Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies

August 2020

CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

1 Contents

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Acronyms

CalEPA: California Environmental Protection Agency

CalHR: California Department of Human Resources

CalOES: California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Caltrans: California Department of Transportation

CARB: California Air Resources Board

CBO: Community-Based Organization

CCI TA: California Climate Investments Technical Assistance program

CDFA: California Department of Food and Agriculture

CDPH: California Department of Public Health

CEC: California Energy Commission

CMAS: California Multiple Award Schedules

CNRA: California Natural Resources Agency

CWDB: California Workforce Development Board

DOC: California Department of Conservation

HCD: California Department of Housing and Community Development

OPR: California Governor's Office of Planning and Research

RFP: Request for Proposals

SGC: California Strategic Growth Council

TA: Technical Assistance

1 Introduction

The State of California recognizes the effect of underinvestment and systemic discrimination on California communities. The State's social, economic, and environmental priorities address these inequities to ensure a better quality of life for all Californians. However, many under-resourced communities lack the staff capacity, partnerships, or resources to address these priorities without assistance securing funding and implementing projects and policies. Taking a critical step to redress these inequities, State agencies are increasingly supporting under-resourced jurisdictions through capacity building and technical assistance (TA).

For the purposes of this document, TA is defined as the process of providing targeted support to an agency, organization, or community with a development need or resource gap. TA may be delivered in many ways, such as one-on-one consultation, small group facilitation, technical resources and analysis, or through a web-based clearinghouse. TA is one of the most effective methods for building the capacity of an organization.

Recognizing the importance of TA in meeting its climate and equity goals, the State enacted Senate Bill 1072 (2018, Leyva), directing the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to develop "Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies" (TA Guidelines). The legislation states that the TA Guidelines should provide "procedures and standards for State agencies providing direct technical assistance to under-resourced communities." Under-resourced communities are disadvantaged or low income communities as defined by Assembly Bill 1550.[1] Compiling best practices from a variety of State agencies, the TA Guidelines serve as a resource for State agency staff who are designing a new TA program for under-resourced communities, or who aim to expand or improve their current TA services.

In early 2020, SGC convened a TA Work Group that included staff from 13 State agencies to gather input from TA and capacity building experts whose work cover a variety of sectors and issue areas. SGC staff worked closely with this group to ensure that the TA Guidelines reflect a broad range of experiences with TA and will be relevant and applicable to diverse programs, grant types, and community stakeholders. During this time, SGC also hosted listening sessions with representatives of approximately 40 entities, including local and regional government agencies, professional organizations, non-profit organizations, philanthropies, and community groups to better understand barriers to achieving community-driven climate and equity goals. These conversations both informed the development of the TA Guidelines and provided staff with information to help SGC enhance its own TA capacity.

SGC opened the TA Guidelines for public comment in July 2020 and incorporated that input into the most recent version. SGC will work with agency and community partners to update the document at least every two years.

[1] See Appendix D for full definition.

2 Background

With a guiding vision of healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a cabinet-level State body whose mission is to coordinate and work collaboratively with public agencies, communities, and stakeholders to achieve sustainability, equity, economic prosperity, and high quality of life for all Californians. SGC leads several policy initiatives, administers grant programs, and works to support capacity building and assistance to local communities.

SGC established the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program (CCI TA) in 2015 with an initial appropriation by the Legislature to support TA for applicants from disadvantaged communities to apply to SGC's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program. Building on the success of that effort, the Legislature expanded its appropriation for TA in 2016 to support grant applicants across the suite of California Climate Investment grant programs, which are funded through the State's Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds. Since its creation, CCI TA has supported low-income and disadvantaged communities in applying for a variety of funding programs spanning transportation, housing, energy, agriculture, urban greening, community-driven research, and climate resilience. Through this program, SGC provides TA adapted to the needs of each grant program, including application assistance, implementation assistance, and capacity building support.

The TA Guidelines are a critical component of SGC's Racial Equity Action Plan, which staff developed in 2018-2019 through participation in the Capitol Cohort, a one-year pilot training program for California State agencies led by the non-profit Government Alliance on Race and Equity. The plan outlines concrete actions that SGC is taking to achieve racial equity in the organization's operations, programs, and policies in order to achieve its vision that all people in California live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race. TA is a critical tool for advancing social and racial equity by increasing access to State funding programs and other opportunities for the state's most under-resourced and historically under-invested communities. By providing a roadmap for State agencies to implement effective and equitable TA and capacity building activities, the TA Guidelines build the capacity of State agencies to advance California's equity goals.

3 Using the Technical Assistance Guidelines

The primary audience for the TA Guidelines is State agencies seeking to implement TA for the first time or refine existing TA offerings. Specifically, the document offers guidance and best practices to support State agencies in evaluating options, making key decisions, and avoiding pitfalls as they develop effective TA programs. These TA Guidelines may also help TA providers and recipients interested in better understanding the State's TA processes.

While some sections of the document focus on implementing TA related to grant funding, most of the guidance also applies to TA that supports planning and policy implementation.

The TA Guidelines do not dive deeply into any one step in the process of designing a TA program; rather, they outline a variety of TA delivery and contracting models that may apply to different types of TA provision. The document also covers best practices for engaging stakeholders in TA design as well as guidance on program management, program evaluation, and communications.

The main sections of this document are outlined below:

- **Core Principles** – This section highlights the key values and objectives that should guide all TA efforts. These core principles are critical to ensuring that TA and capacity building efforts result in equitable outcomes and generate long-term impact.
- **Getting Started** – This section provides guidance on how to know if your program should provide TA, as well as an overview of key considerations and best practices to address when designing a TA program. It includes a three-step process for TA program design: (1) analyze agency and community needs and gaps, (2) set goals and intended outcomes, and (3) determine the TA program structure. The section also includes a description of the three main types of TA addressed in these Guidelines: Capacity Building TA, Application Assistance TA, and Implementation Assistance TA.
- **Nuts and Bolts** – This section describes the different types of contracting methods available to State agencies, as well as some contracting best practices from a programmatic perspective. It also provides guidance on project management for TA initiatives.
- **Evaluation** – This section offers guidance on how to implement effective evaluation for TA, providing a variety of options that can be adapted to different budgets and types of TA activities.
- **Communications** – This section discusses the importance of communicating about your agency's TA and capacity building activities and provides recommendations on how to work with public affairs staff as well as TA providers, TA recipients, and evaluators to support the development of useful communications materials and promote compelling storytelling.
- **Appendix A: Tribal Technical Assistance Guidance** – This appendix offers a robust overview of important considerations and recommendations for providing TA to

California Native American Tribes, as well as key definitions and additional resources to consult in order to better serve Tribal Governments. Due to the historical context and unique considerations related to state engagement with Tribes, SGC chose to dedicate a full appendix to this topic, rather than spreading this guidance across the document.

- **Appendix B: Case Studies** – This appendix includes a curated compilation of TA program profiles that provide examples of diverse models of TA and capacity that State agencies have implemented thus far.
- **Appendix C: Resources** – This appendix provides a list of other helpful manuals, toolkits, and reports that provide more detailed information on topics that are addressed in the TA Guidelines.

4 When is Technical Assistance Needed?

California jurisdictions face significant disparities in resources and capacity, making TA necessary to ensure more equitable resource allocation and policy implementation across the state. It is unrealistic to expect under-resourced communities to compete for funding with well-resourced jurisdictions; TA is crucial in creating a more equitable playing field. TA also provides several benefits to the State of California:

- TA can be a powerful tool for building trust and stronger relationships with local communities
- TA can help create more equitable processes for grant application and policy implementation
- TA can help to accomplish State goals more effectively by ensuring that lower-capacity jurisdictions have the support they need to develop transformational projects and implement critical policies
- TA can build the capacity of State agency staff by filling gaps that staff may not have the capacity or expertise to fill
- TA enables residents of California's most disadvantaged communities to benefit from critical investments that they may never have been able to receive without TA – improving health and equity outcomes throughout the state

SGC recommends that agencies provide TA for under-resourced communities when administering or implementing any of the following:

1. Grant programs that serve disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, low-income households, Tribal governments, or low-capacity organizations
2. Competitive grant programs, especially those that enforce a "black-out period" requiring agency staff to avoid communication with applicants during the application period for the sake of neutrality
3. Grant programs with complex application processes and/or reporting requirements
4. Grant programs that require robust community engagement and/or partnership development
5. Grant programs or State-mandated policies that are complex to implement

If your program or policy initiative does not fit into any of the above categories and you are unsure of whether your program would benefit from TA, carrying out the gap analysis and stakeholder engagement recommended in the "Getting Started" section should provide more clarity.

5 Core Principles

This section highlights the central values that should ground TA and capacity building activities implemented by the State of California. Developed in collaboration with an interagency working group from 13 different State agencies, each with deep expertise in TA and capacity building, these core principles should inform every stage of the process of a TA project – goal-setting, contracting, evaluation, and communications. Approaching the TA initiatives with these core principles in mind will ensure that the TA results in long-term capacity building and equitable outcomes in the state's most under-resourced communities.

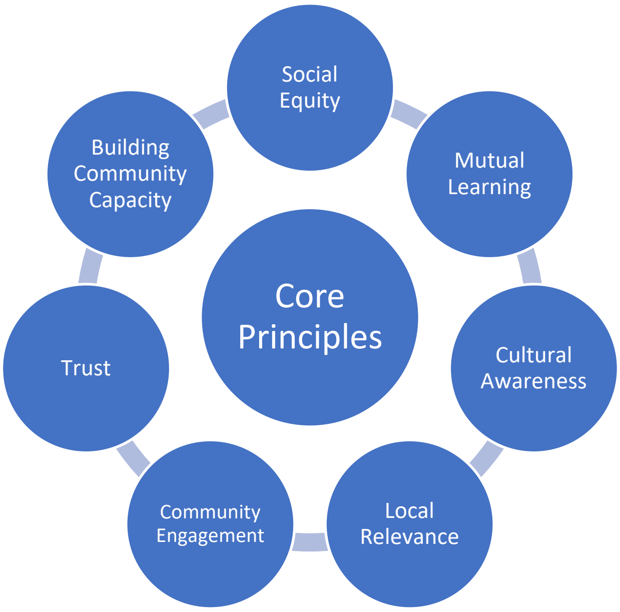

Figure 1: Core Principles

5.1 Social Equity

Each community in California has a distinct history and unique assets and challenges. However, it is critical to understand that some communities and individuals have suffered from historic injustices and continue to carry disproportionate burdens that others do not. Communities of color, low-income communities, Tribes, and communities that have experienced disproportionate environmental burdens do not benefit from the same opportunities as more privileged communities. As a result, they experience additional barriers to applying for State funding, which often keep the communities that most need funding in a vicious cycle of resource scarcity. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize social and racial equity in both process and outcome. Equity is distinct from equality in that it does not seek to offer the same services to everyone, but instead prioritizes the most under-resourced and disadvantaged communities in the state. Racial, gender, income, and other disparities that disadvantage certain groups of Californians should be taken into account when designing and implementing TA programs. By ensuring that equity is central to TA and capacity building efforts, the State gives under-resourced communities a fairer chance to compete for funds or to implement policies that not only benefit their residents, but also contribute to statewide goals.

