

LAFCO MEMORANDUM

SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

105 East Anapamu Street • Santa Barbara CA 93101 • (805) 568-3391 + Fax (805) 568-2249

February 6, 2025 (Agenda)

TO: Each Member of the Commission

FROM: Mike Prater
Executive Officer

SUBJECT: REPORT ON SALC GRANT PROGRAM

This is an Informational Report. No Action is Necessary

SUMMARY

This status report is to bring the Commission and public up-to-date with regard to the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Grant Partnership Program (SALC) being prepared by various interested countywide partnerships.

The Commission adopted its Work Plan in January to pursue a SALC planning grant for round 10. This work requires a pre-proposal submittal, which was due on January 31, 2025. A pre-proposal submittal must meet the following requirements: 1) an executive summary and proposed planning project. This requires a brief description of the proposed planning project, why the project is appropriate for protection agricultural lands, and all participating stakeholders. 2) Draft work Plan that specifies the tasks, sub-tasks, and deliverables that will be performed of sufficient detail to allow assessment of the applicant's progress through the work plan at regular intervals. 3) Budget identifying the total estimated project cost. Total estimated cost needs to be broken down to clearly delineate grant funds requested and match funding to determine if cost meet eligibility. 4) Maps or images depicting the area to be covered by the proposed project. The map should generally depict the area, including the extent of its agricultural resources, urban and/or rural land uses, and any ancillary map data to support the need for the proposal.

BACKGROUND

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) program was created in 2014 as a

component of the California Strategic Growth Council and administered by the Department of Conservation. The program is primarily funded through the California Climate Investments, a statewide program that provides cap-and-trade funds through agricultural conservation, acquisition, and planning grants for programs intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. *SALC seeks to protect at-risk agricultural lands from sprawl development to promote growth within existing jurisdictions, ensure open space remains available, and support a healthy agricultural economy.*

DISCUSSION

Santa Barbara LAFCO has taken on the lead role for submittal of this Round 10 SALC Planning Grant. Attachment A includes our draft pre-proposal submittal to Department of Conservation for consideration and feedback. July 3, 2025 is when final planning grant application packages are due and will require a resolution by the Commission before final submission.

Attachments

Attachment A - Draft Pre-Proposal Submittal

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Planning Pre-proposal Summary Sheet

Basic Information

Project Title: The Santa Barbara County Agriculture and Natural Resource Initiative

Applicant Name: Mike Prater, Executive Officer

Department / Office: Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

Federal Employer ID Number: 77-0595306

Mailing Address: 105 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA. 93101

Project Funding

Location (County and/or City): Santa Barbara County

State Assembly District: 37

State Senate District: 21

Priority Population Status: X Y N

Grant Request Amount: \$500,000

Matching Funds Pending: \$50,000

Matching Funds Committed: \$0

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$550,000

Applicant Information

Contact Person: Mike Prater

Title: Executive Officer

Phone Number: 805-568-3391

Email Address: lafco@sblafco.org

Was this project developed with assistance from a SALC Technical Assistance Provider?:

Y N

If yes, provide details:

Our team met with Cuyate (Serena Unger, Amie MacPhee, & Joe McIntosh) approximately 5-7 times in 2024 to better understand the SALC Grant requirements and what aspects of our project meet these goals. We discussed best approaches to meeting the various State goals, how to ensure community alignment with priority populations, and what to prioritize in our proposed budget. We found the TA meetings to be very helpful in guiding the planning of our project.

Executive Summary and Proposed Planning Project

The purpose of this Agricultural Conservation Planning project is to protect agricultural lands in Santa Barbara County that are under threat of conversion to more GHG-intensive uses. The County, in collaboration with its cities, will engage with the community - particularly priority populations - to develop a framework for implementing smart growth strategies; these strategies will protect critical agricultural lands, maintain open space availability, and address the region's housing needs.

The primary expected deliverable of this coordinated land use planning effort will be a community-informed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the County and cities with policies that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in the county. This initiative will engage priority populations in Goleta, Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Buellton (please refer to attached map from the California Climate Investments Priority Populations 4.0 (2016)) to ensure the MOA represents the needs and interests of our region as a whole.

