

October 15, 2015

Support: 2015-2016 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program Technical Pilot

Quarter: 3rd Quarter 2015

Reporting Period: July 2015-October 2015

Staff Lead: Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program Staff

Recommended Action:

Approve initial program concept for the 2015-16 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) Technical Assistance Pilot (Pilot).

Summary:

This report describes the proposed approach for providing technical assistance to applicants of the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program and requests Council approval of initial program concept.

The Budget Act of 2015 appropriated \$500,000 from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for a pilot technical assistance grant program for the AHSC Program, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, to maximize the funding of projects located in disadvantaged communities. In order to quickly deploy funding for the upcoming 2015-2016 AHSC Program funding round, staff requests Council approval of the concept, with the expectation that third-party technical assistance providers will be engaged to offer assistance to eligible recipients by January 2016. Technical assistance activities may include project proposal development, support for application preparation and other activities related to development of competitive projects and applications that maximize greenhouse gas reductions.

Background:

SB 862, Statutes of 2014 established the AHSC program, to be administered by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC, or Council), "to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use, housing, transportation, and agricultural land preservation practices to support infill and compact development..." In addition, Senate Bill 535 (De Leon, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) directs State and local agencies to make significant investments that improve California's most vulnerable communities. To this end, the AHSC program is also statutorily required to invest at least 50 percent of its annual appropriation in Disadvantaged Communities, as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency through the California EnviroScreen 2.0 Tool.

The Budget Act of 2015 (Chapter 321, Statutes of 2015) appropriated \$500,000 in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for a pilot technical assistance grant program for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, to maximize the funding of projects located in disadvantaged communities.

In the first year of the AHSC Program, the program funded \$91.8 million in projects benefiting Disadvantaged Communities – more than 75 percent of the total projects awarded.

Table 1
Summary of Disadvantaged Community Applications
2014-15 AHSC Program

	Total Applications	Number Disadvantaged Community Applications Received	Total AHSC \$ Requested	AHSC \$ Requested from Disadvantaged Communities	Percentage of Total AHSC Requested
Concept Application	147	90	\$760,714,466	\$548,556,872	72.1%
Full Application	56	37	\$301,788,579	\$229,267,483	76.0%
2015 Funded	28	21	\$121,955,460	\$91,836,695	75.3%

Proposed Concept: AHSC Technical Assistance Pilot

Purpose of Pilot

The funding received in the 2015-16 Budget is an initial step in ensuring investment to provide direct, meaningful, and assured greenhouse gas reduction benefits to the State's identified Disadvantaged Communities and beyond.

In the first year of the AHSC Program, applicants, stakeholders, and AHSC Program staff saw a strong need for ongoing technical assistance and support for all applicants given the steep learning curve and quick turnaround of the new program. The complexity of the program, application process, and technical analysis requires significant applicant resources to develop project partnerships, be apprised of program guidelines, and ultimately submit a complete and competitive application.

This Pilot would identify qualified third party technical assistance providers, who would provide specific services to AHSC applicants through a contract with the SGC.

Technical Assistance Supported

With the small amount of funding appropriated for the Pilot and the short timeframe to provide meaningful assistance, staff proposes funding the following activities directly related to the development of applications for the 2015-16 AHSC funding round, at both the Concept and Full application phases:

- Grant Writing
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis
- Application Coordination
- Data Analysis
- Partnership Development
- Mapping
- Project proposal development
- Other support for application preparation, and
- Other activities related to development of competitive projects and applications

Who is Eligible for AHSC Technical Assistance Funds?

Because of the limited funding for this Pilot, ASHC staff proposes initial eligibility for those applicants who submitted concept or full applications in the 2014-15 AHSC funding cycle, but did not receive an award, and qualified as eligible for a Disadvantaged Community set-aside. Should additional funds be available, SGC could extend the Pilot program to potential disadvantaged community applicants.

How would Applicants Receive Technical Assistance?

Eligible applicants would be contacted by AHSC staff to identify assistance needs and interest in the Pilot program. AHSC staff would facilitate the selected Technical Assistance Providers to provide services to applicants, with a determined scope and funding.

Who qualifies as an Eligible Technical Assistance Provider?

Eligible Technical Assistance Providers may include regional agencies, including but not limited to councils of governments, metropolitan planning organizations, air districts, and conservancies; state community colleges and public universities; and for- or non-profit organizations with a history of working with disadvantaged and / or low income communities. Eligible consultants may conduct all or some of the technical assistance needs outlined above. Multiple contracts may be awarded depending on the scale and scope of the technical services proposed.

What is the Timeline for Implementation of the Pilot?

The anticipated timeline for this Pilot is as follows:

Refinement of AHSC Technical Assistance Pilot	October 2015
Release of Request for Funding Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ)	Early November 2015
Due Date for RFP/RFQ	Mid-November 2015
Selection of Consultant(s) for Services	Early December 2015
Release of 2015-2016 AHSC Notice of Funding Availability	January 2016
Concept Applications Due	Spring 2016
Full Applications Due	Late Spring 2016
Awards Announced	July/August 2016

**All times tentative pending confirmation