5.2 Building Community Capacity

TA should not simply be about contractors doing work on behalf of communities, but about building long-term capacity within communities to sustain and expand successful practices into the future. Capacity building is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions grow, enhance, and organize their systems, resources, and knowledge.[2] TA should build recipients' resilience by identifying and augmenting communities' existing assets and strengths with the goal of reaching a level of autonomy in which outside TA is no longer needed. While not all TA programs are explicitly focused on capacity building activities such as workshops, educational trainings, or building social capital through partnership development, all TA should support relationship building, knowledge transmission, and sustainability of activities once the TA project term has ended.

5.3 Trust

As one of the most direct ways the State can support local communities, effective TA can build stronger relationships between State and local entities. It can also cultivate partnerships and trust within communities. This is especially the case when TA not only supports local governments, but also includes meaningful engagement and partnership with residents and community-based organizations. Residents of under-resourced communities may distrust State and local agencies based on experiences of discrimination or neglect. Histories of redlining[3] and other forms of systemic discrimination have understandably compromised trust in government for many communities of color. In addition, it is important to recognize the violence, maltreatment, and neglect the State has inflicted on California Native American Tribes. Governor Newsom's 2019 apology[4] for the State's "historical wrongs tolerated, encouraged, subsidized, and committed by State actors against California Native Americans" was an important step toward building a stronger relationship with Tribes (See Appendix A for more information and guidance on providing TA for Tribes). Other populations that may not trust government include immigrants – specifically those with undocumented status – certain rural communities, and other historically under-represented groups. TA is an opportunity to build trust slowly and incrementally within

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[2] Adapted from Khan, Mizan R, et al. *The Paris Framework for Climate Change Capacity Building*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2018.

[3] In the 1930s, the Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency, created color-coded maps of every metropolitan area in the country with ratings for each neighborhood to guide investment. The ratings were in large part based on racial demographics. Neighborhoods that HOLC colored red and ranked as "hazardous" were predominantly communities of color, making it more difficult for people of color to access home loans. These discriminatory practices were outlawed by the Fair Housing Act in 1968, but this history has a profound impact on wealth inequality and housing segregation today. Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law* (2017) provides a detailed account of this history.

[4] Executive Order N-15-19

these communities by partnering with trusted local organizations and institutions and maintaining frequent two-way communication.

5.4 Community Engagement

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with a diverse group of stakeholders to address issues affecting their well-being. It involves sharing information, building relationships and partnerships, and involving stakeholders in planning and making decisions with the goal of improving the outcomes of policies and programs.[5] This type of engagement is a powerful vehicle for improving the legitimacy, relevance, and overall success of any project that aims to improve conditions within a community. Community engagement should be a central element of every step of the TA process, from conducting a gap analysis, to designing a TA program, implementing TA, and evaluating and communicating results. Building partnerships on the ground with trusted community-based organizations and other local entities with a recognized commitment to equity is critical to ensure a representative and meaningful engagement process. If community engagement is included in the scope of a TA or capacity building effort, it is important to budget for compensating the community partners that help with outreach, material development, translation, and/or facilitation of workshops or other engagement events. Additional guidance about community engagement practices is referenced throughout this document, and more in-depth resources on the topic are listed in Appendix C.

5.5 Community Relevance

Under-resourced communities face multi-faceted challenges, covering a wide range of basic needs related to clean air and water, natural resources, adequate city services, and availability of parks and open spaces. For this reason, State agencies must work closely with TA recipients and devote adequate time and resources to ensuring that the scope of the TA responds to the priorities and needs of the community it is meant to serve. When the scope of the TA offering is not broad enough to respond to the recipient's priorities, providers must set clear and realistic expectations about available services and, whenever possible, connect the community to other types of TA that can address its priority issues. This early engagement can help build trust and avoid wasting resources on support that will not ultimately have the desired impact.

TA and capacity building initiatives must also be adaptable to changes that may arise during the project term to maintain local relevance. Under-resourced local governments and organizations are often juggling a number of different issues with very little staff capacity. When crises arise, these communities are often the hardest hit, and the local agencies, community-based organizations, and anchor institutions (such as universities, hospitals, and foundations) that serve them may need to shift focus to meet urgent needs. A lack of adaptability can result in wasted time and money, compromise hard-won trust, and miss

[5] California Air Resources Board. *Best Practices for Community Engagement and Building Successful Projects*.

opportunities to provide relevant and timely assistance. Many unexpected scenarios may arise during the project, so adding buffers to timelines and ensuring that agreements allow for adaptability can go a long way.

5.6 Cultural Awareness

To truly build trust through capacity building, the State should hire TA contractors and tailor TA activities to fit the cultural context of the communities served. This may include:

- Providing translation and interpretation services or hiring TA contractors who can provide service in the language of TA recipients
- Respecting cultural norms and traditions, acknowledging past and current injustices
- Hiring TA providers who come from the communities served
- Ensuring TA providers have experience working with under-resourced communities in California and can demonstrate cultural awareness and humility in their approach

Recognizing that miscommunications and mistakes happen in any program provided for diverse stakeholders, agencies should actively seek feedback and always strive to improve TA offerings, ensuring that they become increasingly responsive to cultural differences.

5.7 Mutual Learning

TA and capacity building efforts can help State agencies better understand how to support local communities and improve State policies and programs to ensure better and more meaningful implementation at the local level. For example, application assistance TA may bring to light that certain communities face barriers to applying or competing for funding through a particular program. It may also reveal certain parts of an application process that are unclear or onerous. Policy implementation TA might help an agency identify complexities or a need for a more context-specific approach than originally expected. In contrast, viewing TA as one-way service provision rather than an opportunity for mutual learning and growth is a missed opportunity to improve State programs and policies and can ultimately slow the advancement of State goals.

In many cases, TA recipients can also benefit from hearing about each other's experiences through peer-to-peer learning. While this may not be appropriate when communities are competing for the same grant, connecting past grantees with current applicants or creating opportunities for capacity building or implementation TA recipients to share information can be remarkably fruitful.

6 Getting Started

This section recommends a three-step process intended to support State agency program staff in determining the key elements and structure for a TA program.

1. Analyze agency and community needs and gaps
2. Set goals and intended outcomes
3. Determine the TA program structure

Following this process will help you design a TA program that responds to community needs, reflects State and agency priorities, and creates a clear linkage between established program goals and TA activities. This three-step process will facilitate the development of a comprehensive scope of work, developed through data analysis and stakeholder engagement, which will prepare you to begin select TA providers through the State contracting process or to provide in-house TA. This section includes considerations for developing new TA programs as well as updating or restructuring existing programs, and is relevant to TA related to funding programs, capacity building initiatives, and State policy objectives.

Table 1: Getting Started - At a Glance

Step 1: Analyze Community and Agency Needs and Gaps	**Step 2:** Set Goals and Intended Outcomes	**Step 3:** Determine TA Program Structure
• Evaluate funding sources • Evaluate past performance • Evaluate State, agency, and program goals • Perform technical analysis • Assess complementary TA efforts • Conduct public engagement	• Establish TA program goals • Center social and racial equity • Conduct outreach and engagement	• Approach: Capacity building, application TA, or implementation TA • Provider: In-house vs. third-party TA • Set a community engagement strategy • Identify metrics and evaluation plan • Facilitate program sustainability

6.1 Step 1: Analyze Needs and Gaps

Before making decisions about the structure of your agency's TA program, conduct an evaluation of needs and gaps that the TA could address. In addition, identify any partners doing similar or complementary work that you might coordinate with. In some cases, this process can involve significant stakeholder outreach, data analysis, and review of past TA efforts. The sections below provide further guidance on strategies to determine TA needs and gaps.

6.1.1 Evaluate Funding Sources

State agency staff must first understand what funding is available for the TA program and work with budget, procurement, and accounting personnel to understand any limitations to the use of the funds. See the "Nuts and Bolts" section for more information on potential limitations to how funds may be spent. If your agency does not currently have funds budgeted for a TA program, you may need to consider developing a Budget Change Proposal to receive new funds or identify current staff and program funding that might be redirected to a TA Program. If you are planning to provide TA related to a California Climate Investments (CCI) grant program, keep in mind that the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) 2018 California Climate Investments Funding Guidelines allow the use of CCI program funds for TA. Understanding how and when State and local funds can be spent or distributed to local partners is an important first step before developing any TA Program.

6.1.2 Evaluate Performance of Past TA Efforts and/or Grant Applicants

Early in the process of evaluating needs and gaps, engage your colleagues internally to gather lessons learned from past grant application cycles and/or past TA efforts. Program staff and reviewers of previous grant applications can provide insights on the strengths and weaknesses of past applications. If you have provided TA in the past, sifting through past reporting from TA providers should also provide valuable information about the barriers TA recipients face and recommendations on the most effective ways to address them through TA. Barriers for under-resourced communities vary but often revolve around the following issue areas:

- Lack of awareness and understanding of program goals and eligible projects
- Lack of local agency staff or organizational capacity such as time, financial resources, and expertise to apply for grants
- Lack of relationships across local agencies, partner organizations, and/or community groups

In addition to evaluating barriers under-resourced communities face, it is also important to identify assets and strengths. It may help to shape the TA program to assist under-resourced communities in identifying existing competencies and assets, and then leverage those strengths to build long-term capacity. For example, TA providers may be able to help jurisdictions develop new partnerships with local organizations, such as community-based organizations, universities, hospitals, businesses, foundations, or other entities that can help build local capacity.

6.1.3 Evaluate State, Agency, and Program Goals

Ensuring that TA efforts advance State, agency, and program goals related to supporting priority populations is critical. Common desired outcomes that program staff may choose to consider in shaping a TA program include:

- Funding projects in communities that have not historically received similar funding

- Achieving more equitable and/or geographic distribution of funding
- Implementing holistic approaches that reduce unintended consequences
- Engaging under-represented populations within project development
- Developing stronger, more community-engaged projects
- Building relationships and trust between the State and local stakeholders
- Supporting peer-to-peer networking amongst priority populations
- Supporting implementation of new initiatives and objectives within programs
- Furthering the State's commitment to addressing key issues areas such as affordable housing or climate change
- Advancing racial equity

6.1.4 Perform Technical Analysis

Beyond consulting with other program staff and evaluating agency priorities, conducting a technical analysis can help you gauge the need for TA and understand how to best shape the program. Technical evaluations such as geospatial analysis of past applicants can help you narrow in on more specific needs to address with different forms of TA. For example, an analysis of past grant applications reveals that certain priority communities did not submit applications, TA focusing on capacity building and program education may be effective. On the other hand, if you find that certain communities have applied but have been unsuccessful in competing for funding, application assistance may be more effective to support those communities. Finally, if despite being awarded, certain communities have struggled to bring projects to fruition or have faced challenges with reporting, TA to assist awardees with project implementation may be necessary.

6.1.5 Assess Complementary TA Efforts

Before designing a TA program, it is always important to understand the landscape of TA programs that already exist and examine opportunities for your TA to fill gaps and coordinate with complementary efforts. Such collaboration can help streamline, coordinate, and align TA across agencies to stretch funding and maximize the impact of TA. For example, if you are looking to provide outreach and application assistance for one grant program that funds transit infrastructure, it may be more effective to partner with other programs or agencies to offer outreach and assistance related to other transportation or green infrastructure grant programs as well. If a formal partnership on a TA contract is not feasible, it is still important to coordinate outreach to the extent possible and to ensure that potential TA recipients understand the breadth of TA options available to them. Taking into account that TA is available not only at the State level, but also through Federal, regional, or local governments as well as foundations, non-profits, and other entities can provide a more holistic picture of the relevant TA offerings that may complement those provided through your agency.

