



ICARP

INTEGRATED CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCY PROGRAM

ICARP Regional Resilience Grant Program Engagement Summary

Background

In 2021, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), through the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program (ICARP), received \$250M in the state budget to fund the Regional Resilience Planning and Implementation Grant Program (Regional Resilience Grant Program, RRGP) to fund region-scale climate resilience solutions.

The RRGP will help fill local, regional, and tribal needs and support a pipeline of regional scale climate resilient projects, by providing communities the funding needed to identify climate resilience priorities, build capacity, and implement projects in response to the greatest climate risks in a region.

The RRGP will invest \$250 million over three funding cycles available to local, regional, and tribal governments. The RRGP will support regions in advancing resilience through three major activities: capacity-building, planning, and project implementation. The first grant cycle will invest \$25 million, including at least \$12.5 million to support regional climate adaptation planning efforts and the development of action plans that prioritize projects or actions addressing the greatest climate risks facing a region, particularly in the most vulnerable communities. Grants will be made available both competitively and on a formula basis.

Key Priorities of ICARP's RRGP are to:

- Support regional projects aligned with ICARP priorities that improve regional climate resilience and reduce climate risks from wildfire, sea level rise, drought, flood, increasing temperatures, and extreme heat events.
- Support projects or actions that address the greatest climate risks in the region, particularly in the most vulnerable communities.
- Fill the gaps in climate resilience funding and support sustainable and cohesive climate resilient projects.

Key Feedback & Takeaways

During the summer of 2022, ICARP hosted a series of listening sessions to receive feedback on the RRGP's objectives and inform the development of the grant program. Listening session participants from across the state elevated the following themes as key recommendations to supporting regional-scale climate resilience solutions.

Provide flexibility on defining regions.

- The RRGP should provide guidance for regions to self-identify based on a region's highest priorities for shared climate risks and natural systems.
- Prioritize existing regional partnerships and capacity building opportunities.
- Consider the differences and unique needs of urban and rural communities.

Fund sustainable staffing and strategic partnerships to build capacity.

- Support long-term staffing capacity within organizations, partnerships, and government agencies to ensure multi-scale regional collaboration.
- Encourage strategic regional partnerships that prioritize vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to build long-term capacity.

Streamline and simplify the grant application and reporting processes.

- Provide grant application technical assistance for overcoming barriers to accessing funds.
- Align the RRGP with existing climate resilience grant programs to support cohesive plans and projects.

Stakeholder Engagement

On Monday, July 18, 2022, ICARP launched the RRGP engagement activities with a listening session during the Technical Advisory Council meeting. This listening session focused on seven key questions (see below). Following the listening session, the ICARP team held seven additional listening sessions, conducted key informant interviews, and an online survey to gather feedback and input to inform the RRGP's guidelines. During these sessions, the team heard from a wide range of stakeholders, including community groups, local and regional government agencies, tribal communities and governments, and state and federal agencies. Of 675 registrants, 390 people attended the listening sessions.

Event	Date	Participation
Technical Advisory Council Listening Session	Monday, July 18, 2022, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	121 Registrants 86 Participants
General Listening Session	Tuesday, July 26, 2022 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	109 Registrants 77 Participants
Bay Area & Central Coast Listening Session	Thursday, July 28, 2022 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	136 Registrants 66 Participants
Inland North, North Coast, & Sierra Listening Session	Friday, July 29, 2022 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	47 Registrants 21 Participants
Los Angeles, San Diego, & Inland Desert Listening Session	Tuesday, August 02, 2022 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	76 Registrants 40 Participants
General Listening Session	Monday, August 08, 2022 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	73 Registrants 29 Participants
Tribal Governments and Communities Listening Session	Friday, August 12, 2022 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	36 Registrants 22 Participants
Sacramento & San Joaquin Valley Listening Session	Wednesday, August 17, 2022 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	77 Registrants 49 Participants

Through the listening sessions, key informant interviews, and survey responses, the ICARP team received comments from representatives from 141 individual agencies and organizations. The percentages of attendees who participated in the engagement activities, organized by geographic areas, are shown in *Figure 1*. The industries and types of government bodies the participants represented are shown in *Figure 2*. ICARP will continue to identify feedback gaps to inform further targeted outreach and continue engagement

through the guideline development and review process. Through this first round of engagement, the grant program heard:

- The most from the Bay Area (24%), Los Angeles (13%), and San Joaquin Valley (12%) regions.
- The least from the San Diego (6%), Inland Desert (4%), and tribal regions (4%).
- The most from nonprofits and community-based organizations (27%), regional agencies and districts (17%), and city and town governments (16%).
- The least from regional collaboratives/networks (5%), tribal governments and communities (4%), state agencies (4%), utilities (3%), and the federal agencies(1%).