This initiative will produce a model framework (expected to be in the form of an MOA) for addressing urban development while conserving agricultural lands and resources. The framework will assess development standards and zoning requirements as guidelines for areas within city spheres of influence. It will also provide an opportunity for the County and cities to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding spheres of influence, fostering cooperative planning efforts. The overarching goal is to preserve the rural character of the county while ensuring sustainable growth. The framework developed through this initiative will guide local governmental agencies in making policy decisions that advance regional agricultural sustainability.

Additionally, the project will develop enhanced online mapping and analysis tools to map community priorities for agriculture and natural resource protection, as well as priority areas for urban and housing development. The project aims to increase economic opportunities for farm and ranch operators, while also promoting equity for priority populations, including disadvantaged communities and tribes. The framework will address city and county annexation policies and procedures, future resource and service needs, and sustainable development principles such as compact building design, walkable and well-connected neighborhoods, improved transit, and improved jobs/housing balance. Importantly, the initiative will ensure all parties are on the same page in developing the framework for working together.

Agricultural Land Conversion Threats

Santa Barbara County's agricultural heritage is a cornerstone of its history, culture, and economy. The region's unique combination of loamy soils, varied topography, and diverse microclimates supports the production of an extraordinary array of fruits, vegetables, livestock and specialty crops, contributing to a dynamic agricultural economy. However, the future of agriculture, rangelands, and natural lands across the County is increasingly at risk. Urban expansion, housing demands, water scarcity, and climate-driven changes are causing the loss of working lands, with the number of acres of land in farms decreasing by 13% from 2017 to

2022. In order to meet the state housing mandates, many of our cities in the County will be looking at agricultural lands to meet their housing requirements. Currently, four cities are evaluating or actively seeking to expand beyond their urban boundaries, increasing pressure on agricultural land.

Addressing the Threat

The Santa Barbara County Agricultural and Natural Resources Initiative seeks to address these threats by using comprehensive spatial and policy analysis, combined with robust community engagement. The goal is to enhance the long-term economic viability of agriculture while also providing multiple co-benefits, such as mitigating climate impacts, preserving biodiversity, and conserving natural resources.

By engaging a diverse group of stakeholders to identify priorities, barriers and needs for growth and conservation, we can develop policy frameworks that address multiple goals and garner broad community support and buy-in. Within this framework, we will map community-based spatial priorities and recommendations for future actions. Addressing land use policy holistically is essential for fostering resilient landscapes and ensuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the region.

The final product will be a framework (MOA) that sets a precedent and a model for collaborative planning among the cities, county, and public. It will serve as a model for other regions, enabling joint planning on critical issues such as zoning, GHG emissions reductions, housing development, and more.

To support the process, we will perform a participatory spatial analysis of all the parcels within 1.75 miles of any of the spheres of influence of the four cities. It will overlay multiple spatial criteria in weighted combinations to map relative priorities for agricultural conservation (including or excluding co-benefits) as well as relative priority for allowing more housing (such as allowing an extra story of buildings in a particular urban area). This analysis and its results will have additional context from an online mapping atlas, also participatory, with over 600 GIS data layers for the County.

Participative stakeholders:

- Santa Barbara LAFCO (SBLAFCO)
- Santa Barbara County Planning & Development Department
- Land Trust for Santa Barbara County
- Cities of Santa Maria, Lompoc, Buellton, and Goleta Planning Departments
- Community Environmental Council
- Conservation Biology Institute
- Legacy Works Group
- Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
- Cachuma Resource Conservation District
- Other Stakeholders and supporters

Stakeholders will work together to identify and map priorities, address barriers, and develop a policy framework that balances growth with conservation, ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability and community resilience. We plan to leverage a SALC planning grant to secure Prop 4 funding for project implementation.