6.1.6 Conduct Public Engagement

Public engagement must inform any TA program. Engaging stakeholders and potential TA recipients prior to the development of a TA program can help increase awareness and trust and identify local barriers and assets to ensure that the TA effectively addresses community needs. Early engagement can also help you develop a sense of how great the need for TA is and to appropriately tailor the scope of services to meet and/or prioritize that need. For example, surveying or interviewing past grant applicants about what parts of the application process were most challenging and which ones were simple can help define a scope of TA services that responds to applicants' needs. Engagement prior to implementing a TA program can be carried out in several different ways [See Call Out Box].

California Climate Investments has developed "Best Practices for Community Engagement and Building Equitable Projects" that includes more detail on other public engagement best practices. Many other helpful resources and guides are available in Appendix C.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Surveys

Surveys can help engage broad and diverse audiences of stakeholders. Surveys can gather information about specific programmatic needs at the local level, gauge interest in applying for a program or receiving TA and establish a point of contact between the State and local stakeholders. Surveying potential recipients on the full breadth of needs related to a program or initiative can help to ensure TA programs are designed with sufficient flexibility to meet diverse community needs. While surveys are an important tool, the quality information received from them is limited to the questions asked. Thoughtful survey design and outreach supplemented by other types of engagement can ensure more useful results.

Listening Tours and Public Workshops

Listening tours and public workshops are effective for gathering information about TA needs while building relationships between program staff and local stakeholders. In-person engagement can be particularly effective for building trust and relationships with disadvantaged communities that have typically been under-represented in informing State practice. Listening tours and public workshops can also be opportunities to offer TA, including providing information about the program, discussing potential project ideas, and convening local partners to identify joint priorities. Doing so can help local stakeholders envision the value of further TA while providing an interim benefit to those who offer their insights into program development.

Key Informant Interviews

Like listening tours and public workshops, key informant interviews (KIIs) are useful for soliciting input from stakeholders while building effective relationships. KIIs offer program staff and stakeholders the ability to engage more deeply on topics, answer more specific questions, and learn about unique needs and opportunities. Program staff or third-party TA providers can carry out KIIs remotely or in person. It is often helpful to host KIIs with intermediary organizations in support of planning further, more place-based engagement activities. In some cases, bringing stakeholders together in focus groups can be another effective strategy for gathering useful feedback.

Webinars

Webinars and online town halls can be useful in reaching broader audiences across the State without the resource intensity associated with in-person convenings. Webinars should be designed to communicate information about the TA program and gather input on TA needs, experience engaging with similar programs, and other information that can help shape the TA program. The downsides to this approach are that these events do not facilitate as effective relationship building or peer-to-peer networking as in person workshops and it can be difficult to gather input from a variety of stakeholders at once. Webinars are also inaccessible for those without internet access, although providing a call-in option can partially address this issue. You should plan these events to include time for gathering input, answering questions, and facilitating dialogue rather than simply providing information to stakeholders.

Technical Advisory Committees or Workgroups

In addition to conducting broad engagement with stakeholders and potential TA recipients, you may choose to convene a technical advisory committee or workgroup made up of community stakeholders, past and potential TA recipients, and other key informants. Workgroups can enable you to workshop more specific elements of the TA program's design with well-informed partners. Potential topics to engage a workgroup on can include:

- *Culturally sensitive engagement practices with underserved communities*
- *Updating or developing components of the TA*
- *Contracting practices*
- *TA implementation*
- *TA evaluation*

Once you complete this gap analysis, you are ready to move into the goal-setting phase for your TA program. While in some cases, you may not be able to complete all three steps before designing the TA program due to time constraints, doing as much analysis as possible before launching the program, and then closely monitoring progress and requesting feedback during the project term will enable adaptation to emerging issues or needs. See the “Evaluation” section for more detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation.

6.2 Step 2: Setting Goals and Intended Outcomes

6.2.1 Set Overall Program Goals

Once you have determined potential available funding, local support needs, and appropriate TA activities, establish goals to inform the structure of the TA program. In addition to specifying State, agency, and program goals as well as findings from your needs and gaps analysis, SGC recommends incorporating the eight “Core Principles” described in Section 5 into your TA goals. Some think of this step as establishing a theory of change – identifying how and why a desired outcome is expected to happen through programmatic activities. Setting program goals early helps the TA development team:

- Identify expected and desired outcomes
- Ensure the TA program responds to State, agency, program, and community priorities
- Determine program structure
- Identify communities, populations, and stakeholders to engage
- Establish effective processes for selecting the right TA provider(s)
- Evaluate program successes and opportunities for refinement
- Consider the appropriate level of flexibility and adaptability within TA provision

Incorporating clearly written program goals as part of a TA program scope of work or internal guidance document provides an important resource for agency staff. Collaborate with internal and external partners to develop these goals and ensure that all stakeholders involved in a TA effort clearly understand them. These goals can aid you in communicating the approach to agency leadership and administrative/contracting staff as well as ensuring that the program continues to be successful in the event of staff turnover.

Clarifying program goals can inform the development of unique approaches to the structure of the TA program. For example, if a TA program goal is to build relationships with under-resourced communities, it may be helpful to partner with a community-based organization with existing relationships in target communities to implement the program. Further, if a goal is to increase awareness of a new program or initiative, you may consider a program timeline and outreach approach that allows for more engagement with eligible communities prior to the application phase. Where possible, re-engaging with agency staff and stakeholders who helped inform needs and gaps can maximize the effectiveness of this goal setting-process.

6.2.2 Center Social and Racial Equity

As described in “Core Principles” (Section 5), social and racial equity are central to the State’s TA and capacity building efforts. Setting equity as a foundational goal and stated mission of your TA program helps ensure that all program partners have a shared understanding of the TA objectives. However, simply stating that equity is a goal of your TA effort is not sufficient to ensure that the process and outcomes of the TA will be equitable. The Greenlining Institute (2019)[6] offers the following four key steps to "making equity real," which comprise a helpful framework for incorporating equity into your agency's TA and capacity building work:

1. **Embed equity in the mission, vision, and values** – Explicitly setting social and racial equity goals from the beginning of a TA effort and ensuring that all partners fully understand these goals is a critical first step.
2. **Build equity into the process** – Incorporating social and racial equity considerations in TA program outreach as well as in the selection process for TA providers and recipients is critical to meeting equitable outcomes. This may include creating targets for TA recipients from certain groups or geographic areas. For example, CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture TA program includes a provision that at least 25% of TA recipients qualify as Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs).
3. **Ensure equity outcomes** – While incorporating equity in the process of providing TA will support the attainment of equitable outcomes, it is also important to ensure that the content of the program itself is leading to equity. For example, if you are providing TA to a disadvantaged community, are the most vulnerable populations within that community engaged in determining the outcomes of TA effort?
4. **Measure and analyze for equity** – It is impossible to know if your program is meeting its equity goals without intentionally evaluating equity metrics. Setting clear goals in the beginning of the TA effort and documenting decisions made in program design and implementation to reach equity goals are important in being able to effectively evaluate outcomes. See the "Evaluation" section for more information.

6.3 Step 3: Determine the TA Program Structure

Once you have worked through the first two steps described above, you can determine the TA program structure. Deciding on the specific design elements of a TA program can help you narrow in on further details around the most effective contracting approach, project management structure, evaluation strategy, and other key components. Program design decisions should reflect findings and recommendations from the needs and gaps analysis phase as well as the goal-setting process. This section will help you decide what model of TA makes the most sense for anticipated outcomes, contracting processes that can support the most effective implementation of the TA program, and recommendations for incorporating public participation, evaluation, and long-term sustainability into your TA design.

[6] The Greenlining Institute. *Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook*

6.3.1 Provider: In-House versus Third-Party TA

When designing a TA program, agencies need to decide whether agency staff will provide the entirety of the TA or if the agency will hire a third-party team. When hiring a third-party TA provider, you should remain integrally involved in TA provision, either through training TA providers and responding to technical questions or working alongside third-party TA providers to provide complementary community assistance. You should view TA as an opportunity to build stronger relationships with local TA recipients and as a chance to augment the State's capacity to engage at the local level. The following table summarizes some of the benefits and downsides to both approaches.

Table 2: In House vs. Third-Party TA

In-House TA		**Supplemental Third-Party TA**	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
• Potentially more cost-effective if dedicated staff are available • Can build relationships directly between local stakeholders and agency staff • Avoids RFP or contracting processes	• Can be difficult to implement if agency lacks trust or relationships with local stakeholders • Can be resource-intensive given the need across communities • Can bring into question the impartiality of agencies in reviewing grant applications	• Allows State agency staff to maintain neutrality in a competitive grant-making process • Enables deeper engagement with communities than may be possible with agency staff • Can enable greater reach across communities, especially where the State does not have relationships • Typically requires less demands on program staff's time • Can build the capacity of local community organizations or other trusted partners through a contract with the State	• Requires project management of third-party provider • Requires third-party contracting process • Costly depending on contract size and intended program goals • Limits opportunities to build relationships directly with communities • An underperforming TA provider can lead to more problems and lack of trust • The State needs a strong justification for why a third-party contractor is needed

In the case of a competitive grant program, third-party TA may be especially valuable because it allows State agency staff to maintain neutrality and avoid any perception of bias towards one applicant or another. This is especially important for agencies that enforce a "black-out period" in which they cannot communicate with any applicants once the solicitation has been released. Black-out periods can present a barrier for grant applicants because they may make it more difficult for applicants to receive answers to important questions in a timely manner. Technical assistance can be particularly valuable to ensure that under-resourced applicants that lack access to experienced consultants have a fairer chance of receiving funding.

In addition, some TA recipients may feel more comfortable airing grievances about barriers they face in the application process or admitting to weaknesses in their applications when engaging with a non-state TA provider. When TA providers report this information to State agencies, it helps the latter better understand barriers embedded in their programs. In addition, the applicants' transparency creates an opportunity for third-party TA providers to offer encouragement and support that may not be feasible or appropriate for State agency staff to provide in order to get applications to the finish line and ultimately result in stronger projects. Third-party TA providers can also offer encouragement and support that may not be feasible or appropriate for State agency staff to provide to get applications to the finish line.

6.3.2 Select the Right Approach

Though TA can be delivered in a variety of ways, the main approaches fall into three categories: Capacity Building, Application Assistance, and Implementation Assistance. Each approach corresponds to a different stage of planning for or implementing a project or policy initiative. In some cases, a TA program may employ elements of one or more phases depending on the level of support that an agency deems necessary to meet program goals. When providing TA for under-resourced communities, it is generally best to provide longer-term assistance from the same TA provider to support TA recipients through all stages – partnership development, community engagement, project conception, and implementation.

For example, recognizing that not all communities are at the same level of readiness, SGC's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) TA program meets applicants where they are to help them move closer to the goal of developing an AHSC project. The AHSC TA program provides direct application-based TA to recipients deemed ready through a pre-application survey. Those not yet ready to apply to the program receive capacity building support. This dual approach helps ensure that the TA program responds to communities that fall within a spectrum of readiness and helps to build more productive relationships between the State and local stakeholders.

Table 3: TA Approaches

TA Approach	Description
Capacity Building	Seeks to equip communities with tools, resources, knowledge, and connections that support developing strategies for meeting specific needs. Often occurs outside of the application window. Does not need to be specific to any single funding program.
Application Assistance	Provides assistance to applications within an application window to help with challenging elements of grant application processes, such as: demonstrating robust partnerships and meaningful community engagement, developing data collection and evaluation methodologies, or pulling together data and other relevant information.
Implementation Assistance	Supports communities that have been awarded projects to provide assistance in implementing complex and unique aspects of a project or supporting tasks that an under-resourced agency or organization may not be able to implement fully.

