

Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program

Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program

Technical Assistance: Partnerships

Background

The Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program (EHCRP) will fund Early and Advanced Transformative Infrastructure projects to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat. The Program will build frameworks for change and invest in local, regional, and tribal projects that protect the most vulnerable Californians from the impacts of extreme heat. This guide covers:

- **Round 2 Partnership Requirements**, including eligibility, partnership types, and partnership structures;
- **Documentation Required in the Full Application** for partners
- **Summary of Applicant Roles and Responsibilities** in a summary table format
- **How to Prepare for Round 2**, including guiding questions to consider when identifying partners and a partnership building checklist
- **Appendix**, including partnership case studies and an organizational capacity self-assessment to evaluate your organization's readiness to manage grant funding

Round 2 Partnership Objectives

Partnerships are a key component of the EHCRP program and are intended to:

- Bring together collaboration across entities to increase community resilience to extreme heat;
- Center the needs and priorities of communities most vulnerable to extreme heat; and
- Ensure that projects are aligned with local and regional planning efforts and requirements.

Applicant Team Roles

Together, the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s), Contributor(s), and Supporter(s) are collectively referred to as the "Applicant Team."

- **Lead Applicant:** The Lead Applicant is responsible for submitting the Pre-Application Interest Form and full application and will receive funds from EHCRP if awarded. If awarded, the Lead Applicant is the only entity to enter into an agreement for grant funding with the State.
- **Co-Applicant(s):** Co-Applicants are required by the Program for each project and will receive funds from EHCRP through the Lead Applicant if awarded. The project work plan and budget must include the Co-Applicant's key activities, detailed tasks, and allocated budget.
- **Contributor(s):** Contributors are not required by the Program but can be included in the project proposal, work plan, and budget without detailed tasks. This flexibility allows the Lead Applicant to develop the Contributor's role post-award and over the course of the project period. The total budget for Contributors should not exceed 30% of the total proposed budget.
- **Supporter(s):** Supporters are not required by the Program but can be included in the proposal to help illustrate local support for the proposed project. Supporters do not receive funding from the Program and include partner organizations who are in favor of the project and may participate in some project activities without additional funds. Supporters will submit a letter of support with the application.
- **Contractor(s):** Contractors are separate from partners; they are entities paid by the grant to accomplish specific tasks. Contractors can be non-profits or private entities. Contractors do not have to be selected at the time of application. Contractors will be selected using the rules and guidelines of the Lead Applicant.

Round 2 Partnership Requirements

The EHCRP application requires both a Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant. California Native American Tribes and Tribal Entities are exempt from the requirement to include a Co-Applicant. If awarded, Lead Applicants and Co-Applicant(s) will be required to submit a formal Partnership Agreement. The Program will provide an agreement template once grants are awarded. Some of the elements of a partnership agreement are: roles and responsibilities, conflict resolution, and governance structures.

Round 2 Partnership Roles & Structures

Eligible Applicant Types

The following are eligible entity types that may apply for EHCRP Round 2:

- Local or Regional Public Entities,
- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs),
- Public Higher Academic Institutions,
- CA Native American Tribe or Tribal Entity, and
- Coalitions, collaboratives, or associations of nonprofit organizations that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) non-profit or academic institution.

Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant Types

Round 2 requires Lead and Co-Applicant pairings to ensure each Applicant Team has the expertise, community buy-in, governmental authority, and operational capacity to implement the project. The table below lists the Required Co-Applicant type for each Lead Applicant type.

Lead Applicant Type	Required Co-Applicant Type
Local or Regional Public Entity	CBO
Community-Based Organization (CBO)	Local or Regional Public Entity
Public Academic Institution	CBO AND Local or Regional Public Entity
CA Native American Tribe or Tribal Entity	None required

Documentation Required in the Full Application

This table summarizes documentation that will be required in the full application for each project role, with more detail on the requirements for each role discussed below.