List of Attachments:

Priority Populations Benefits Assessment Tool
Draft Work Plan
Draft Budget
Maps of the Project Area (2)

DRAFT

Draft Work Plan

Applicants must provide a detailed work plan that specifies the tasks, sub-tasks, and deliverables that will be performed. The work plan template can be found on the SALC website. The schedule should be of sufficient detail to allow assessment of the applicant's progress through the work plan at regular intervals. If awarded funding, this work plan will be incorporated into the Grant Agreement, with minor alterations approved on a case-by-case by the Department.

Draft Budget

This section will identify the total estimated project cost. The budget template can be found on the SALC website. The total estimated cost should be broken down to clearly delineate grant funds requested and match funding. Additional rows may be added to each section as appropriate. All costs must be eligible. If awarded funding, this Budget will be incorporated into the Grant Agreement, with minor alterations approved on a case-by-case by the Department.

Map(s) of the Project area

Please provide a map or image depicting the area to be covered by the proposed project. The map should generally depict the area including the extent of its agricultural resources, urban and/or rural land uses, and any ancillary map data to support the need for the proposal. Examples of maps include [Important Farmland Maps](#), Spheres of Influence, priority planning areas, and other protected lands. Protected lands databases can be found at the following locations:

National Conservation Easement Database

California Protected Area Database

California Conservation Easement Database

Geographic information system (GIS) data may be submitted along with digital map products.

California Protected Area Database

California Conservation Easement Database

Geographic information system (GIS) data may be submitted along with digital map products. bases can be found at the following locations:

- [National Conservation Easement Database](#)
- [California Protected Area Database](#)
- [California Conservation Easement Database](#)

Geographic information system (GIS) data may be submitted along with digital map products.

DRAFT

Work Plan

Grantee Name: Mike Prater, EO

Task	Timeline [Start and End Date]	Deliverable
Task 1 Stakeholder Planning Process		
Subtask A - develop a comprehensive analysis of existing regulatory policies status including GP, Climate Action Plans, etc.	2 months (24 Hours) January - March 2026	Final list of relevant regulations, policies and related source material
Subtask B - identify and review regulations and policy documents relevant to agricultural lands conservation within Santa Barbara County.	10 months (120 Hours) January 2026-October 2026	
Subtask C - Convene committees to discuss and address inconsistencies in policies relevant to agricultural lands conservation in Santa Barbara County.	2 months (24 Hours) October 2026-December 2026	
Subtask D - Summarize existing policy, highlighting gaps, overlap, and redundancies.	1/1/2027 (4 Hours)	
Subtask E -Draft summary of findings.	1/1/2027 (8 Hours)	Final draft summary of findings
Task 2 Mapping		
Subtask A: Update and expand the Online Mapping Resources (Blueprint Atlas)	12 Months (400 Hours) January 2026-December 2026	Vastly improved Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint Atlas, with at least 100 new or updated GIS layers
Subtask B: Engage with stakeholders and partners to analytically map relative priority for agricultural conservation (includes co-benefits)	12 Months (400 Hours) April 2026-March 2027	Environmental Evaluation Modeling System online (EEMOnline) that can be interacted with by stakeholders and end users with the ability to turn on and off co-benefit calculation.
Subtask C: Pursue a similar process for mapping relative cost benefit of increasing housing on each parcel (both currently developed and undeveloped) in the area of analysis.	6 Months (280 Hours) October-March 2027	Evaluation or map of this issue, with the ability to map only costs or benefits
Subtask D: Document and communicate methods and how to use the results and tools.	6 Months (200 Hours) December-May 2027	Report recorded presentation available online, and at least 2 additional workshops about how to use project tools and related tools like Site Check, Healthy Soils, and Manure Tools
Task 3 Community Alignment		
Subtask A: Developing Outreach Plan	2 months (60 Hours) March-May 2026	Inclusive stakeholder and/or community engagement and outreach activities
Subtask B: Forming partner and stakeholder groups	18 months (540 Hours) January 2026-June 2027	Community-based collaborative plans and consensus-building activities that provide general education about agricultural land conservation, information about the proposed project, and details outlining the opportunities for input and participation in the process. Tasks include: one-on-one interviews, smaller working groups, etc.
Subtask C: Host mapping workshops	4-6 months (20 hours) July 2026-October 2026	Stakeholder meetings to support proposed modeling/mapping. Supporting the protocols, reviewing previous tools, and feedback for updates
Subtask D: Community Informed	2 months (60 Hours) October - December 2026	Sharing mapping workshop findings and data with community stakeholder groups
Task 4 MOA Framework		
Subtask A - With Stakeholder participation, develop outline for Development Standards and indicate the process for zoning and evaluating future development as a guide post.	12 months (340 Hours) January 2027-July 2027	A more solution-based decision making processes that proactively address issues, clarify the intentions of each jurisdiction with regard to approving future development and providing services to the Sphere of Influence, increase the level of trust between the City and County, improve the working relationship that will result in a more coordinated and informed decision-making process for both the City and County, and ultimately a Sphere of Influence that is more meaningful in terms of what annexations may entail and when those annexations might occur.
Subtask B - Clarify the intent of the City and the County with regard to the development of an area and provide a structure for continued discussion and dialogue.	4 months (50 Hours) July 2027-October 2027	Consultation through project referrals on land use applications, Land Use approvals and CEQA documentation.
Subtask C - Consideration of a draft Memorandum of Agreement	6 months (30 Hours) October 2027-December 2027	Draft MOA
Task 5 Administration		
Subtask A - Grant administration (e.g., invoicing, invoice review, document signing).	24 months	Invoices, Signed contract