Capacity Building

Capacity building programs seek to equip communities with tools, resources, knowledge, and connections that support developing strategies for meeting specific needs. The goal of capacity building programs is to build long-term sustainable action to complex issues and not create a dependency on third party providers. Potential capacity building activities through TA may involve:

- Conducting outreach and building awareness of grant programs or State policy priorities
- Convening stakeholders to discuss community needs and potential solutions
- Supporting project conceptualization, incubation, and development
- Developing community-engaged project plans that respond to local needs
- Supporting the development of partnerships between stakeholders and potential project partners
- Advising on the development of multi-benefit projects and identifying alignment with potential funding sources
- Creating tools and processes to support sustained action at the community scale
- Assisting with policy development or implementation in response to state mandates and/or community needs

The audience for capacity building TA can include local agency staff as well as community-based organizations and other local entities. Capacity building programs typically focus on education, partnership development, public engagement, and increasing project readiness. For example, this type of TA may involve convening stakeholders to define the scope of a project and map out the steps, and then providing support to secure funding and implement it. To maximize the impacts of these activities, plan for sustained engagement and iterative feedback over longer periods of time. Consider that this approach to TA may require more upfront investment of time and resources.

The level of engagement from agency staff and TA providers varies across capacity building programs, depending on the goals of the project. Some capacity building programs may provide less-intensive assistance, such as hosting public education workshops. In other cases, capacity building programs can involve a high degree of involvement and include a variety of different strategies including education, policy analysis and support, and public engagement. Determining the bounds of the TA and communicating that to TA recipients from the beginning can avoid friction later in the process.

Depending on the program’s goals and intended outcomes, agency staff, TA providers, and TA recipients should agree on the full scope of capacity building activities to carry out during the project term. Staff should work closely with the TA recipient to determine this scope to ensure that the assistance responds appropriately to the assets and needs of the TA recipient. For example, a lack of time and resources may be a more significant barrier for some low-capacity jurisdictions than a lack of knowledge or skills. In this case, providing workshops or trainings would be ineffective and may even seem patronizing to the TA recipient, which could jeopardize opportunities for coordination and relationship-building. Understanding the recipient’s needs and priorities early on can help ensure that the TA meets the goals of both the agency and the recipient.

While the goal of capacity building programs may be to increase a community’s ability to successfully apply for funds or implement a project, the lasting impact of capacity building TA is difficult to quantify through traditional data metrics. You should expect to invest additional time and effort into creating strategies to measure the impact of capacity building programs in communities and making the case for ongoing support.

Taking stock of your agency’s existing relationships with TA recipients and staff capacity to carry out TA can help you determine whether in-house TA is feasible or whether a third-party provider would be more appropriate. Capacity building programs are often more effective when the State can partner with local trusted organizations to sustain elements of the TA program into the future. If you choose to provide in-house TA, intentionally developing relationships with such local organizations will be important to support the long-term sustainability and resiliency of the capacity building effort.

Application Assistance

Application assistance is a common form of TA offered to communities. Application TA recognizes that applying for State funding programs can be challenging, given the need to demonstrate robust partnerships and meaningful community engagement, develop data collection and evaluation methodologies, and pull together vast quantities of information. These challenges are more pronounced in under-resourced communities that lack staff capacity, local plans, and/or networks of community-based partners. The following are common components of application assistance TA programs:

- Public outreach workshops
- Assistance for applicants in understanding grant requirements
- Partnership engagement
- Grant writing assistance
- Data quantification
- GIS mapping support
- Environmental review

Though application TA commonly takes place over a shorter period than capacity building programs, it can incorporate elements of capacity building. This is especially true if the TA creates resources, tools, case studies, and other products that communities can use in subsequent funding rounds or to continue similar projects. Depending on the funding program, application assistance TA can vary from limited engagement with TA recipients to a more hands-on approach. Among other considerations, depending on whether the funding program is competitive or allocation-based, you may choose between an in-house TA approach or hiring a third-party TA provider. Often, with competitive programs, agency staff may not wish to or be allowed to provide direct application assistance TA in order to maintain impartiality.

Implementation Assistance

Agencies sometimes provide implementation TA to certain communities after they have received an award from the State. In other cases, State agencies may offer implementation assistance to support communities in implementing a policy that furthers State goals. Similar to other TA approaches, implementation assistance TA can vary from relatively low involvement (e.g. producing guidance and factsheets) to a more hands-on approach (support implementing a workforce development strategy to ensure that a funded project benefits local priority populations, for example). As more State funding programs seek to address a variety of community needs through grant programs, funding additional TA can support implementation of non-traditional aspects of awards. For example, SGC manages third-party contracts to support its Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC) grantees in implementing workforce development and anti-displacement strategies, along with other critical activities to ensure that infrastructure investments funded through the grant program lead to equitable outcomes.

6.3.3 Setting a Community Engagement Strategy

For some TA programs, especially those that provide very limited or specialized services, TA may involve few local partners to meet program goals. However, in most cases, TA programs should seek to engage a variety of local stakeholders and community members to develop or implement programs. Setting a clear engagement strategy at the outset of your TA effort can help ensure the effectiveness of this critical component of TA delivery and help determine other elements of your TA, such as the program timeline, TA providers, budget, and evaluation.

To avoid wasting scarce resources on assistance that does not meet community needs, ensure that contract budgets and schedules allocate plenty of time for community engagement in the beginning of a TA project timeline. Note that if community engagement related to the project has already been conducted, it is important to thoroughly analyze that data to avoid wasting community members' time with the same questions.

When designing your TA program, consider strategies to maximize meaningful and sustained engagement. Some examples include:

- Collaborate with CBO networks and coalitions to engage traditionally under-represented populations
- Fund local CBO and other trusted organizations to provide outreach and engagement support through the TA program to facilitate effective community participation
- Hire CBOs and other trusted organizations or individuals as primary TA recipients
- Create resources or hold workshops and other engagement activities to build partners' understanding of the program and capacity to engage
- Encourage peer-to-peer collaboration across similar communities through facilitated networking events
- Compensate CBO and resident participation in events and workshops. Secure funding for childcare, food, and other components of effective events

The California Air Resources Board has developed "Best Practices for Community Engagement and Building Equitable Projects" that includes more detail on other public engagement best practices.

6.3.4 Identify Metrics and an Evaluation Plan

It is best to design evaluation metrics and processes into the TA program from the outset. TA program evaluation, whether done internally or by a third-party consultant, can help identify successful practices as well as refinements to meet program goals and community needs more effectively. If a dedicated evaluation of the TA program itself is not feasible, agency staff may consider including TA in the evaluation of the overall funding program or policy initiative. Third-party evaluators can offer more objective analysis and help program staff that do not have an analytical background develop robust evaluation methodologies.

Answering the following questions can help you embed TA evaluation into the overall design of a program:

- Should the TA evaluation be done by a third-party consultant or in-house?
- Will the TA be evaluated on its own or part of the broader funding or policy program?
- What methodologies already exist for evaluating similar TA programs?
- What outputs and outcomes will help inform on the success or the program?
- Who will be tasked with collecting data and insights from the TA program?
- Who are the intended audiences for the evaluation (e.g. funding agency, communities receiving TA, legislature, policy makers, etc.)?

More information about developing a TA evaluation strategy appears in the "Evaluation" section.

6.3.5 Facilitate Program Sustainability

Another key consideration in developing a TA program is the sustainability and replicability of the TA services. In many cases, TA programs are unable to provide the same degree of TA to every eligible community in each round. Consider how the TA services and outcomes can be sustained and replicated within the communities that have received TA as well as other communities throughout the state. For example, deliverables such as toolkits, technical tools, resource libraries, and case studies make it possible to reach larger numbers of TA recipients in future funding rounds.

7 Nuts and Bolts: Contracting Best Practices

If an agency determines that it needs a third-party TA provider, it will need to go through the contracting process to establish this partnership. This section provides a primer on the contracting options available to State agencies. It offers high-level information about what program staff should know from the beginning about the contracting methods that may be utilized to execute a TA contract. This section is neither comprehensive nor intended to duplicate the State Contracting Manual. Instead, it provides recommendations to help agency staff understand some best practices and key considerations in TA contracting from a programmatic perspective. It is always best to consult with your internal administrative team prior to developing any new program or amending an existing program to best understand how funds can be used and the policies and practices that apply to your agency.

Table 4: Contracting Best Practices at a Glance

Key Considerations	• Project Management Team and Resources • Contracts vs. Grants • Expertise and Experience
Procurement Methods	• Interagency Agreements • Request for Proposals • California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS) • Small Business or Disabled Veteran Enterprise Option • Non-Competitive Options
General Contracting Recommendations	• Scope of Work • Budget Considerations • Timeframe • Deliverables • Appropriate Reporting Schedule
Competitive Bidding Guidance	• Outreach • Selection Process
Contract Language Guidance	• Clarify Roles and Responsibilities • Allow for Adaptability

7.1 Key Considerations

Before diving into the contracting process, identify the approach that works best for your TA program. Understanding the available options from the start will help make decision-making easier later in the process.

7.1.1 Project Management Team and Resources

The first step in developing a TA program and determining the contracting process for the program is to meet with procurement and legal staff at your agency to better understand the contracting policies and processes at your agency and any limitations to using the available funding. Throughout the contracting process, work closely with these colleagues and consider including them as an official part of your project management team. Their expertise on the State's contracting rules can help you navigate an otherwise complicated process, identify potential roadblocks, and set a realistic timeline.

Additionally, the State maintains many helpful resources to consult as you determine the contracting method most suitable for your TA program. State contracting policies will likely inform some elements of TA design, so it is helpful to use Volume 1 of the State Contracting Manual (SCM) developed by the Department of General Services (DGS). The SCM, Volume 1 provides the policies, procedures, and guidelines for securing services for the State. It might be useful to also consult SCM, Volume FI$Cal as it provides details on various procurement methods and promotes ways to increase business opportunities on state procurement and contracting activities for small and disabled veteran businesses and those businesses operating in economically distressed areas of the state.

7.1.2 Contracts versus Grants

TA can be deployed through both contracts and grants. Contracts are used to obtain services provided to the State through a legally binding agreement. Contracts are specific in topic, scope of work, budget, and outcomes. Grants are used as a mechanism to provide services to a community. They generally allow for more flexibility in topic, scope of work, and outcome. The first step in determining which approach is best for your TA program is knowing the funding source. If your TA program uses funding designated for "State operations" or "State support," then you must use a contract to partner with an external entity. There are multiple contracting methods available to State agencies, which are described in the sections below. Selecting the right method for your purposes will depend on the type of organization and expertise your agency seeks, as well as the budget and timeline for the contract.

If your TA program is funded through "local assistance dollars" and/or you have statutory or budgetary authority, then you may also be able to provide TA through grants. Without statutory authority, a grant is considered an illegal gift of public funds. There are two ways to administer grants to support TA. The first is to administer the grant directly to the local government or other entity that will be receiving assistance and allow them to carry out their own procurement process to select a TA provider. This allows TA recipients to have more control over the scope of work and selection of their own TA provider. However, it may necessitate a longer timeframe since the TA recipient will have to administer the funds through its own procurement process. Another way to provide TA through this method is to grant directly to TA providers to cover the cost of their TA services. Both the California

Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Climate Smart Agriculture TA programs and the California State Waterboard's Proposition 1 TA are administered as grants to TA providers.