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the percent of participants in the stakeholder engagement activities, organized by geography.

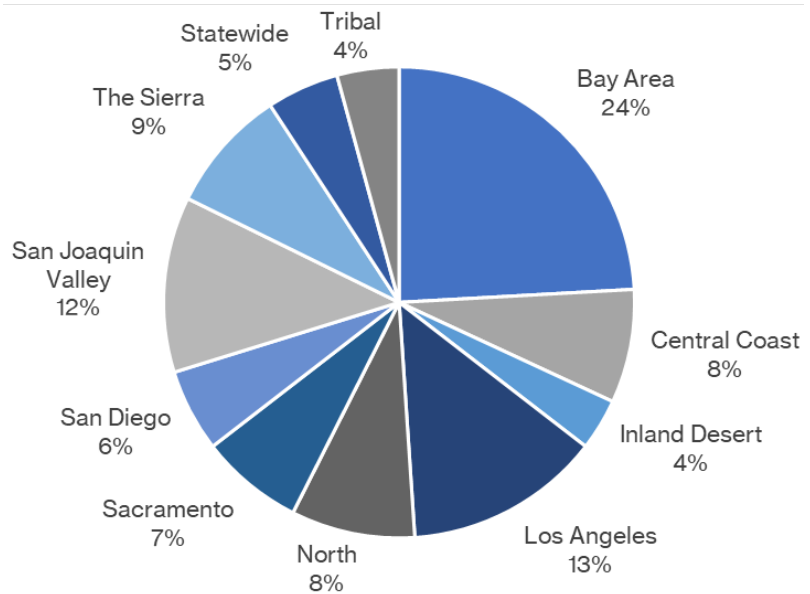
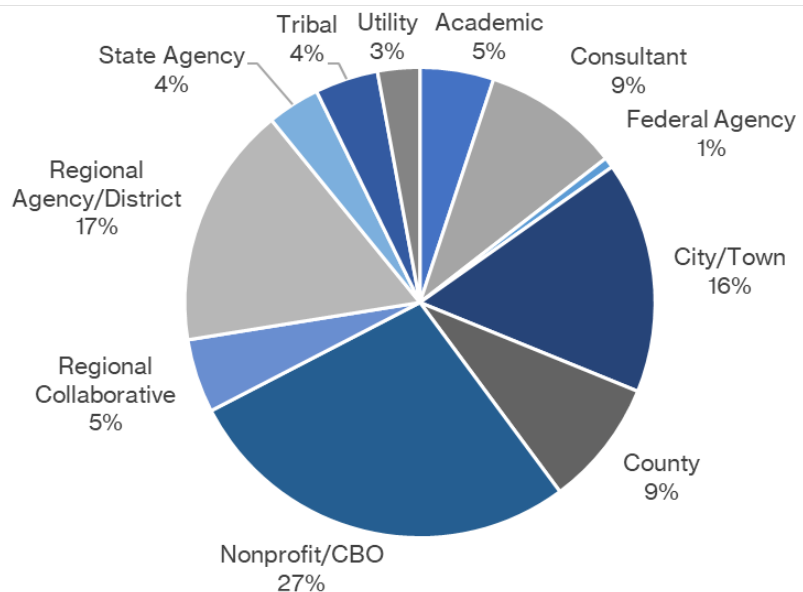


Figure 2: Pie chart showing which industries or type of government body the participants in the engagement activities represented.



Previous Engagement

To ensure that engagement was informed by stakeholder recommendations already received through other engagement events, the ICARP team synthesized feedback received by similar grant programs before hosting the listening sessions for the RRG. The major themes identified across this feedback are:

- **Long-term partnerships:** Create an ongoing collaborative grant development process with the funding agency and facilitate partnerships between grantees to solve shared issues.
- **Engagement support:** Support community engagement activities through advanced grant payments, engagement stipends, and travel vouchers.
- **Build capacity through the grant process:** Provide technical assistance throughout grant program timelines, which could include feedback on proposal suitability and general application assistance.
- **Funding stream alignment:** Align grant programs to reduce the time and cost burden of grant applications and allow for a project pipeline that addresses planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Greater transparency:** Provide more insight into the decision-making process for selecting grants and what makes an application successful.
- **Accessible grant process:** Design a simple grant application process with flexible eligibility criteria that allows for creativity.
- **Data assistance:** Develop a single source for climate resilience data and resources and help connect regional climate hazards to local impacts.

Attendees of the Regional Resilience Grant Program Listening Sessions were asked to identify their top three priorities from the list above. The most selected theme was “build capacity through the grant process” while the least selected theme was “greater transparency” (see *Table 1*).