Application Requirements by Project Role

Role Information & Application Requirements	PROJECT ROLES			
	Lead Applicant	Co-Applicant	Contributor	Supporter
Required Role?	X	X		
Receives EHCRP Funds	X	X	X	
Must include tasks in budget and work plan	X	X	X	
Letter of Support required		X		X
Financial Capacity Documents				
Current Annual Budget	X	X		
Financial statements from the last two years, including - all balance sheets - income statements, and - statements of cash flows	X	X		
For Non-Profits (if applicable) - Federal Form 990 (most recent), and - IRS 501(c)(3) Tax Determination Letter.	X	X		
Audit Findings (if organization received audit findings in the last five years)	X	X		

Co-Applicant Requirements

The full project application must include the following **Co-Applicant** documents:

- The project work plan and budget must include the Co-Applicant's **key activities, detailed tasks, and allocated budget**.
- Financial capacity documents** for Co-Applicants: financial statements from the last two years including balance sheets, income statements, and statements of

cash flows; for non-profits, the most recent Form 990 and IRS 501(c)(3) Tax Determination Letter; and (if applicable) any audit findings in the last five years.

- Applications must include a **Letter of Support** from the Co-Applicant that include the following information:
 - How the project supports the goals and interests of your organization and why you think the project deserves to be funded;
 - Description of how you plan to accomplish the components of the project your organization is responsible for; and
 - Identification of two potential barriers or obstacles you may encounter in the grant and how you plan to address them.

Contributors

- **High-level tasks** for Contributors should be included in the budget and work plan, but the total budget for Contributors should not exceed 30% of the total proposed budget.

Supporters

- Supporters do not receive funding from the Program and include partner organizations who can participate in some project activities without additional funds.
- Supporters must provide a **Letters of Support** in the application. The application will allow for a maximum of three Supporter Letters of Support. Supporter Letters of Support should include:
 - How the project supports the goals and interests of your organization and why you think the project deserves to be funded.
 - If applicable, how your organization will be involved in the grant project.

Summary of Applicant Roles and Responsibilities

The table below provides a summary of the applicant roles and responsibilities during the application period and upon award.

Role	Required / Optional	Receives Grant Funds?	Application Responsibilities	Post-Award Responsibilities
Lead Applicant	Required	Yes – as Grantee	-Coordinate team members to prepare proposal and gather documentation -Submit Pre-Application Interest Form -Submit full Application	-Enter into grant agreement with the State to receive funds -Subgrant funds to project partners -Serve as point of contact with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) -Lead grant administration and project implementation
Co-Applicant(s)	Required May include more than one Co-Applicant	Yes – receives funding through Lead Applicant	Project work plan and budget must include Co-Applicant's key activities, detailed tasks, and costs	- Sign Partnership Agreement with Lead Applicant - Implement grant activities and support grant implementation as outlined in Partnership Agreement
Contributor(s)	Optional May include more than one Contributor	Yes – receives funding through Lead Applicant (no more than 30% of project budget)	Project work plan and budget should include high-level description of activities and cost, but do not require detailed tasks or budget justification for application	- Develop and refine tasks, deliverables, and costs over the project period - Implement grant activities as outlined in refined work plan
Supporter(s)	Optional May include more than one Supporter	No	Provide a Letter of Support to Lead Applicant to include with application	May participate in some project activities without receiving funds

How to Prepare for Round 2

With the EHCRP Round 2 Application expected to launch in early 2026, potential applicants should begin exploring partnership possibilities with other eligible entities and organizations as soon as possible. Defining roles and coordinating responsibilities across multiple organizations will require discussions and adequate preparation.

Identifying Potential Partnerships

Strong and diverse partnerships will be comprised of partner entities that bring unique strengths and approaches with a proven track record of meaningfully engaging with communities. Some examples include:

- Regional climate collaboratives
- Organizations representing social workers
- Organizations representing Access and Functional Needs communities
- Youth led groups and youth empowerment organizations

To identify potential partners in your project, consider the following:

- What organizations are most trusted by residents that are most vulnerable to extreme heat?
- Are there organizations/groups doing work to address extreme heat or community resilience in your community (e.g., organizations dedicated to green space expansion, social services, arts, or health)?
- Have you had previous discussions with other organizations around extreme heat and community resilience?
- What organizations have been most effective at building community power and advocating for policy change and community-centered infrastructure improvement?
- Are there existing local or regional planning documents or strategies for addressing extreme heat? Who owns those plans?
- What specialized skills or expertise would your project benefit from? Are there local organizations that have these skills?
- How can partners be included in the project scope to create a holistic, comprehensive approach to addressing extreme heat?