7.1.3 Desired Expertise and Experience

Once your team has decided to hire an external TA provider, be specific about what types of skills and expertise are needed to effectively carry out the TA. This will help determine the most appropriate contracting method, and also inform RFP content, scoring criteria, and outreach to potential bidders in the case of a competitive contract. If you are looking for a variety of types of expertise, or if your TA contract plans to cover a large and diverse geographic area, it may make sense to promote a team approach. By encouraging a variety of organizations with different areas of expertise and geographic focus areas to collaborate under one contract, the TA team will be able to provide more specialized expertise to meet TA recipients' needs.

A team approach may be especially beneficial when contracting with smaller organizations that may not have the staff capacity to carry out TA activities if a staff member leaves or an essential funding source dries up. In these cases, working with a team of TA providers can ensure that another organization can step in if unforeseen circumstances arise. Not only does this approach help ensure a more resilient TA project, it enables smaller community organizations to participate in TA delivery, which helps ensure more context-sensitive and culturally sensitive TA.

7.2 Procurement Methods

If you decide a contract is your best option, it is important to understand the types of contracts available to State agencies. If your agency has determined that it does not have the in-house capacity or expertise to carry out the TA activities, the SCM specifies that the agency should first consider an Interagency Agreement (I/A). If you can identify other State agencies, departments, the University of California (UC), or California State University (CSU) that have the desired expertise, an I/A may make the most sense. If your TA program requires highly specialized skills or needs a diverse team to support TA across subject areas, exploring other contracting options may be the best way to respond to the needs of TA recipients. The sections below provide some basic information about the contracting options for TA contracts.

7.2.1 Interagency Agreements

Your agency or department may wish to consider funding another State entity with the necessary expertise to provide TA services. These types of non-competitive contracts are known as Interagency Agreements or "I/As." Agencies may enter I/As with any California State agency, including UCs or CSUs, but cannot use them for contracts with federal government agencies, local agencies, joint power authorities, campus foundations, or other states (SCM v1 3.03). Agencies often prefer I/As because they tend to be more cost effective and involve fewer steps than other methods, which can streamline the contracting timeline.

Note that I/As cannot be used to circumvent purchasing authority by having another agency buy goods or services for you. If an I/A is not well suited to your TA program, your department or agency may choose to go through a competitive bidding process to select a contractor or contractor team to carry out TA.

7.2.2 Requests for Proposals

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a solicitation for competitive proposals for a particular contract. An RFP describes the process for how the agency will select the TA provider and describes a scope of work for the TA project or program. It must be as precise as possible to ensure that all proposals address the same goals. State contracting processes offer several RFP types, but RFP Secondary is generally the most relevant for TA contracts. RFP Secondary is well-suited to obtaining very complex and/or unique services for projects that demand professional expertise and methods that vary greatly as well as for creative or innovative approaches (SCM v1 5.06).

7.2.3 California Multiple Award Schedules

DGS maintains a list of California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS) contractors on their Find CMAS Contractor search platform. These contractors provide products and services that have been competitively assessed, negotiated, or bid at or lower than the Federal General Service Administration rates with the State of California terms and conditions. CMAS agreements streamline the procurement process for select products and services by removing repetitive and resource intensive steps of the bid process. Before deciding on using CMAS, consult the search platform and DGS resources (like the CMAS Guide and SCM, Volume FI$Cal) to ensure that contractors with the TA expertise needed for your specific program are on the CMAS list. Even though CMAS has fewer steps than the RFP process, it is important to take the time to verify that the expertise needed is available through the CMAS contractor list before opting for this option and to ensure that your agency has purchasing authority from DGS to pursue this method.[7]

7.2.4 Small Business or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Option

The State’s contracting laws allow departments to solicit California-certified SB and DVBE suppliers and award purchase documents valued from $5,000.01 to $249,999.99. Agencies must only release the solicitation package to certified SB or DVBE businesses and obtain responsive bids from at least two bidders before awarding the contract. The certification status of a SB or DVBE can be verified on the OSDS database.[8]

7.2.5 Non-Competitive Contracts

The State also allows for non-competitive contracts when the contract budget is under $10,000 or when contracting with specific types of entities. Eligible entities are listed within Chapter 3 of SCM, Volume 1. TA program costs cannot be split into multiple contracts to

[7] California Department of General Services, *State Contracting Manual*, vol. FI$Cal, pp. 23–28.
[8] ibid, p. 4.

stay under $10,000 and avoid the competitive bidding process. Table 5 provides a summary of the various contracting pathways available to agencies for TA programs. [9]

Table 5: State Contracting Methods

Method	Description	Bidding Required
Request for Proposals	Formal advertised competition with award to the highest scorer. Useful for complex unique multi-faceted services where cost is a significant but not the primary factor. Ex. Public relations, advertising, research, etc.	Yes. Advertising and protest rights apply.
CMAS (California Multiple Award Schedules)	Agencies may award contracts using an existing Leveraged Procurement Agreement (LPA), which allows departments to buy directly from suppliers through existing contracts and agreements.	Yes. Advertising and protest rights apply.
Contract under $10,000	Services contracts under $10,000 may be awarded by contract or service order without competitive bidding.	No.
Interagency agreements	Contracts between two California State agencies.	No.
Contracts between $10K and $250K awarded to a California certified SB or DVBE	Services contracts may be awarded based on obtaining quotes from two California certified Small Businesses <u>or</u> Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise businesses (DVBE)	No. This is an informal quote process, no advertising, sealed bids, or protest

7.3 General Contracting Recommendations

7.3.1 Scope of Work

The scope of work (SOW) describes all work the selected TA providers will perform. SOWs explain the tasks and deliverables the provider will carry out through the contract. Depending on the template your agency uses, you may include legislative background and project goals in the SOW or in a separate section.

[9] Californi Department of General Services, *State Contracting Manual,* vol. 1, Ch. 5.

An effective SOW will not only elicit the types of responses desired but will also create an easier selection process. Consider what types of information will allow bidders to submit strong proposals that respond to the needs of your TA program. Also consider that once a contractor has been selected, it is relatively difficult to amend the scope of work beyond what is contained within the contract SOW.

The following recommendations can help you craft your solicitation SOW:

1. Clearly state program goals and background to clarify intended audiences, activities, and outcomes.
2. Clearly describe all tasks and deliverables.
3. Specify if you would like an opportunity to review a draft of any deliverables or be involved in decision-making on certain tasks. Doing so allows for quality control and will ensure that draft reviews are properly incorporated into the timeline.
4. Include reporting requirements and expected communication methods, such as regular check-ins.

Ideally, a SOW should be clear and concise but not overly prescriptive. It can be challenging to strike a balance between being clear, but not so specific that amendments will have to be made every time a minor change is needed. Avoid being overly specific on components that your team may not have enough expertise to specify, or that will depend on factors outside of your control. Providing bidders with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and experience through the bidding process, or through collaboration with the contractor on a non-competitive contract, ensures that the TA can benefit from the expertise and approach of the TA provider you selected.

In the case of an RFP process, an overly rigid and narrow SOW may keep some strong candidates from bidding because the SOW does not allow them to apply their expertise in creative ways that could enhance the overall project. Openness to the expertise of TA providers and community-based organizations is particularly important for TA programs that involve engagement and partnership with under-resourced communities. It may be helpful to distinguish between deliverables the contractor has discretion over and deliverables that your agency may wish to keep more prescriptive. Bidder defined deliverables may include components such as TA assessments, approach, work plan, or training activities, details for which the provider may define based on their areas of expertise and knowledge of their team.

7.3.2 Budget Considerations

While some State contracting requirements apply to all agencies, it is important to consult your internal contracting and legal teams to understand any policies specific to your agency or funding source. In many cases, the source of funding for the TA contract will also have some restrictions to consider when scoping out the overall budget for the project and developing an RFP or non-competitive contract process. The following section includes policies you should consider when budgeting for a TA effort.

Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect costs are expenses of doing business that are of a general nature incurred to benefit at least two or more functions within an organization. These costs are not usually associated specifically with project activities but are necessary for the organization's general operation. Agencies may have slightly different definitions of indirect costs; work with your contracting staff to understand any important policies related to indirect cost rate (ICR). Many agencies cap indirect costs at a certain rate, or in some cases there may be an ICR associated with the funding source.

Keeping indirect costs low ensures that more of the project funding goes directly to activities associated with the project. However, a low ICR cap may create a barrier that prevents some organizations from contracting with your agency. Small non-profits and businesses, for example, may not be able to cover day-to-day operations without including some overhead costs in the budget. Note that some organizations have pre-negotiated ICRs that they may not be willing or able to amend. For example, UCs and CSUs often have an established ICR, and some Tribes and nonprofit organizations may have a pre-negotiated rate with the federal government. While State agencies are not beholden to federal negotiated rates, entities accustomed to those rates may hesitate to agree to a lower ICR. Connect with your internal contracting team to understand your agency and funding source rules around ICR and eligible contractor costs.

Personnel Costs

While no Statewide policy defines reasonable personnel costs for contractors, it is a best practice to suggest that contractors refer to the State Civil Service Pay Scales located on the California Department of Human Resources' (CalHR) website to stay within the range of the comparable salary of a State worker. Your agency may have a policy around whether it accepts loaded personnel rates, which include fringe benefits and indirect costs in the hourly personnel rates. Keep in mind that if a contractor submits loaded rates, their hourly rate will be significantly higher than they submit actual rates.[10]

Travel Costs

Project travel conducted by the TA providers must follow the CalHR's travel and per diem rates. Regardless of which contracting method your agency chooses, it is important to ensure that anyone entering a contract with the State understands this requirement to ensure that their travel expenses qualify for reimbursement. Reiterate the travel reimbursement policy at the contract kickoff meeting to ensure the contractor will not have to cover the difference for any ineligible travel costs.

[10] The California State Water Board publishes and updates Cost Guidelines that can be a helpful resource to understand how other agencies determine which costs are reasonable.

Equipment Costs

Depending on the scope of work for the contract, it may be helpful to set a policy around equipment costs. Include clear information about whether and what type of equipment is an eligible cost, along with any restrictions on how much the contract can spend on equipment. According to the SCM, when contractors purchase or build equipment as part of a State contract, the contract must clearly indicate that the title for the equipment will belong to the State. After the contract term closes, the contactor must return the equipment to the State, or the agency may allow the contractor to continue using the equipment under another contract or agreement (See SCM v1 7.29 for more information).

Meeting Spaces

Room rental is an eligible cost for many funding sources but be sure to verify before allowing it as an expense in an RFP or contract budget. Reasonable costs for meeting space depend on the occupancy of the room, any audiovisual equipment included, and the amount of time the room is occupied. In many cases, especially for smaller workshops, it is possible to find meeting spaces that are available free-of-charge. Public agency buildings, libraries, universities, community centers, and churches may be ideal options for workshops, but it is important to check if they have audiovisual equipment (if needed) and are American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant before planning to hold a workshop. It is also important to keep in mind that some community members, particularly undocumented individuals, may not feel comfortable attending workshops in public agency buildings. If the goal of the TA is to build partnerships and trust between local agencies and the community, it may be wise to plan to hold workshops in more neutral spaces and leverage existing community meetings when possible.

Translation and Interpretation

Depending on the audience for your TA, you might need to budget for the translation of materials as well as interpreters and interpretation equipment for meetings and workshops. If you are providing TA to local or regional agencies, businesses, non-profits, or other organizations, it may not be necessary to translate materials. However, it is best to engage with these entities before finalizing the SOW for your TA to ensure that this is the case. If your TA project will provide direct services to community members in disadvantaged or low-income communities, or will include community engagement of any kind, take language access into consideration.