Table 1 Table showing how attendees of the Regional Resilience Grant Program Listening Sessions ranked the priority level of various themes.

Theme	Percent Selected (%)
Build capacity through the grant process	21
Funding stream alignment	17
Long-term partnerships	16
Accessible grant process	16
Support for engagement	15
Data assistance	10
Greater transparency	5

Technical Advisory Council Q2 Grant Listening Session

The ICARP Technical Advisory Council grant workshop on July 18th featured a discussion for the Councilmembers and public participants to respond to the following questions:

- How can this program define a region to accomplish regional-scale climate resilience solutions?
- What types of regional partnerships can support these solutions?
- How can the program sequence the three major activities (planning, capacity building, project implementation) over the three funding cycles to support cohesive projects?
- While this program may issue grants both competitively and on a formula basis, what should the program consider when evaluating the feasibility of funding set-asides?
- How can this program define capacity building to fill gaps in climate resilience funding?
- Where are the gaps in climate resilience funding and how might we structure the program to align with other programs?
- What are the existing barriers to accessing similar funding programs? How can the grant program address these barriers (e.g., technical assistance)?

Technical Advisory Council Grant Listening Session Takeaways

Monday, July 18, 2022 | 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 pm

Participants of the Technical Advisory Council Grant Workshop shared that aligning with other funding programs, removing barriers from the application process, and leveraging existing regional agencies and collaboratives will be essential to the success of the grant program.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider defining regions in a way that aligns with other federal/state programs and existing governance structures [like Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Joint Power Authorities], to lower the grant application burden for applicants.
- The grant program should consider how regional boundaries can align with existing and planned data platforms like ICARP's Vulnerable Communities Platform.
- The grant program should consider that there may be resistance to state-defined regional boundaries, and an inclination toward self-defining regions, especially concerning shared climate impacts.
- The grant program should consider what guidance would be needed to ease tension between entities and how to facilitate partnerships between groups that have been left out of previous initiatives (such as tribes and some community-based organizations).

Program Needs

- The grant program should recognize that capacity building needs vary by organization types and their location, and a definition would require analyzing the range of needs throughout the state.
- The grant program should consider how capacity limitations keep the communities that need these funds the most from applying for them.
- The grant program should consider that capacity building should:
 - Be defined flexibly so that funding recipients can meet their specific and diverse needs.
 - Consider historically unfunded items and activities, such as: software, participant stipends, gift cards, and food.
 - Consider long-term staffing and workforce development activities.
 - Consider capacity for regional collaboration, performing regional-level gap analyses on what resilience work has already been done, and aligning scaling up smaller efforts into regional ones.
 - Align with and complement existing capacity building definitions and technical assistance services from similar state funding programs, like the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC).
 - Allow for community engagement, education, and general climate resilience awareness.

Grant Administration

- The grant program should ensure funding expense timelines are flexible so that organizations can integrate and align with other efforts.
- The grant program should ensure that applicant's budgets can be flexible to consider inflation and increased costs.
- The grant program should consider operating under an advanced pay model, requiring no match requirement, and providing flexible or unrestricted funding for capacity building.
- The grant application should be available in one easily accessible location co-located with other grant application for similar funding programs.
- The draft application should allow for edits and providing additional information before submittal.
- For future rounds of funding, the grant program should consider sharing with applicants and partners what activities and organizations have previously received funding.
- The grant program should provide robust technical assistance during the grant application period, as lack of knowledge is a major barrier. This could include in-depth training for staff on navigating and applying for grants to build up on-the-ground subject matter experts.
- The grant program should fund community-based organizations in advance of active engagement and streamline the application regardless of formula or competitive grant funding.

- If set-asides are used for the grant program, they should potentially align with the goals of similar programs with formula funding (e.g., Department of Energy resilience programs).
- The grant program should provide funding to the most multi-benefit initiatives where the funding can make the highest per-dollar impact. This may require leaning more on competitive funding to select funding recipients. However, this may lead to the highest capacity organizations that can write grants receiving the most funding.
- The grant program should consider how current data tools to identify vulnerable communities may leave out many high-need communities.
- The grant program should consider how formulas that are population based may result in allocations that are too low and do not match an area's need.
- The grant program should consider distributing formula funds to regional organizations like MPOs.
- The grant program should provide funding to communities that are not already preparing for climate change impacts.

Listening Sessions

During July and August 2022, ICARP hosted seven public listening sessions, including two general audience listening sessions, one Tribal Government and Communities listening session, and four regional listening sessions to invite feedback on the following discussion questions:

- How can this program define a region to accomplish regional-scale climate resilience solutions?
- What are the highest priority resilience concerns for your region overall?
- How can this program define capacity building to fill gaps in climate resilience funding?
- What are the existing barriers to accessing similar funding programs? How can the grant program address these barriers (e.g., technical assistance)?
- While this program may issue grants both competitively and on a formula basis, what should the program consider when evaluating the feasibility of funding set-asides?

