

Context: The Climate Justice Challenge and Opportunity

Since 2020 several community leaders have been working together to build cross-sector capacity to more deeply center equity in our region's climate change response efforts. The challenges and opportunities that are driving this work include:

- The Monterey Bay Area region is already experiencing significant climate change impacts, from drought to wildfire to extreme heat days, that are disproportionately impacting frontline communities of color.
- There are over \$3.5T in state and federal funding commitments for climate change related programs and projects. Five regional public agency climate program staff with nonprofit administration partners have formed and funded a group to develop and submit scaled, regional grant proposals for these sources. This group has a commitment to center equity but does not yet have strategies or funding identified.
- Our region has received [less than half its per-capita share](#) of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund investment.
- Climate and justice leaders have not broadly worked together in the past, so they have not yet built trusting relationships and often don't understand each others' sectors and lack the capacity to partner.
- Authentic community-based frontline involvement in project development is now a standard priority in many public grant programs. Communities that do not succeed in grounding their climate work with frontline representation will not compete as well for funding critical to respond to the climate crisis.

Our response to this challenging opportunity is to build a structure and provide funding and capacity to enable co-creation of equitable climate projects and proposals that secure a fair share of funding for our region and that also foster deep partnerships for implementation, policy development and healing of racial divides.

Toward Kinship and Partnerships: Our Work so Far

Many agency climate programs have begun compensating and centering equity awareness and prioritization in their policy processes. Groups like Regeneración have brought climate change awareness to social justice organizations in Pájaro Valley. Working together we have prepared a proposal to develop a formal Climate Justice Collaborative for the Monterey Bay Area and tested it in a small but impactful process this summer. We submitted a \$1.75M [Regional Climate Collaborative \(RCC\) grant](#) proposal on 10/7/22. Work to date includes:

- **Summer 2020:** Development of concept to form Collaborative based on [a similar collaboration](#) in Santa Barbara/Ventura Counties. We submitted several \$120,000 grant proposals that were not funded.
- **Fall 2021:** Survey issued to 600 climate and justice CBO contacts for interest and needs for partnering on climate project development. [62 responded](#) indicating strong interest and need for compensation.
- **Summer 2022:** Secured a small grant and funds from Central Coast Climate Collaborative to fund consultants to interview eight frontline community-based organization leaders about climate change programs, provide diversity, equity and inclusion training to climate practitioners, and facilitate two relationship building sessions for all participants. This was led with significant in-kind leadership support. This proof-of-concept process and initial relationship building [was a success](#).
- **Fall 2022:** Expanded our leadership team to include additional agencies and took feedback from our summer process together inform the strategy and partners included in our RCC proposal.

Our Collaborative Vision: A Region Where All People Thrive in Harmony with Nature

Our shared vision is to build a broad, inclusive, cross-sector, functional network of organizations who, by collaborating together, create jobs, improve health outcomes, increase community well-being and reverse economic and race-based disparities through activities that rapidly reduce emissions and make our region more resilient in the face of climate change impacts.

RCC Grant Proposal: Key Activities and Communities Served

The RCC grant program required at least four co-applicants to sign a [proposal partnership agreement](#). If funding is awarded in early 2023 these project leads will convene leaders from direct service community-based organizations (CBOs) working in frontline communities along with climate practitioners from public agencies and nonprofits and representatives from other sectors to form an impactful Monterey Bay Area Climate Justice Collaborative (Collaborative). Key activities include:

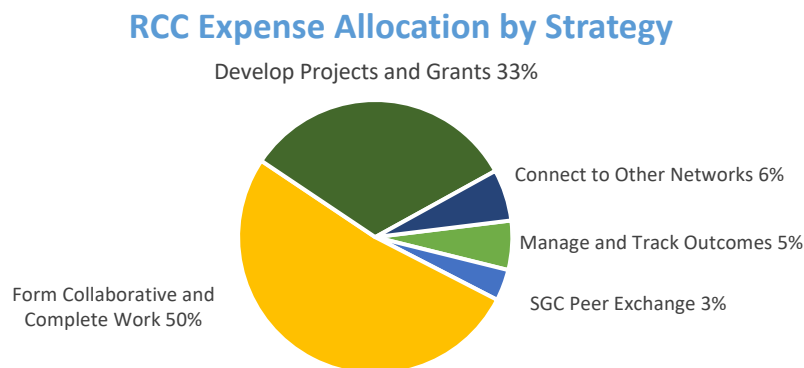
- Facilitating frontline serving CBOs and climate leaders to form initial relationships, develop a shared vision and purpose statement, establish power-sharing governance, and finalize an RCC grant Action Plan.
- Facilitating meaningful frontline engagement in policy creation and foster and fund community outreach partnerships. Through peer exchanges and community engagement we will increase awareness of and action for both justice and climate issues across our communities.
- Within a supportive Collaborative structure that facilitates public feedback, led by grant writing consultants, we will co-create shared priority project briefs that make us ready and successful to attract our Region’s fair share of the once-in-a-generation public climate investments happening now. Grant proposals will be developed within the Collaborative and in coordination with other regional efforts.

