCRP leaders, staff and partners share planning information and make revisions according to stakeholder feedback.

Locally-Informed Outcome Measures

NCRP "engage[s] in data development, data gathering, assessments, and convenings that integrate regional and local expertise and knowledge." Measured project costs and benefits include (but are not limited to) the following: *Water sediment concentrations; Local fish habitat protection; Protection of agricultural heritage; Conflict avoidance and reduction of local tensions; Use of local labor and supplies.*