General Listening Session Discussion Takeaways

Tuesday, July 26, 2022 | 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Participants of the first General Listening Session shared that flexibility should be incorporated as much as possible into grant program definitions and eligibility requirements. Participants also shared that the program should intentionally fill the gaps of previous and current climate resilience funding opportunities.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program guidelines should include clear guidance on defining regional boundaries that align with existing state definitions and intentionally include underserved communities excluded from state investments.
- A flexible definition of a region should consider the scale and scope of climate resilience solutions, which are influenced by:
 - The geography of shared climate impacts.
 - An area's existing working relationships.
- The grant program should help regions prepare for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Determining and communicating regional climate risks and the most climate vulnerable geographies within regions.
 - Strengthening existing built infrastructure.
 - Building the community and staff capacity to act.
- The grant program should encourage agencies to address community disinvestment and disenfranchisement. It should prioritize those most impacted by climate change and consider the economic impacts of climate change, such as job loss.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider:
 - Including relationship building activities, such as community engagement and multi-sector collaboration.
 - Taking an equity-first approach and facilitating partnerships where those with capacity can share knowledge and resources with those with more capacity constraints.
 - Including education activities for both organizational staff and the wider community.
 - Enabling long-term funding that can add permanent full-time staff to agencies and organizations.
- The grant program should consider how technical assistance, especially for under resourced communities, is most effective when provided long-term.
- Regions would benefit from more flexibility in communicating their communities needs and meeting those needs. The grant program should consider:
 - How tools other grants have used to determine eligibility have disqualified communities in need.
 - Building in flexibility when considering eligible costs.
- The grant program should consider using an advanced pay model and not require match funding as many agencies and organizations do not have the budget to pay up-front costs or match funds.

Grant Administration

- The grant application and reporting requirements should be streamlined to reduce the time and resource burden typical of other grant programs.
- The grant application and guidelines should align with other relevant funding sources to alleviate the burden communities currently face in navigating funding opportunities.
 - Grant Program staff should also communicate about the program using consistent language that provides detailed information that differentiates the program from others.
- The grant application timeline should allow communities the time to realistically complete the necessary relationship building, coordination, and work that the application requires.
- While the grant program should provide technical assistance at every stage, it should be especially significant in the planning stage, where organizations need assistance with Geographic Information System (GIS) and data analysis, site identification, identifying measures, and navigating California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and permitting needs
- The grant program should consider funding set-asides that prioritize the communities most vulnerable to climate change and have faced the most historical community disinvestment (e.g., redlining).
- The grant program should consider statewide grantees as they allow for consistency and reduce the likelihood of redundant activities between regions.

Bay Area & Central Coast Discussion Takeaways

Thursday, July 28, 2022 | 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Participants of the Bay Area and Central Coast Listening Session shared that meaningful involvement of community-based organizations is essential to holistic climate resilience. Also, capacity building is needed at every scale to achieve the level of collaboration needed to implement successful projects.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- While high-level guidance from the program guidelines would be appreciated, applicants may prefer flexibility in defining a region because top-down definitions can limit effective approaches to climate resilience. Guidance should consider:
 - Aligning with existing state definitions.
 - Existing data and assessments on shared climate vulnerability and ecosystems.
 - Interregional and subregional governance and decision-making capacity.
 - Existing collaborative partnerships.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Assessing regional climate vulnerabilities with a focus on equity and economic prosperity.
 - Building infrastructure that withstands climate impacts.
 - Collaborating across multiple scales, regionally and sub-regionally.
 - Exploring the effectiveness of current climate resilience practices.
- The grant program should focus on communities that are most vulnerable to climate change and consider equipping organizations most trusted by these communities with resources.
- The grant program should highly encourage that tribal governments and communities are integrally involved in building and implementing regional climate resilience solutions.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need to:
 - Hire staff to build trust and relationships with a broader range of stakeholders.
 - Hire long-term staff and fund the tools and services that support their work.
 - Compensate communities for providing expertise during the engagement process.
 - Increase event turn out with incentives to attend (e.g., food) and remove barriers to attendance (e.g., childcare, translation services).