Partnership Building Checklist

- ☐ Consult the new EHCRP Round 2 Partnership Requirements to see which entity type you should partner with as Co-Applicant
- ☐ Identify organizations and groups working on extreme heat or community resilience in your project area and consider what project roles they might support
- ☐ Try to identify and engage your Co-Applicant as early as possible and begin clarifying roles and responsibilities for both the proposed project and preparing your application
- ☐ Begin gathering required documentation from your partners early
- ☐ Identify other potential key partners who can support the project as Supporters or Contributors and begin outreach to those organizations
- ☐ Communicate about and request Letters of Support early to account for turnaround time
- ☐ Looking Ahead: While Lead and Co-Applicants are not required to submit Partnership Agreements until after a project is awarded, preparing early will reduce the effort later. A partnership agreement is required. A template will be provided once grants are awarded. Some of the elements of a partnership agreement are: roles and responsibilities, conflict resolution, and governance structures.

Appendix

Examples of Partnerships

SolarCHHILL Project: In Round 1 of the EHCRP, North Coast Opportunities Inc., Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians, and the City of Clearlake came together to propose the Cooling and Heating Homes with Innovative Low-Impact Living (SolarCHHILL) project. The SolarCHHILL project focuses on the installation of solar-powered mini-split cooling and heating units for vulnerable households, training of residents in solar panel installation and maintenance, and community education campaigns. The Lead Applicant, North Coast Opportunities (NCO), is a community-based organization that collaborated with the Tribal Nation of Middletown Rancheria as a Co-Applicant and the City of Clearlake as a Supporter to jointly shape the initiative and ensure that the effort aligned with the region's existing plans and actions concentrated on improving the community's adaptive capacity.



SolarCHHILL project, from LCI

Lessons learned:

Clarify Partner Roles and Responsibilities – In designing their partnership structure, the SolarCHHILL project team had a clear sense of each entity's duties. NCO manages overall grant administration, coordinates the workforce development initiative, oversees contractor relationships, and leads data collection and reporting. As a Co-Applicant, the Middletown Rancheria Tribal Nation gathers community input, identifies potential project participants and mini-split recipients, and organizes community events. Both partners work together to shape the implementation of the project through direct engagement with the community to design processes that ensure the most vulnerable households benefit from these limited resources, while also building extreme heat awareness to support future expansion. **Support Capacity Building** – The workforce training component of SolarCHHILL was modeled after NCO's existing Building Up Individuals and Local Development (BUILD) program, which aims to provide vulnerable populations with construction training opportunities and work experiences. To ensure the long-term sustainability of solar workforce programming in Lake County, the program trains participants from both within and outside the Tribe to lead the installation of mini splits funded through this grant and in future projects.

Tuolumne County Community Resilience Centers: In response to unmet recovery needs stemming from the August 2013 Rim Fire, the State of California applied for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC), a national program designed to help communities rebuild more resiliently following major disasters. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) led the State's application in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and Tuolumne County.



Tuolumne Community Resilience Center, from <https://mymotherlode.com/news/local/2823816/tuolumne->

In 2017, California was awarded \$70.4 million from HUD, \$19.7 million of which was dedicated to the construction of two Community Resilience Centers (CRCs) in the County, in Tuolumne City and Groveland. The CRCs were built to provide short-term shelter for residents during extreme weather events and serve as a hub for disaster assistance providers, while also offering space year-round for community programming and services such as job training, immunization clinics, town hall meetings, and more.