Keep in mind that translation and interpretation are specialized skills. A TA provider is fluent in relevant languages is not necessarily qualified to carry out these tasks. If translation and/or interpretation services are needed for the TA project, encourage potential contractors to partner with a translation agency if they do not have this expertise internally. For one-on-one TA activities, however, it will likely be more effective to ensure that member(s) of the TA team have the relevant language skills for the communities served through the project.

Food and Childcare for Workshops

Providing food and childcare at workshops and events is a well-documented best practice for improving the effectiveness of community engagement by creating a more welcoming environment, ensuring better turnout, and allowing participants to stay longer and engage more fully. However, many State funding sources do not cover the cost of food or childcare. In some cases, food may be an eligible expense for working lunches at the State's per diem rate but work with your administrative team to clarify if this is the case for your agency. If funding for these activities does not seem feasible using internal funding sources, it may be helpful to explore other funding sources to cover these costs. Consider working with your administrative team to identify opportunities for potential partnerships or sponsorships with local foundations, businesses, or other potential funders. Try to avoid requesting financial support from local community-based organizations as they generally have limited resources and should instead be viewed as partners to be compensated for their efforts to inform and assist with the TA effort. Finding a source of funding to cover the costs of food and childcare will be especially valuable when aiming to engage disadvantaged and low-income communities, or for workshops that span a mealtime.

Stipends and Scholarships for Workshop Participants

Depending on the audience and the level of involvement required from attendees, compensating workshop participants for their time or covering travel costs through stipends or scholarships may be another option to maximize engagement and acknowledge the services, input, and time provided to the State or local agencies by individuals. Compensation for participation can enhance the reach of the TA program by lowering or eliminating participation barriers such as travel costs. In addition to reducing financial barriers for engagement, compensating community partners who help with outreach or other tasks related to planning a workshop can change the dynamic between community partners and State agencies by showing that the State values their time, expertise, and input. Note that agencies should only provide stipends to compensate a specific service provided to the State. The agency and the partner should execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other contractual agreement to specify the scope of services provided in exchange for funding. Work with your administrative team to understand to what extent those costs are allowable based on your funding source or applicable contracting regulations. If stipends and scholarships are not allowable, it may be possible develop creative ways to compensate partners through other strategies.

7.3.3 Timeframe

Work with administrative staff to set a clear and realistic timeline for the contracting process and the overall program as early as possible. It is critical to understand the deadlines associated with your funding source. In most cases, State funds will have both an encumbrance and an expenditure deadline. The encumbrance deadline is the date by which the funds must be under contract. The expenditure deadline is the date by which the funds must be spent.

The time needed to encumber funds varies depending on the type of contracting method used. I/As and other non-competitive contracts, which require fewer steps, are generally quicker than other options. However, in many cases the process of negotiating a scope of work with an intended I/A partner can be equally time consuming for program staff, so make sure to allocate an appropriate length of time to develop these agreements before the encumbrance deadline. CMAS is also a relatively streamlined procurement process. Competitive RFPs tend to be the most time-consuming contracting process as they involve competitive bidding and scoring. According to the SCM, the competitive bidding process often takes an agency three to eight months from the time it posts the advertisement until it makes the award. However, this will vary by agency, so work with your administrative team to understand your agency's timelines. Keep in mind the key steps in the competitive RFP process highlighted below.

Bidding Window

The bidding window is the length of time the solicitation will be posted on CaleProcure. While the SCM states that RFPs must be posted for 10 business days, best practice recommends at least 30 days. A longer bidding window gives bidders more time to respond, which can increase number and diversity of bids, helping ensure a fair competitive process. Short bidding windows tend to benefit organizations with more staff capacity and more familiarity with the State contracting process.

Proposal Evaluation and Bid Selection

A technical review committee must review and score all proposals through a deliberative process. The committee should include a minimum of three evaluators and one facilitator (typically from your administrative team). Reviewers should be familiar with the program and its objectives but remain impartial to applicant teams. It is generally helpful for reviewers to read through all the proposals and score them individually prior to deliberation by the committee. Allow ample time for reviewers to thoroughly review the proposals. If there are many bids to review it may be helpful to hold more than one deliberation meeting to ensure that reviewers have the time and energy to make thoughtful scoring decisions.

Protest Period

Once the review committee selects the winning bid, your agency will notify bidders of the decision and an intent to award is physically posted in the agency's entry. For the sake of transparency, it is best to post the intent to award on your agency's website as well. This is especially important when it is impossible or inconvenient for bidders to physically come to your office. Once the intent to award has been posted, the protest period begins and continues for 5 business days. During the protest period, proposers may challenge the State's decision to award another bidder if they believe that the agency failed to properly follow procedures. Chapter 6 of SCM Volume 1 provides more detailed information about the protest process.

Department of General Services Approval

Depending on the contracting amount and method, some types of contracts – including *all* competitively bid contracts – require approval by the Department of General Services (DGS). Under typical conditions, DGS approval takes approximately 10 business days. However, unforeseen circumstances can slow this approval, so it is best to account for more time. Your administrative team may be able to provide more specific guidance on DGS review times at the time your contract is submitted. Guidelines for timely submittal of contracts and late justification exceptions are outlined in DGS Administrative Order 06-05.1 (available by contacting DGS). Once DGS provides the final approval of the contract with signatures from all necessary parties, the contract has been executed and services can begin. The State cannot compensate or reimburse contractors for work conducted prior to contract approval.

7.3.4 Deliverables

Deliverables are work products developed as a result of the project and are not to be confused with tasks in the SOW. Deliverables should be specific, measurable, and accessible in the case of an audit. Program staff should avoid requiring deliverables that do not add a clear and specific value to the project. Including onerous reporting requirements or placing too much emphasis on refining documents not critical to successful TA delivery can quickly use up precious work hours that could have been devoted to TA service delivery.

Deliverables should provide useful information that supports TA recipients, allows agencies to understand and communicate the impact of TA programs, track and evaluate progress over time, and better understand how to enhance the TA for future iterations. Take your TA evaluation plan into account when determining the reporting structure for the contract to ensure that reporting provides useful data to track progress and to evaluate the success of the TA effort (see “Evaluation” for more information).

When describing deliverables in a SOW, consider making final reports and TA resources public-facing. This may require budgeting extra time to make the documents easily digestible to a general public audience, as well as ensuring that they are ADA compliant. It is also important to specify that deliverables should be non-proprietary and to specify any branding or style guide requirements in the contract and the RFP (if applicable).

Transparency & Open Access

Specifying in the contract that the State has the right to share any deliverables created through the contract publicly eliminates misunderstandings around the audience and ownership of materials created during the contract. Some TA providers may also provide fee-for-service offerings outside of the TA contract and wish to keep certain materials proprietary, so it is important to clarify expectations. If the agency intends to have the rights to all materials created through the contract, share any style guides, logos, or other guidance on creating documents for the agency during the kickoff meeting to ensure clear expectations about branding and ownership.

7.4 Competitive Bidding Guidance

7.4.1 Outreach

Outreach is essential to spreading the word about your RFP and eliciting responses from a diverse set of organizations. In order to broaden the pool of TA providers and advance equity in contracting, ensure that contracting opportunities are widely distributed and accessible to organizations new to working with the State. In addition to posting it on the State's contracting portal and your agency's website, publicizing the RFP opportunity through additional channels can help increase your pool of bidders. Consider reaching out directly to contacts with connections to a broad network of organizations, including non-profits, small business enterprises (SBE), disabled veteran business enterprises (DVBE), minority-owned business enterprises (MBE), and women-owned business enterprises (WBE). Contracting with organizations that have existing relationships with the communities served by the TA program supports your ability to deliver context- sensitive assistance. Doing so can also facilitate inclusivity and trust between community and public agencies at both the local and State level.

Outreach activities – informational webinars, for example – can also help solicit more relevant and higher-quality bids. This approach allows organizations to engage directly with program staff and other potential respondents. Informational webinars can also create a networking opportunity for bidders interested in assembling a team.

If a team approach would best serve your TA program, it also can be helpful to create opportunities for potential bidders to network. With their consent, you can share webinar participants' contact information via an open access spreadsheet. Other ways to support networking opportunities include hosting an online forum through your agency's website (like the California Energy Commission's Empower Innovation platform) or creating LinkedIn Groups open to anyone who wishes to join. It is important to note that agency staff should not facilitate this networking beyond creating opportunities for it to occur. For example, you should not contact multiple organizations to encourage the formation of a project team as this can affect impartiality and fairness to other bidders.

7.4.2 Selection Process

As you develop the project scope, think about scoring criteria. For RFP Secondary processes, agencies can score bids using criteria beyond the cost of the bid. While cost is a factor in RFP Secondary, other criteria such as team experience, approach to scope of work, and project timeline can also influence scoring. Pertinent scoring criteria helps facilitate an informed decision-making process and ensures selection of TA providers with the desired skills and experience. Consider all the roles, activities, and deliverables that the TA provider must fulfill during the contract term and prioritize the most important skills and background in scoring. To ensure that new TA providers have an opportunity to compete, place more emphasis on specific skill sets when setting selection criteria rather than being overly prescriptive about required experience. For example, criteria related to experience with grant application assistance is more inclusive than criteria requiring experience assisting applicants for a specific program.

Strong review committees should comprise a diverse group of reviewers, which will enable examination of each proposal from various perspectives. Before commencing your review session, ensure that reviewers understand the program priorities and do not have a conflict of interest (COI)[11] with any of the organizations that submitted a proposal. Reviewers must also sign a form attesting to their lack of COI before the review session.

After you announce the winning bidder, consider hosting debrief calls with unsuccessful bidders to provide constructive feedback – especially for organizations with less experience working with the State. The SCM recommends informing inquiring bidders why their proposals did not meet minimum requirements if they were not considered. Debrief calls help build bidders' capacity to pursue other TA contracts for the State by explaining the reasons behind the final scores. Program staff should provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of bids but avoid advising bidders of specific ways to be more competitive in future solicitations to ensure impartiality and fairness in future bidding.

7.5 Contract Language Guidance

7.5.1 Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

Creating clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both the project managers and the selected TA providers is key to a successful TA program. Doing so ensures consistent organization, promotes collaborative decision-making, and enhances operational performance by promoting accountability to assigned work. The RFP should clearly outline all roles and responsibilities.

7.5.2 Allow for Adaptability

Building flexibility into your contract allows program staff and the TA provider to adapt to changes in real time. One way to support adaptability is to clearly specify intended outcomes without stipulating activities or processes that are overly constrained or rigid. This can help prevent the need for budget changes or contract amendments, which are time-consuming for everyone involved. It can help to build increased flexibility into pilots or the first round of a TA program, since both provide key learning opportunities to strengthen processes for the future. One concrete way to build flexibility into a contract is to include evaluation and assessment deliverables and activities in the SOW with the explicit intention of identifying opportunities for improvement.

[11] California Department of General Services. *State Contracting Manual*, vol. 1, 7.10

8 Project Management

Effective project management is one of the most critical components of a successful TA program. The project manager or project management team is responsible for ensuring the TA project rolls out as planned and achieves the desired outcomes. Key elements to an organized project management approach include clearly defined roles for each entity involved, a clear communication process, a plan for ensuring engagement of TA recipients, and an ability to be flexible and responsive to changing needs.