- The grant program should consider using an advanced pay model because smaller agencies and organizations do not have the up-front funding to carry out activities that many grants typically fund through a reimbursement model.
- While match funding poses a significant barrier for many agencies and organizations, the grant program should consider in what cases they can incentivize other funding sources.
- The grant program should provide technical assistance for early-stage application preparation through to later stage engineering and design services.
- The grant program should increase access to data to support identifying climate vulnerability and community needs, in a way that includes all groups that are most vulnerable to climate impacts

Grant Administration

- The grant program should align its timeline, application requirements, and scoring frameworks with similar state and federal funding programs.
- The grant application and reporting requirements should be simplified to reduce the time and resource burden typical of other grant programs.
- The grant application interface should be user-friendly and support collaborative grant writing.
- The grant program should consider how funding timelines can correspond to the timescale and true costs of the full length of programs and projects, including maintenance funds.
- The grant program should consider formula or set-aside funding for:
 - Communities most vulnerable to climate change.
 - Small, isolated cities.
 - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led communities.
 - Regional agencies.
 - Climate impacts that are not already substantially addressed by other funding sources.
- For any formula or set-aside funding, the grant program should consider providing clear guidelines on how funds should be spent, considering diverse local political dynamics and power imbalances.

Inland North, North Coast, & Sierra Discussion Takeaways

Friday, July 29, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Participants of the Northern and Sierra Listening Session shared that subregional communities have unique resilience needs that require tailored approaches. Funded programs and projects need to be integrated with current local initiatives leveraging existing collaborative relationships. Additionally, rural communities need to be approached with sensitivity and an understanding of how communities in need have not been addressed by other state investments.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider allowing for flexible definitions of regions so that applicants can integrate their climate resilience goals with existing social initiatives related to economic development, community-serving built infrastructure, and racial equity. A flexible definition should consider:
 - Shared climate impacts and natural systems geography.
 - Aligning with existing state and federal definitions.
 - Existing working relationships and the need for improved collaboration between counties and neighboring regions.
 - The diverse needs of different populations, such as urban and rural communities and coastal and inland communities.
 - How tourist populations and other human movement affect communities.
 - What communities have not previously received funding for climate resilience efforts.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Adaptation planning that considers how multiple hazards intersect.
 - Strengthening energy system resilience through strategies like microgrids and electrification.
 - Infrastructure needs not comprehensively supported by other funding sources, like temporary bridges and improving rural roads.
 - Nature-based climate resilience solutions.
- The grant program should encourage agencies to bring in the community as decision-makers and respect tribal sovereignty and leadership.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need to:
 - Hire dedicated staff to build capacity beyond what is available through the “coalition of the willing.”
 - Provide current staff more education and resources.
 - Train a workforce to implement and maintain programs and projects.
 - Coordinate between subregions.
 - Meaningfully engage with community.
 - Innovate and complete research and development activities.
- The grant program should encourage multi-sector collaboration to increase agency and organizational capacity because:
 - Public/private partnerships can increase access to funding and resources, especially in rural regions.
 - Community expertise vitally enhances government processes, when given the space to do so.
- The grant program should consider how to focus support to tribal governments and communities, as many do not currently have the capacity to participate in collaborative efforts.

Grant Administration

- The grant program should consolidate information and resources with interrelated funding programs, as many agencies and organizations do not have the capacity to navigate how they fit into the current overall funding landscape.
- The grant application should be simple as many organizations do not have the capacity to apply for grants or prepare applications competitive to those prepared by more resourced communities.
- The grant program should consider how to incorporate cost sharing or reimbursed costs into the grant application process.
- The grant program should provide a long application window so that interested communities have the time to prepare competitive grant applications.
- The grant program should consider how funding set asides can:
 - Ensure full coverage of California's geography.
 - Holistically define vulnerable communities by considering the reality of being under resourced or underrepresented in a rural area.
 - Support tribes that are not federally or state recognized.
 - Support existing climate collaboratives.

Los Angeles, San Diego, & Inland Desert Discussion Takeaways

Tuesday, August 02, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Participants of the Los Angeles, San Diego, and Inland Desert Listening Session shared that the density and diversity of the Southern California region poses unique challenges to regional-scale governance and collaboration.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider allowing applicants to define their regions to allow those with local expertise to navigate Southern California's diverse demographics, densities, and geologic make up. A flexible definition should consider the:
 - Existing environmental geography and jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Diverse needs and governance profiles of individual counties.
 - Climate resilience issues at both subregional and interregional scales.
- The grant program should consider how to best prioritize different factors that may define a region. For example, since climate impacts are not beholden to political boundaries, prioritizing regional definitions based on shared ecology and climate vulnerabilities may be more effective.
- The grant program should encourage partnerships with community-based organizations because the flexibility and community perspective of these groups strengthens regional coordination efforts.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:

- Adaptation planning that considers how multiple hazards intersect and affect energy resilience, affordable housing, and food and water access.
 - Implementing multi-benefit programs and projects that address the public health, equity, and economic impacts of climate change.
- The grant program should prioritize increasing resilience in a community context and in a specific way that acknowledges historical disinvestment.
- The grant program should prioritize protecting agricultural resources and ecosystem services in a way that maintains ecological diversity.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need to:
 - Hire long-term, competitively-paid, full-time staff dedicated to regional climate resilience.
 - Determine and ensure organizational and collaborative accountability.
 - Navigate regulatory compliance for projects.
 - Identify and secure maintenance funds to prepare for when one-time funding ends.
 - Engage with the community and consistently build relationships.
- The grant program should support incorporating indigenous ecological knowledge into adaptation planning and implementation activities.
- The grant program should take an equity-first approach and prioritize those communities that have historically not applied for grant funding due to constrained capacity.
- The grant program should recognize that political will to work on climate resilience issues is a barrier to building the necessary partnerships for grant applications.
- The grant program should consider providing technical assistance as early as the grant pre-application phase and prioritizing that assistance for those groups who typically cannot access state funding.

Grant Administration

- The grant program should align with other relevant funding programs and coordinate to provide resources and guidance on the eligibility criteria, nuances, and eligible costs of each program.
- The grant application should allow applicants to be flexible with the scopes for their proposed regional climate resilience projects. It should also provide space for them to communicate how these projects have not been eligible for other funding due to scope limitations.
- The grant program should consider providing state resources that guide agencies and organizations on how to consistently define climate impacts. State resources should educate the public on how projects mitigate those impacts in ways that tangibly protect their communities.
- Given the variable capacity to apply for competitive grants for different agencies and organizations, the grant program should consider how to ensure funding is distributed equitably.

- The grant program should consider how funding set-asides can:
 - Consider tribal and migrant farm worker populations, as they are not consistently captured in other tools identifying climate vulnerability.
 - Prioritize equity markers like access to clean drinking water, disproportionate heat vulnerability, and housing access.

General Listening Session Discussion Takeaways

Monday, August 08, 2022 | 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Participants of the second General Listening Session shared that staffing is a foremost capacity concern for climate resilience work and that these staff will be essential to facilitate the multi-scale collaboration necessary for regional initiatives.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider that applicants may prefer to define their own regions, as existing partnerships are structured differently in different geographies and entities are diverse in the regional services they provide. The following types of entities may be helpful in informing regional boundaries:
 - MPOs, Metropolitan Transportation Authorities, or Associations of Governments.
 - Individual counties.
 - Regional Climate Collaboratives and Regional Energy Networks.
 - Contiguous areas with shared climate impacts.
- The grant program should consider how counties may require individual approaches because of their diverse needs and governance structures, especially rural counties which have historically been combined with other counties for regional initiatives.
- The grant program should consider how regional partnerships between multiple types of jurisdictions, especially in geographies with shared climate impacts, can improve service delivery across jurisdictional boundaries.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Adaptation planning that considers intersections with other emergency preparedness needs.
 - Integrated climate solutions that consider multiple resilience strategies, such as grid reliability, housing access, built infrastructure, public health and waste management.
- The grant program should consider how climate impacts exacerbate equity issues like generational wealth gaps.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need to:

- Build strong partnerships, especially with community-based organizations and regional governments.
- Fill staff vacancies and address staff turnover.
- Provide staff training to integrate climate resilience work into existing operations.
- Scale up the capacity of existing programs already proven as effective resilience solutions.
- Buy equipment and technology to manage physical climate risks to increase response capacity (e.g., equipment for mitigating fire risk).
- Outreach to communities historically overlooked by other community resilience initiatives (such as the COVID response).
- The grant program should consider how capacity building requires long-term investments to be effective, especially in locations with political barriers to climate work.
- The grant program should consider providing technical assistance for both the grant application and the ongoing financial management of the awarded grant funding.
- The grant program should recognize that regions are in different stages of capacity building and support those areas at the beginning stages of establishing collaborative partnerships.

Grant Administration

- The grant application and guidelines should align with other relevant funding sources to alleviate the burden communities currently face in navigating funding opportunities.
- The grant application should be streamlined and include components that can be used to support other grant applications.
- The grant program should coordinate with other state and federal funding programs to provide resources and guidance on the differences in eligibility criteria, project scope limitations, and eligible costs of each program.
- While the grant program should provide technical assistance at every stage, it should be especially significant in the planning and implementation stages. Examples of this are when agencies and organizations need help with data analysis, site identification, identifying measures, and navigating regulatory requirements.
- The grant program should consider how to ensure that groups receiving funding are accountable and use the funds in the ways that meet the funding's purpose
- The grant program should consider how funding set-asides can:
 - Increase the effectiveness of technical assistance and grant writing.
 - Support those who have not received grant funding historically.