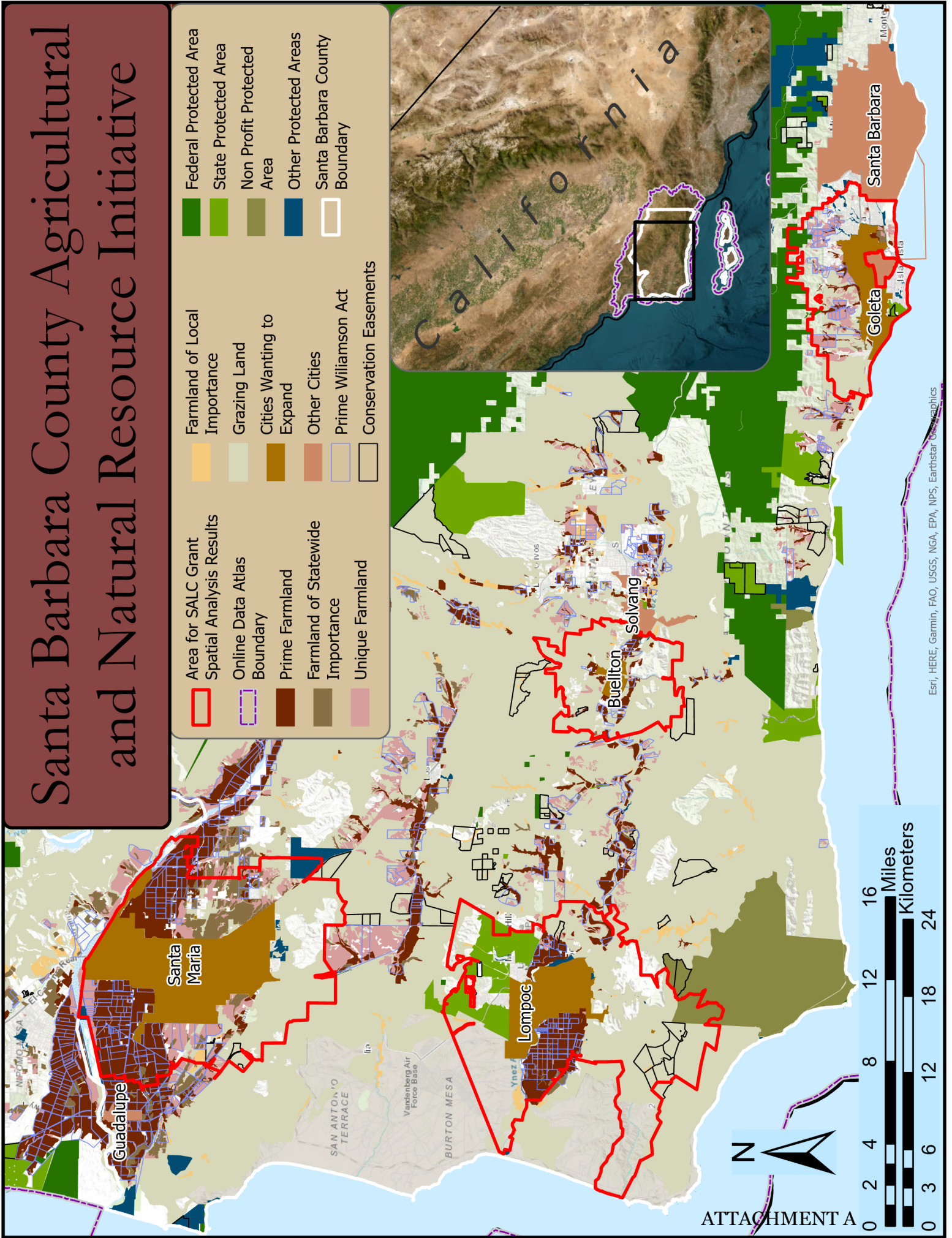
Budget Detail Worksheet:

Grant #: 77-0595306

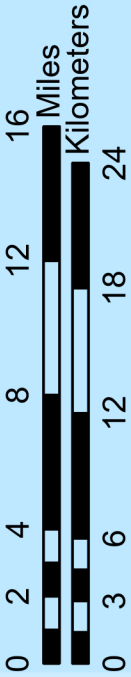
Grantee Name: Mike Prater, EO

Budget Item	Units (if applicable)	Rate (if applicable)	Program Reimbursement Request	Grantee Match	Grand Total
Task 1 Stakeholder Planning Process					
Consultant (not to exceed)		*Per RFP	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
County/LAFCO Staff (See rate information below in Table 2)		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000
City Staff		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 13,000
Subtotal			\$ 16,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 26,000
Task 2 Mapping, Analysis, and Support					
Consultant (CBI) (not to exceed)		*Per RFP	\$ 195,000	\$ -	\$ 195,000
Staff (See rate information below in Table 2)		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Subtotal			\$ 195,000	\$ -	\$ 195,000
Task 3 Community Alignment					
Project Partners (not to exceed)		*Per RFP	\$ 134,000	\$ -	\$ 134,000
Staff (See rate information below in Table 2)		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000
Stakeholder Support	Up to 20 stakeholders, 10 hours of work each	\$100/hr	\$ 20,000	-	\$ 20,000
Spanish Translation/Facilitation			\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000
Subtotal			\$ 182,000	\$ -	\$ 182,000
Task 4 MOA Framework					
Consultant (not to exceed)		*Per RFP	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000
County/LAFCO Staff (See rate information below in Table 2)		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000
City Staff		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 45,000
Subtotal			\$ 55,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 90,000
Task 5 Administration					
Consultant (not to exceed)		*Per RFP	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
County/LAFCO Staff (See rate information below in Table 2)		**Varies. See rates below.	\$ 40,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000
Subtotal			\$ 40,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000
Other Expenses					
Travel		Varies	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000
Meeting expenses		Varies	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
Other (describe)		Varies	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
Subtotal			\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000
Grand Total			\$ 500,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 550,000
TABLE 2: RATES DETAIL					
Title	Rate (\$/hour)	Notes			
Staff Rates					
Executive Officer (LAFCO)	\$87.76	**Hours will vary by position. Amount for reimbursement not to exceed amount stipulated and allocated by workplan tasks.			
Analyst/Clerk (LAFCO)	\$56.68				
Project Partners (Community Engagement Consultants)	\$200.00				
Lompoc Planning Staff	\$200.00				
Santa Maria Planning Staff	\$151.84				
Buellton Planning Staff	\$62.97				
Goleta Planning (Staff - Peter)	\$114.45				
County Planning	\$292.00				
Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) Consultant (Average)	\$152.34				
	\$0.00				
Consultant		*Total amount not to exceed that which is listed in this budget component of the grant agreement.			