The Collaborative will build capacity with and for the 132,736 residents in 22 Communities of Focus throughout the Monterey Bay Area including 6 “disadvantaged” census tracts in the cities of Salinas, Watsonville, and Marina and the unincorporated community of Pájaro. We also included 16 low-income census tracts from different cities and unincorporated communities where the need is greatest (see [Project Map](#)). These communities are:

- Majority census designated “Hispanic” (77.5%) (see [Demographic Summary Chart](#)).
- Have an average 13.6 percent four-year college completion rate and an average \$22,073 per-capita annual income.
- Have a census documented 3.8 persons per household and significantly higher un-documented occupancy rates.
- Are the primary places supporting the estimated 80,000 undocumented persons in our region.
- Have wonderful assets that include strong and resourceful family networks and faith communities, a vibrant and growing arts and culture scene, a hard-working young population with working lands expertise and a growing cadre of impactful leaders arising from and informed by their immigrant farmworker heritage such as Assembly member Robert Rivas and longtime arts leader Luis Valdez.

Resourcing for a Just Transition: Our Initial Funding Need and RCC Budget Elements

Our \$1.75M RCC proposal budget over a three-year grant term is allocated as follows:



- \$1.1M of the budget is committed to direct frontline compensation and support. This ranges from stipends for residents to participate in policy and planning processes to part time staff positions for organizations to join as active Collaborative members. Allocation of this budget line item will be democratically decided by initial Collaborative Members following Action Plan finalization.
- A “Collaborative” level of engagement budget split¹ was achieved with 63% going to support Community Partners and Access and 37% going to support Systems Administration.
- \$155,000 for consultants to facilitate successful formation and ongoing management of the Collaborative as well as develop projects, identify funding and write/support grant proposals.
- \$98,500 in materials and services to ensure transparency, enable access and increase engagement from frontline communities. This includes provision and maintenance of a bilingual website, translation, interpretation, childcare and transportation support for public meetings, and community engagement and outreach material expense reimbursement.

Our annual funding need breakdown is: \$697,00 year one, \$644,000 year two, \$400,000 year three.

Broad and Confirmed Interest: Our RCC Grant Proposal Supporters

We are thrilled that our foundational work to-date has resulted in a broad level of confirmed interest in participating in a Collaborative if funding can be secured. Our RCC Grant Letters of [Commitment](#), [Support](#) and [Reference](#) confirm interested partners.

RCC Proposal Co-Applicants

Ecology Action, Managing Partner
 Regeneración, Collaboration Manager
 Central Coast Energy Services
 Central Coast Climate Collaborative

Local Agencies

Counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz
 Cities of King, Salinas, Santa Cruz, Soledad and Watsonville

Regional Organizations

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
 Central Coast Community Energy
 Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
 Monterey Bay Air Resources District

RCC Proposal Frontline Community Based Organizations

Santa Cruz Indian Council
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Santa Cruz Chapter
 Mujeres en Acción
 MILPA Collective
 Healing and Reconciliation Institute
 Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action (COPA)
 Community Action Board
 Center for Farmworker Families
 Center for Community Advocacy
Additional Summer 2022 Frontline CBO Participants
 Community Bridges
 Youth Alliance, San Benito County

Growing Relations: Our Next Steps

We will be offering optional, non-compensated convening opportunities until funding is secured after which we will have more capacity to organize the effort and compensate frontline representatives. The Strategic Growth Council [will announce RCC Grant funding awards](#) in December 2022 and offer another round of funding in Spring 2023. The leadership team is identifying other grant opportunities and will be presenting this concept to local funders for consideration as well. We are currently determining how our leadership team and advisors will continue to work together until more capacity is secured.

Please contact us with any opportunities or interest in supporting and joining in this effort!

Nancy Faulstich, Regeneración- Pájaro Valley Climate Action
nancy@regenerationpajarovalley.org 831-234-0210

Kirsten Liske, Ecology Action
Kirsten.liske@ecoact.org, 831-332-3619

¹ <https://movementstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Spectrum-of-Family-Community-Engagement-for-Educational-Equity.pdf>

With Thanks: Our Leadership and Advisory Team

We are deeply grateful to the core team who lead the early formation work and advised on and developed content for our summer 2022 process and RCC grant proposal. A huge smile and bow of thanks to:

Project and Grant Development Leads

Tiffany Wise West, City of Santa Cruz
Nancy Faulstich, Regeneración
Kirsten Liske, Ecology Action
Amaury Berteaud, AMBAG

Collaborative Formation Advisory Team

Toto Vu Duc, City of Watsonville
Vicente Lara, Monterey County Health Department
Cora Panturad, Monterey County Sustainability Programs
Mireya Gomez-Contreras & Kaki Rusmore, Consultants



*"The answers we seek will never be found by you or by me. They can only be found by us."
~ Sasha Kanthan*