Tribal Governments and Communities Discussion Takeaways

Friday, August 12, 2022 | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Participants of the Tribal Governments and Communities Listening Session shared that their capacity is extremely strained, and that tribes do not have the time, resources, or support to build the interjurisdictional buy-in required of climate resilience work. Additionally, grant programs typically do not consider the diverse needs of tribal communities.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider how regions can be defined in many ways and those definitions can be perceived as subjective. Some important considerations in defining a region are:
 - Shared natural geography.
 - Shared climate impacts (e.g., drought).
- The grant program should encourage regional, collaborative partnerships where those with more resources can share capacity building opportunities with tribal government and communities with fewer resources.
- The grant program should help regions prepare for climate impacts by providing funding that:
 - Prioritizes water conservation and stormwater management.
 - Restores native ecosystems.
 - Supports an integrative approach to transition away from carbon-based fuels.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider that tribal governments and communities do not have the capacity to attend listening sessions, let alone apply for grant funding.
- The grant program should allow for flexible definitions of capacity building to help fill the extensive capacity gaps facing tribes.
- The grant program should directly link funding for capacity building activities to climate resilience project implementation. It should recognize that many tribes have not received funding to implement already developed climate adaptation plans.
- The grant program should provide technical assistance for projects' full life cycles.

Grant Administration

- The grant program should keep grant applications simple and not include match funding requirements.
- The grant program should correlate one-time funding to other long-term funding sources that can sustain programs and projects over time.
- Grant applications should provide strong incentives for non-tribal governments/organizations to work with tribes. These partnerships are necessary to

address climate issues that affect tribes but require work outside of a tribal jurisdiction.

- The grant program should consider how to encourage state, regional, and local governments to include tribes in their existing and planned cross jurisdictional work.
- Set asides for tribal communities and groups are often helpful. However, the grant program should consider drawbacks to formula funding such as:
 - Funding that requires tribes to reveal information that they do not wish to share with the state.
 - Formulas that inadvertently exclude tribes that are in need.
 - Formulas that do not consider that non-tribal and off-reservation land controlled by other jurisdictions also impacts tribes.
- Instead of or in addition to set-asides, the grant program should consider providing a scoring preference to under-resourced groups

Sacramento & San Joaquin Valley Regions Takeaways

Wednesday, August 17, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Participants of the Sacramento & San Joaquin Valley Listening Session shared that workforce development is an essential component to building resilient communities. Additionally, resilience projects should intentionally address challenges that most affect rural, unincorporated, and agricultural communities.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider allowing applicants to use their local expertise to determine their regional boundaries. This would alleviate concern that a prescribed and inflexible definition may exacerbate barriers to preparing competitive grant applications and implementing projects. A flexible definition of a region should consider:
 - Shared climate risk.
 - Shared resource management needs.
 - Existing community collaboratives and working relationships.
 - Political and jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Natural geography.
 - Aligning with existing state, federal, and regional agency definitions.
 - Subregional differences between urban and rural communities.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Adaptation planning and resilience projects that integrate resilience needs with the issues that most affect rural and unincorporated communities (e.g., transportation access).
 - Maintaining community access to fresh and healthy food and water and safe shelter.

- Addressing the disruption of crop production and the impact to working people’s livelihoods.
- Authentically engaging vulnerable communities with a community-first approach.
- Moving from planning to implementation activities and building staff capacity for these activities.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need to:
 - Prioritize building staff capacity at both government agencies and non-governmental organizations in rural areas.
 - Align with current workforce development initiatives.
 - Access comprehensive climate data to inform regional and subregional work.
 - Collaborate regionally to avoid redundancy and support consistency across initiatives.
 - Carry out education and information-sharing activities, both externally and internally, on how to identify community needs and receive appropriate services.
- The grant program should consider how to best align with and complement existing definitions of capacity building with other state and federal funding programs.
- The grant program should consider how to best leverage the capacity building best practices of existing regional collaboratives and trusted community networks.
- Even if set-asides are made for rural communities and communities with small population sizes, technical assistance is still required to align funding resources and avoid redundancy.

Grant Administration

- The grant application should be simplified and streamlined to reduce the time and resource burden typical of other grant programs.
- The grant program should consider how to provide funding for community resilience projects in areas where leadership may not have the political will to apply for grant funding.
- The grant program should consider how to address the history of disinvestment that has reduced community trust in government.
- When developing set-asides, the grant program should consider supporting communities with small populations in a way that addresses the contextual differences of rural and urban communities.

Key Informant Interviews and Survey Results

Interview Takeaways

ICARP conducted one-on-one interviews with existing regional climate collaboratives and agencies to identify best practices, takeaways from past funding cycles, and opportunities to foster better coordination between funding programs for regional resilience activities across the state.