8.1 Clarify Roles and Points of Contact

Each entity involved in the TA program needs defined roles and a designated point of contact. Each party should have a work plan to keep the project moving on schedule and avoid misunderstandings about tasks and associated deadlines.

Agency

Designate an agency staff person as a clear point of contact for the TA program. The point of contact should have a clear understanding of their expected role and responsibilities and the capacity to manage the project. In addition, this person should work directly on the program or policy the TA supports or maintain close communication with the relevant agency staff. Appointing multiple points of contact within the agency creates confusion. However, you should prepare a back-up plan in case of staff transition.

TA Providers

The contract or agreement for a TA program should cover the following components:

- The number of total hours committed to the TA project by each team member
- The TA staff assigned to the project
- The scope of work for the TA team
- Any work products to be developed, such as training materials or an application toolkit

Once a contract begins, it may be useful for agency staff and TA providers to create and agree on a workplan that outlines some or all these components in greater detail.

TA Recipient

TA recipients must fully understand the expectations for their involvement and have the capacity and willingness to meet them. If a TA program requires a significant dedication of time, you might have recipients sign a MOU or other form of agreement to ensure their full participation. Keep these agreements as simple as possible – overly lengthy and complex agreements may deter TA recipients from participating in the program. In some cases, especially when the TA provided is short-term or does not represent a significant engagement for the TA recipient, a MOU may be too burdensome for the TA recipient and a simple verbal or written agreement to participate may suffice.

8.2 Communication Process and Tools

Establish a clear communications protocol on how all entities should coordinate and collaborate. Establish clear lines of communication to ensure consistency in TA delivery and support everyone's understanding of their role. Developing strong working relationships with TA providers can help agency staff ensure consistent messaging and information flow. The following key strategies can help maintain strong communication:

Kickoff Meetings

Agency-hosted kickoff meetings and robust orientations for TA providers at the beginning of the contract provides space for agency staff to develop a relationship with TA providers and simultaneously lay the groundwork for carrying out TA. The kickoff meeting should clarify roles, processes, and tasks included in the contract. A kickoff meeting might cover the following topics:

- Roles of agency staff and TA providers
- Communication processes between agency staff, TA providers, and TA recipients
- Deliverables and deadlines for the contract or agreement
- Guidance on any technical components of the TA work to be performed

Question and Answer Documents

If TA providers are relaying questions from TA recipients to agency staff, implement a mechanism for organizing and sharing these questions as well as a timeline for agency staff to respond. In addition, determining which topics or types of questions TA providers can answer and which require a response by agency staff should be determined when establishing a question and answer process.

Check-in Calls

Regular check-in calls between agency staff and TA providers should take place throughout the duration of the TA program. Depending on the services provided, agency staff might have direct contact with TA recipients as well. If a TA contract has a team with multiple subcontractors, consider scheduling additional check-ins with the entire team of TA providers so that everyone has direct access to agency staff.

Clear Deadlines

At the beginning of the contract, establish deadlines for reporting requirements and other deliverables that you can refer to through the duration of the TA program. Providing timely reminders is essential to achieving prompt implementation and reporting over the life of the contract.

Transparency

Maintaining frequent and open communication with TA providers can ensure that they are providing the most accurate and up-to-date information with TA recipients. For competitive grant programs, this may include sharing scoring information from past application cycles so

TA providers can understand common challenges and pitfalls and tailor their TA accordingly. This may also include notifying TA providers when an important policy decision is being made that may affect TA recipients.

TA Coordination

As a TA project manager, it is important to reach out to other agencies and partners to understand what complementary TA is available. Coordinating your TA efforts with those provided by other agencies can maximize the impact of your assistance and result in better outcomes on the ground. This coordination may entail organizing joint workshops with TA providers for other relevant grant programs or connecting your TA recipients to other TA providers who can provide complementary services. Remember that communities do not live in silos and often do not differentiate grant opportunities by administering agency or funding source as much as by the projects they fund. For example, providers of application TA for a specific grant program that supports affordable housing should also be able to direct TA recipients to TA opportunities for other grant programs that fund affordable housing and related infrastructure, as well as support for planning, transportation, urban greening, and other related grant assistance opportunities as well. If you are unaware of other TA programs to coordinate with, contacting SGC's Community Assistance team is a good starting point.

8.3 Engaging with TA Recipients

Engaged TA recipients are critical to the success of a TA effort. The level of engagement required differ by audience and the intended scope of work.

Outreach

Effective messaging about TA offerings Is important to attract interest and set realistic expectations. Under-resourced communities sometimes hesitate to apply for TA because they lack staff who can dedicate time to interacting with the TA provider or assume that the TA program will involve too much hands-on involvement. In order to maximize interest and participation in your TA program, emphasize TA methods that will help the recipient save time while ensuring that they are involved and able to provide guidance as needed. For example, a TA provider may help identify viable grant opportunities for the TA recipient, respond to technical questions, and review the grant application, which helps the TA recipient save time, while also building internal capacity to apply for similar grants in the future.

In developing a TA program outreach strategy, you may choose to consider the following strategies:

- Develop a messaging and communications strategy in partnership with agency communications staff or third-party consultants
- Identify key stakeholders, coalitions, or networks through which to share information

- Host workshops and in-person events to publicize the program

TA Recipient Commitment

Considering findings from your gap analysis (see "Getting Started" for more information), work with your TA provider team to set clear selection criteria for TA recipients. These criteria will depend greatly on the goals, audience, and needs identified in your gap analysis and community engagement. However, under-resourced communities should be prioritized, according to the definition that makes the most sense for your program.

When selecting TA recipients, particularly for application assistance on a specific funding program, it is critical to be honest with TA recipients about the level of effort necessary to put together an application, as well as the likely competitiveness of their project, making it clear if receiving TA does not necessarily mean they will be awarded funding. If a project is not ready for the current funding round or is not suitable for the program at all, that information should be communicated clearly. If a project is not ready, TA providers should provide guidance on what steps the grant-seeker should take to prepare for the program's next round; and the applicant should be re-considered for TA at that point if it is still offered. If a project is not well-suited for the program, TA providers and agency staff should seek to connect the applicant with other funding programs that may be more suitable.

Once TA recipients have been selected, State agency staff and TA providers should consider strategies to ensure consistent communication and participation from local points of contact. With little capacity to spare, local agency staff may sometimes be slow to respond to TA providers or even be reassigned to other tasks before completing the project, ultimately minimizing the effectiveness of the TA program in that community. To facilitate consistent communication and engagement, program staff may choose to employ some or all the following strategies:

- Develop messaging that clearly outlines the level of involvement from TA recipients and outlines the benefits to them
- Identify the level of available staff capacity through surveys or within applications for TA
- Schedule an intake call with TA providers and prospective TA recipients to ensure that everyone understands expectations and are ready to begin TA
- Require an MOU or other form of agreement between TA recipients and providers
- Develop a work plan for the TA project term that clearly specifies timelines and who is responsible for each task

For TA programs that will involve engagement with a variety of partners and stakeholders, State agency staff and TA providers should agree on a plan to maximize the effectiveness of that engagement. Developing the engagement plan early in the program's development will create an opportunity for input from stakeholders and potential TA recipients. For additional strategies and resources for maximizing engagement with TA recipients during the provision of TA, see the Program Outreach section under “Getting Started.”

8.4 Flexibility & Responsiveness

Success in TA and capacity building efforts requires flexibility and the ability to adjust as needed. This may be particularly true in the first few rounds of TA or when you are experimenting with a new model of TA delivery. It is especially important to understand that under-resourced communities are often juggling a number of priorities, which requires agency staff and TA providers to be persistent, responsive, and adaptable to the needs of TA recipients throughout the entire project term.

9 Evaluation

This section presents key considerations and options available to State agencies in evaluating TA programs. It includes guidance on determining evaluation goals and process as well as budgeting and contracting considerations to consider when hiring an outside evaluator. It does not provide a detailed guide to evaluating a TA program but is instead intended to offer a high-level overview of evaluation best practices for State agency staff. Appendix C lists additional resources that provide more detailed guidance on some of the topics covered here.

9.1 Why is Evaluation Important?

Program evaluation is the "systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future program development."[12] Evaluation is a critical component of designing effective TA, but it is too often forgotten or only considered after TA delivery. Evaluating the quality, suitability, and long-term impact of TA is fundamental to understanding opportunities for improvement and communicating successes that can make the case for future investments in TA. For TA to be as effective as possible, you should create an evaluation plan in the early stages of TA design. Engaging as many partners as possible during these early stages helps ensure that goals, metrics, and indicators for success are clear from the beginning, mutually agreed upon, and trackable from the outset of the TA effort.

It is critical to have clarity around goals and closely monitor progress in the case of TA for pilot programs or in the first round of TA provision, when demonstrating success is especially important to ensure future support for the program. Close monitoring and data collection throughout TA activities can shine a light on inefficiencies or issues that arise during the project term, making it possible to respond quickly. Be sure to track modifications throughout the project term in order to identify which project partners were successful in implementing with fidelity to the original plan, as well as what had to be adapted and how those changes helped meet the original program goals.

9.2 Key Considerations for Evaluation

9.2.1 Evaluation Goals

The first step for determining your evaluation goals is to clarify the objectives of the TA effort itself (see "Getting Started" for more guidance). Clearly stating goals for both the process and outcome of your TA effort will help determine appropriate metrics and methods to measure them. You might develop a logic model to help identify the relationships between resources, activities, and results. Logic models can be organized as a series of if-then statements; as a diagram showing factors, activities, outputs, outcomes,

[12] Patton MQ. *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997.

and impacts;[13] or in various other ways. Engaging outside stakeholders in determining the desired outcomes of the program – particularly the communities that stand to benefit from the TA program – helps ensure that the TA effectively serves the needs of its intended audience.

Strong evaluation plans serve specific goals and audiences. For example, an evaluation might:

- Help program staff better understand what is working well and identify areas for improvement or build a case to outside partners for additional funding (internal program staff)
- Gather data to fulfill reporting requirements (funder)
- Show the value of TA to encourage leadership to devote more staff time or resources to TA (internal leadership)
- Inform the public of your agency's TA and capacity building offerings to build transparency and improve trust in government (general public)

Tailoring evaluation deliverables to your target audiences to ensure they have the desired impact.

9.2.2 Budgeting

Gaining clarity on the goals, scope, and scale of the evaluation enables you to determine an appropriate budget for your evaluation. In many cases it will be important to prioritize goals with your budget amount in mind to ensure that the methodologies necessary to respond to the scope of the evaluation are feasible. Sometimes budget amounts for evaluation are predetermined, such as by legislation. In those cases, you will need to carefully consider what is achievable given budget constraints and may want to further prioritize any evaluation goals written in statute. If not, ensure that funding is available for evaluation and specify evaluation goals.

The budget for evaluation will depend on the method you plan to use to procure evaluation services. Partnering with a UC or CSU through an I/A will likely be more cost effective than releasing an RFP for a private evaluation consultant, but the latter may be preferable in some cases. Reach out to colleagues who have carried out similar evaluations to better understand an appropriate budget amount. Reviewing the budget for other similar evaluation studies can also help you set realistic expectations about the evaluation's scope given financial constraints.

Hiring a third-party evaluator is ideal because it provides a fresh and unbiased perspective. However, it is also possible to incorporate evaluation deliverables into the scope of a TA contract or to carry out some informal in-house monitoring and evaluation. Surveys created by TA providers or State agency staff can help quickly evaluate TA recipients' satisfaction.