Santa Barbara County Agricultural and Natural Resource Initiative



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Area for SALC Grant | Farmland of Local Importance | Federal Protected Area |
| Online Data Atlas Boundary | Grazing Land | State Protected Area |
| Prime Farmland | Cities Wanting to Expand | Non Profit Protected Area |
| Farmland of Statewide Importance | Other Cities | Other Protected Areas |
| Unique Farmland | Prime Williamson Act | Santa Barbara County Boundary |
| | Conservation Easements | |



ATTACHMENT A

Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS, Earthstar Geographics

California Climate Investments
2018 Funding Guidelines
Benefit Criteria Table



Project Type:
PLANNING

California Climate Investments are required to meet minimum levels of investments to projects that benefit residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households, collectively referred to as “priority populations.”

All projects counting toward the statutory investment minimums must be located within an identified community and benefit individuals living within that community, or directly benefit residents of low-income households anywhere in the State. Administering agencies must determine if a project meets the criteria for providing direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations using the following evaluation approach:

Step 1: Identify the Priority Population(s). Be located within a census tract identified as a disadvantaged community or low-income community, or directly benefit residents of a low-income household;

Step 2: Address a Need. Meaningfully address an important community or household need for the disadvantaged community, low-income community, or low-income household; and

Step 3: Provide a Benefit. Using the evaluation criteria, identify at least one direct, meaningful, and assured benefit that the project provides to priority populations. The benefit provided must directly address the identified need.

Only investments that meet these criteria will be counted toward achieving the statutory investment minimums identified for priority populations. Administering agencies can fund projects that otherwise provide meaningful benefits, but do not meet these criteria; however, those projects will not be counted toward investment minimums.

The following table includes criteria for administering agencies to use to determine whether projects satisfy each of the three steps. The criteria are designed to enable administering agencies to readily make an objective “yes” or “no” decision about whether a particular project provides a benefit to a priority population.

Evaluation Criteria for Providing Benefits to Priority Populations

PLANNING

Administering agencies must use the criteria table that is applicable to the specific project type(s) funded. For complex projects, there may be more than one applicable criteria table. A complete list of available criteria tables is available at:

www.arb.ca.gov/cci-fundingguidelines.

Administering agencies must refer to CARB's Funding Guidelines for direction on how to use the criteria table in program design and implementation, project evaluation, project selection, and reporting (www.arb.ca.gov/cci-fundingguidelines).

Project Type: Projects directly benefits priority populations by increasing their capacity to develop plans that enhance access to funds or enable the implementation of projects that reduce vulnerability and/or improve response to climate hazards and other risks. Planning activities may be implemented as a standalone project or as part of a larger, more comprehensive California Climate Investments project.

Projects must satisfy the applicable criteria through Step 3 to be considered to provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and count toward statutory investment minimums.

Step 1 – Identify the Priority Population(s).¹ Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria. Check all boxes that apply.

Note: For this project type, project location is the geographic boundaries of the region covered by a plan, partnership, or collaborative. For projects that comprise discrete events (e.g., outreach, workshops, seminars), project location is the location of the event.

- A. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **disadvantaged community census tract**?
- B. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income community census tract**?
- C. Is the project located outside of a disadvantaged community, but **within ½-mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income community census tract**?
- D. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income household**?

If a project does not meet at least one of the qualifying criteria in Step 1, the project does not count toward statutory investment minimums and no further evaluation is needed. If the project meets at least one Step 1 criterion, continue the evaluation in Step 2.

¹ An online mapping tool of identified disadvantaged communities and low-income communities, and a “look-up” tool list of “low-income” thresholds by county and household size are available at: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cci-communityinvestments>.