Specific feedback participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should consider aligning with other state programs' definitions of regions but allow for flexibility in determining regional boundaries.
- The grant program should consider how to encourage regions to establish what agencies are accountable for regarding regional-scale planning and project implementation.
- The grant program should support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Implementing existing adaptation plans or projects that address existing vulnerability assessments.
 - Coordinating regional collaboration and defining the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and organizations.
 - Adaptation planning for climate risks relevant to multiple localized scales, from neighborhoods to regions.
 - Integrating climate resilience into current regional long-range planning.

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need for:
 - Dedicated full-time staff to coordinate, build capacity, plan, and implement climate resilience projects.
 - Community-based organizations to collaborate and align common goals.
 - Relationship-building between community-based organizations, the private sector, and agencies.
 - Staff that can secure additional funding to sustain programs and projects funded by one-time funding sources.
 - Training that connects staff with existing resources to complete climate resilience work and builds two-way channels for sharing information.
 - Multiple modes of community engagement and developing impact-based public messaging.
- The grant program should allow for flexibility in defining capacity building so applicants can identify and plan to meet their unique needs.
- The grant program should consider providing technical assistance throughout the entire grant application process.

Grant Administration

- The grant program should:
 - Align its timeline, application requirements, and scoring frameworks with similar state and federal funding programs.
 - Coordinate with other funding programs to provide applicants guidance on the eligibility criteria, nuances, and eligible costs of each program.
 - Simplify and standardize the grant application process and provide a pre-application that is translatable to other grant applications.
 - Not place constraints on innovation at the project and program level.
 - Consider maximizing flexibility in both the grant guidelines and grant reporting requirements.
 - Consider providing technical assistance specific to navigating the regulatory environment around implementing projects.
 - Consider prioritizing historically underfunded regions.
 - Consider using an advanced pay model and not require match funding.

Survey Takeaways

ICARP shared an online survey with interview informants, listening session participants, and other state, local, and regional partners.

Specific feedback survey participants shared included:

Program Objectives & Vision

- The grant program should:
 - Ensure historically underserved communities within regions can close climate-threat disparities between groups.
 - Support regions in preparing for climate impacts by providing funding for:
 - Proactive climate adaptation planning and resilience projects that protect the most sensitive ecosystems and natural resources.
 - Regional-scale impact specific vulnerability assessments.
 - Initiatives to increase the baseline resilience of the most climate vulnerable communities, including public health and economic initiatives.
 - Innovative environmental technology.
 - Allow for a flexible definition of regions that allow for applicants to use several methods of justification to propose their individual region's boundary. A multi-purpose framework could consider:
 - Shared climate impacts.
 - Shared ecosystems and natural resource management needs.
 - Dominant geographic features.
 - Existing definitions of regions and jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Existing collaborative relationships.
 - Major resilience issues areas, such as housing burden.
 - Contiguous areas at similar levels of "readiness."

Program Needs

- When funding capacity building activities, the grant program should consider the need for:
 - Staffing key positions to scale up current resilience initiatives.
 - Training, guiding, and supporting existing staff and community leaders.
 - Compensating the time and expertise of contributing marginalized community members.
- The grant program should allow flexibility in how applicants define capacity building.
- The grant program should consider providing common reference resources that allow for interagency alignment and a shared understanding of resilience opportunities.
- The grant program should encourage diverse regional partnerships at multiple scales with transparent governance models. These partnerships can include community-based, academic, tribal, local government, regional agency, state, and federal groups.
- The grant program should encourage partnership models that do not reinforce existing power dynamics and integrate groups at varying levels of resource access.
- The grant program should allow for technical assistance that can tailor support to a unique applicant's needs.

Grant Administration

- The grant application should be simple, and the grant program should supply application assistance to not place undue burden on applicants.
- The grant program should coordinate with other funding programs to provide applicants guidance on what program is the best fit for their proposals.
- The grant program should provide tools that will enable organizations to collaborate on grant applications rather than compete for them.
- The grant program should consider how to align the needs of long-term resilience programs with the funding cycle timeline.
- The grant program should operate under an advanced pay model and not require match funding.
- The grant program should consider how to reimburse costs related to preparing grant applications.

Next Steps and Contact Information

ICARP is incorporating the collective input described above into the Regional Resilience Grant Program's draft guidelines. The ICARP team is grateful for the time, effort, and wisdom contributed by all those who have participated to date, and by those who will inform this new program in the future. Draft guidelines will be available for public comment during the 2022-2023 winter.

If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to the ICARP Regional Resilience Grant Program team by emailing icarp.grants@opr.ca.gov, or visit the ICARP Grant Programs web page for future updates on the Regional Resilience Grant Program (<https://opr.ca.gov/climate/icarp/grants/>).