The Tuolumne City CRC was completed in 2022, thanks to a successful partnership among several critical stakeholders, including state agencies (OPR and HCD) which managed grant administration and compliance with HUD regulations, while Tuolumne County largely handled implementation, facility operations planning, and community engagement with many supporters of the project, including the Tuolumne Band of Mi-Wuk Indians Tribe, the County's school district, and Police Department.

Lessons learned:

- **Centering Belonging and Community Ownership** – Initially, the State requested \$40 million in the NDRC application to construct the CRCs but ultimately received \$19.7 million. Rather than simply presenting scaled-back plans to community members, the County convened members of the public to provide updates on the reduced budget, and held meetings with County staff, architects, and local stakeholders to collaboratively work through difficult tradeoffs. Through interactive techniques like dot voting and prioritization matrices at public meetings in Groveland and Tuolumne, residents discussed their desires and participated directly in problem-solving rather than merely sharing feedback. Community members recognized the

necessity of compromises and demonstrated willingness to scale-down certain aspects of the project to achieve their goals.

- Building Financial Sustainability into Operational Design – Rather than creating grant-dependent facilities requiring perpetual public subsidy, the CRC project partners developed a five-year pro-forma with financial projections demonstrating long-term viability. The Tuolumne City CRC is projected to achieve positive net operating income (\$8,500) by its fourth year of operation, which is anticipated to grow to nearly \$18,000 by year five. Surplus funds are designated for staff expansion, maintenance, equipment purchases, and general unanticipated needs. Financial sustainability for the CRC stems from partnerships that created revenue streams, like long-term lease agreements with tenant partner organizations the Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency, Red Cross, and the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Community Service Unit as well as facility rentals for private events and conferences. By establishing revenue-generating capabilities alongside the provision of free or subsidized community services, project leaders worked early on to offer pathways for the Center to be financially sustainable after federal grant funding ends.

Organizational Capacity Self-Assessment Prompts for Lead Applicants

Lead Applicants should assess their organization's readiness to manage grant funding from the State of California. The self-assessment prompts listed below were designed to help potential Lead Applicants evaluate their financial, operational, and overall grant management experience and capacity. If your organization is considering a Lead Applicant role, for each of the questions below, consider whether your organization's responses are:

- No/Needs Improvement
- Partially in Place/Needs Strengthening
- Fully in Place /Strong Capacity

Your responses can help to determine what applicant type and/or project role might be the best fit for your organization. For example, if your organization can respond to the majority of the following questions, you may be well positioned to serve as a Lead Applicant. The questions can also help you identify what you may want to look for in a project partner to supplement your organization's existing strengths and capacity.

Financial & Grant Management Capacity

1. Do we have written financial policies and procedures (procurement, reimbursements, conflict of interest, internal controls)?
2. Can our accounting system track grant funds separately and generate accurate reports?
3. Do we have staff or contracted expertise with experience managing government grants?
4. Do we have the cash flow or systems to manage reimbursement-based funding?
5. Can we track expenditures, keep invoices/receipts, and reconcile expenses against the approved budget?
6. Do we have experience managing contractors/subcontractors, including agreements and performance monitoring?
7. Do we have familiarity with state and federal compliance requirements (e.g., allowable costs, nondiscrimination, accessibility, labor laws)?
8. Do we have the capacity to submit timely financial and program reports to state grant managers?
9. Are we familiar with audit requirements, and do we have clean, timely audits or financial reviews from recent years?
10. Are we prepared to retain all financial and program records for at least four years?

Operational Capacity

1. Do we have enough qualified staff or available contractors to carry out grant activities?
2. Are staff roles and organizational structure clearly defined to support grant management and project implementation?
3. Do we have systems to collect, analyze, and report program data that aligns with state requirements?
4. Can we manage relationships with subgrantees/partners, including formal agreements (MOUs, contracts) and monitoring their compliance?
5. Is our leadership and board engaged and supportive of managing state-funded grants?

6. Do we have systems to recruit, hire, and onboard staff or contractors quickly if needed?
7. Have we successfully implemented programs of similar scope or scale before?
8. Can we adapt and scale operations if the grant expands our workload or reach?