Evaluation Criteria for Providing Benefits to Priority Populations

PLANNING

Step 2 – Address a Need. *Identify an important community or household need and evaluate whether the project provides a benefit that meaningfully addresses that need.*

To identify a need that the project will address, agencies and/or applicants can use a variety of approaches:

- A. **Recommended Approach:** Host community meetings, workshops, outreach efforts, or public meetings as part of the planning process to engage local residents and community groups for input on community or household needs, and document how the received input was or will be considered in the design and/or selection of projects to address those needs;
- B. **Recommended Approach:** Receive documentation of support from local community-based organizations and/or residents (e.g., letters, emails) identifying a need that the project addresses and demonstrating that the project has broad community support;
- C. **Alternative Approach:** Where direct engagement is infeasible, look at the individual factors in CalEnviroScreen that are most impacting an identified disadvantaged or low-income community (i.e., factors that score above the 75th percentile), and confirm that the project will reduce the impacts of at least one of those factors; or
- D. **Alternative Approach:** Where direct engagement is infeasible, refer to the list of common needs for priority populations in CARB’s Funding Guidelines Table 5 and confirm that the project addresses at least one listed need.

Describe identified community or household need(s):

If the project addresses a community or household need as described in Step 2, proceed to Step 3. If the project does not address a community or household need, it will not count toward statutory investment minimums and no further evaluation is needed.

Evaluation Criteria for Providing Benefits to Priority Populations

PLANNING

Step 3 – Provide a Benefit. Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria to determine if it provides direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations. The benefit provided must directly address the identified need.

Project must meet at least one of the following benefit criteria:

- A. Project directly engages priority populations in developing actionable plans that address community needs, reduce environmental burdens, and/or improve public health in their community;
- B. Project or plan includes components that, when executed, reduce risk to priority populations from climate hazards such as: fire (e.g., defensible space); flooding, coastal inundation, wave impacts, or erosion;
- C. Project or plan includes components that, when executed, improve the ability of priority populations to respond to climate risk (e.g., emergency preparedness plan).
- D. Project or plan includes actionable components that, when executed, meets the criteria in benefit criteria table for the applicable project type.
- E. Project or plan includes components that, when executed, identifies specific sources of pollution or reports pollutant concentrations in priority population communities and provides access to the results in a format that is actionable, timely, and accessible to affected communities.

If the project meets the criteria in Steps 1, 2, and 3, it will be considered as providing direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and will be counted toward statutory investment minimums.

Search by census tract, place, or designation



California Climate Investments Priority Populations 4.b

Designation



Low-income community



Disadvantaged community: CES



Disadvantaged community: Tribal land



Disadvantaged community: CES

Disadvantaged community: Tribal land

Low-income community



Disadvantaged community: CES, Low-income community



Disadvantaged community: Tribal land

Low-income community



DAC 1/2 mile neighbor: low-income community

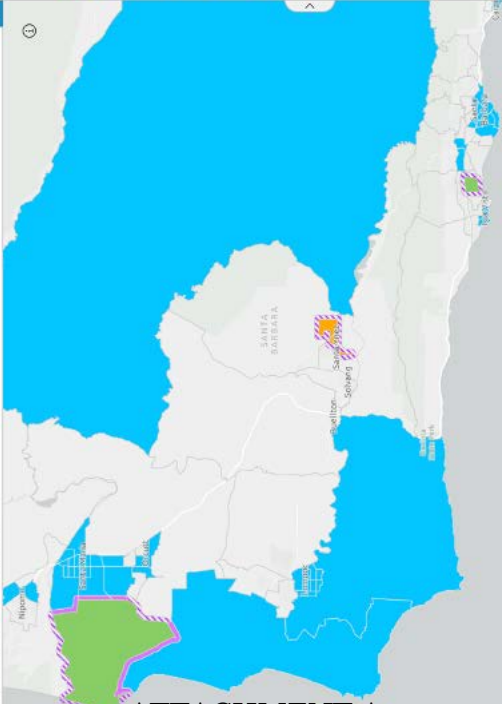
DAC 1/2 mile neighbor: low-income household eligible



Not a priority population area: low-income households are eligible



Not a priority population area: low-income households are eligible



ATTACHMENT A