[13] W.K. Kellogg Foundation, *Logic Model Development Guide*, 2004.

You may also consider reaching out directly to TA recipients to set up a quick call or email check-in to gather feedback. However, for more a robust and comprehensive evaluation of both process and outcome measures related to TA, it is best to engage a third-party.

9.2.3 Evaluation Plan

Developing an evaluation plan can help focus activities and ensure that everyone involved is clear on purpose of the evaluation, partners, evaluation design, evaluation questions, metrics, methods, outreach and engagement strategy, and timeline. Include this plan as an early deliverable of your evaluation contract, specifying who will be involved in developing and approving the final version of the plan. Once the plan is complete, it should remain a living document to amend as conditions change. Building regular updates to the evaluation plan into the scope of work can keep the plan relevant.

9.2.4 Stakeholder Participation and Engagement

There are many ways to meaningfully engage TA recipients, TA providers, and other relevant stakeholders in the evaluation process. The most appropriate way depends on a variety of factors including the nature of the TA, the goals of the evaluation, and the time and resources available. Involving stakeholders in the process of developing an evaluation plan as well as data collection and analysis can help to ensure that the evaluation results respond to the right questions and reflect the lived experience on the ground. While it may not always be feasible to engage stakeholders in all steps of the process, maximizing community engagement in the evaluation process can produce more accurate results.

Consider creating a community steering committee to advise the TA process as a whole or just the evaluation. If your agency chooses this option, be clear and intentional about the purpose of the group to ensure that committee members are meaningfully engaged and feel that their time is valued. Developing a participatory model for your TA evaluation by engaging the beneficiaries of the TA in carrying out evaluation activities themselves is another option to consider. There is a significant body of research and guidance available on best practices for participatory evaluation, some examples of which can be found in Appendix C.

9.2.5 Metrics and Data Collection

Engaging stakeholders, and especially TA recipients and community members, in the process of defining metrics is critical to ensure that the evaluation captures a holistic understanding of the success of TA, not just the benchmarks that are important to your agency. In selecting metrics to assess program impact, be sure to consider both process and outcome measures to create a holistic picture of the TA's effectiveness. Process indicators measure the program's activities and outputs, clarifying the extent to which the program is being implemented as planned. Outcome measures help you measure whether the program is meeting its intended goals in the short, intermediate, and long term.[14] Both are important

[14] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Approach to Evaluation*.

in evaluating whether dollars were well spent and how to improve the program in future iterations. See Table 6 for examples of these two types of indicators.

Table 6: Process and Outcome Indicators

Indicator Type	Examples
Process Indicators – measure the program's activities and outputs.	• How many TA recipients from different types of communities were served? • Did TA reach desired geographic areas? • How did TA recipients rate the quality of the services provided? • How responsive was TA to community-identified needs?
Outcome Indicators – measure whether the program is achieving the expected effects/changes in the short, intermediate, and long term.	• Did the community receive funding after receiving TA? • Was the project/policy measurably improved through the provision of TA? • Did the TA build community capacity to continue similar efforts in the future? • Did the TA build long-lasting partnerships? • Did the TA increase community understanding of grant program requirements?

In determining the methodology for tracking indicators, it is generally best to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative metrics provide information that can be counted and can be useful to show objective data, such as the number of TA recipients served or how much funding was awarded for TA-supported projects. It can also answer more subjective questions (through survey responses for example), like whether the TA improved trust in government, or built stronger partnerships.

Qualitative metrics help to provide a greater understanding of why or how the TA has been effective or ineffective through narratives and stories. This qualitative data can also help illustrate to non-technical audiences what constitutes effective TA. Qualitative methods can also support analysis and understanding of quantitative data, providing an opportunity to "ground-truth" or verify the data by cross-checking it with experiences on the ground.[15] See Table 7 for examples of the types of questions that can be answered by each metric type.

[15]Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. *Principles of Community Engagement, Second Edition*.

Table 7: Quantitative and Qualitative Metrics

Metric Type	Methods	Sample Evaluation Questions
Quantitative Metrics	• Surveys • Baseline assessments • Observation • Analysis of existing documents and databases	• How many entities received TA? • How did TA recipients rate the quality of TA? • How many TA recipients were successful in receiving grants?
Qualitative Metrics	• Interviews • Focus groups • Case studies • Observation • Analysis of written documents	• What "value add" did the TA provide? • What best practices emerged from the TA effort? • How can TA be improved in the future?

If you intend to evaluate the program through a formal research process, you will need to consider data ownership, privacy, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight. If you are working with Tribal communities, there may be additional considerations to data collection. See Appendix A for relevant guidance.

9.2.6 Communicating Results

Keep communications goals in mind when setting reporting requirements for your TA providers and designing the scope of work and deliverables for evaluators. If the primary audience for the evaluation is internal to your agency, you may not need to budget much time for creating visually pleasing and digestible deliverables. However, sharing evaluation results presents a great opportunity to communicate the impact of your program with the public; and in most cases it is worthwhile to ensure that the contract includes some deliverables that you can share publicly, for example:

- Compelling data points that demonstrate the success of the project
- Visuals that help tell the story of your TA efforts
- Profiles of TA recipients – organizations or individuals
- Case studies

Such materials can help make the case for future funding for your program, improve the image of your agency or program, build trust in State government, or simply help inform the public that TA services are available and effective.

Keep in mind that evaluation is not only about measuring success, it is also a way to illuminate opportunities for improvement. No one expects for TA to be perfect, especially in the case of a pilot or a new program, but being open about the ways your agency intends to be responsive to feedback helps community members see that your agency is invested in providing the most effective TA possible.

10 Communications

This section provides an overview of key considerations related to telling the story of TA and capacity building projects, which can help to extend the impact of a TA investment beyond its original recipients. This section includes guidance on how to work with a variety of partners to highlight project milestones and success stories throughout the TA project, and share outcomes and lessons learned once it is completed.

10.1 Why is Communications Important?

Storytelling and communications may not naturally come to mind in the early phases of designing TA, but it helps to take them into account when determining the statement of work for a TA provider, evaluator, or both. Sharing information about successes and lessons learned in an easily digestible format, such as a case study or data story, can help you reach a broader audience and deepen the impact of your program.

The list below highlights examples of the value of amplifying TA efforts through storytelling and effective communications:

- Raise awareness of available TA resources to reach more TA recipients
- Demonstrate the importance of providing sustained funding for TA
- Inspire other agencies to provide TA
- Encourage low-capacity agencies and organizations to apply for grants or implement policies knowing that support is available
- Build trust in State government
- Build a stronger relationship with TA recipients and providers by recognizing their hard work and success

10.2 Communications Planning

Planning communications in advance can help ensure that all partners are on the same page about how to share information about your TA project. Meet with your public information office early on to understand what communications services are available internally and what your communications team will need from program staff in order to communicate regularly about the TA program. Consider website updates, social media, blogs, press releases, case studies, videos, presentations, and other types of communication tools and media. For agencies lacking the internal capacity to create some of the desired communications content, it will be important to include some tasks and deliverables related to communication in contracts with TA providers and/or evaluators.

10.3 Audience

The first thing to determine when planning out a communications strategy is who your audience is. While many audiences benefit from communications about TA, communications are most effective when targeted to specific audiences. Depending on the audience, the form and style of communications content should vary. For example, if the audience is the general public or the Legislature, your communication should have a less technical, more accessible style. Conversely, case studies or fact sheets designed for outreach purposes should have more technical information about the specific services provided, funding allocated, selection process, etc.

Target audiences may include:

- Potential TA recipients
- Prospective TA providers
- Legislators
- State agencies
- Regional entities and sectors
- General public

10.4 Accessibility

Taking language access into consideration when creating any communications content is critical. If your audience will include non-English speakers, translation services should be budgeted for in any contract that includes communications deliverables. It is important to carefully consider your audience when securing translation services, as simply providing materials in Spanish and English may not be sufficient. For example, if your audience includes members of a Latinx community, do not assume that everyone is Spanish speaking, as some may speak indigenous or other non-English languages.

In addition to language access, it is also important to consider the reading level of your target audience. Making materials clear and easy to read by avoiding jargon, acronyms, and overly technical descriptions can help improve their accessibility to a broader audience. Removing unnecessary detail to focus on and clarify your key message is also a general best practice for creating a more impactful document for all audiences.

Additionally, Assembly Bill 434 (Baker, 2017) requires all documents posted on State agency websites to be fully digitally accessible. This means that any deliverables that your agency plans to post on its website will have to be American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Ensuring that documents are ADA compliant can be a time-consuming process and may require setting aside additional work hours on the contract to ensure that all public-facing documents are ADA compliant.

10.5 Storytelling

One of the most effective ways to share information about TA is through storytelling. It may be a story about an individual TA recipient, or the story of a community that came together to enact change, or even the story of a State agency that implemented an assistance program to more equitably serve communities across the state. Depending on the goals and audience for the content, there may not always be an opportunity to build out a complex story, but explaining the objectives, actors, activities, and outcomes of a TA effort in a logical order can make any document easier and more pleasant to read.

Whenever possible, communications about your program should not only cover the activities of the TA but should explain *why* they are needed. Why should the audience care about this project? What problem is the TA addressing? While it may seem obvious to agency staff or partners involved in the project, it may not always be clear to those who are not as familiar with the needs of the community the TA is serving. Clarifying that the objective of the TA is to support under-resourced communities to advance social equity is critical, but it is also important to explain how the program is meeting that objective. What issues is the TA addressing and how is it helping to meet the broader goals of the TA program?

It is also important to be honest about the challenges that disadvantaged communities face without disregarding their strengths. Residents are sometimes offended by the term "disadvantaged" in reference to the communities where they live, work, and play, so keep this in mind when communicating about TA and capacity building projects. When telling the story of a community's need for TA, it can be easy to dwell on the hardships the community is struggling with in a way that can reinforce negative stereotypes and cast historically underserved communities in a negative light. While it may not be possible to go into much detail on the histories that have affected these communities, pointing to structural inequalities that have led to current conditions can provide a more accurate picture. Lifting up the strengths and assets that already existed in the community and were able to shine through the TA or capacity building effort is important in order to honor the hard work that TA recipients put into the success of the project.

10.6 Spreading the Word

Ideally, your agency should not be alone in sharing the successes of TA efforts. TA recipients, TA providers, community partners, elected officials, local and regional governments, and other stakeholders may also be interested in getting out the word about the exciting progress that is being made. There are many ways to nudge partners to share information through their networks. The following provides some suggestions of ways to engage a variety of stakeholders in communicating the successes of TA and capacity building efforts. Please note that these options will not apply to all TA projects so it will be important to pick and choose the ones that are relevant to your program:

- **Create a communications kit for TA recipients** – It may be helpful to create some guidance for TA recipients about how to communicate about the TA they received, perhaps suggesting sample social media posts or website content. This may be created by State agency staff or included as a deliverable of a TA contract. If the agency or TA providers create a MOU with the TA recipients, it may make sense to include some responsibilities for the TA recipient to communicate about the TA they are receiving through their channels.

- **Notify a variety of stakeholders that their community has been selected for TA** – Telling elected officials, local and regional governments, community partners, and other relevant stakeholders that their community will be receiving TA is important because they may want to share that information with their networks as well. If the TA is meant to support grant application assistance, follow up with these stakeholders if their community ends up receiving the grant.
- **Engage stakeholders in the creation of communications materials** – If case studies, blog posts, videos, or other types of content are developed in collaboration with local partners, those partners are much more likely to share the content throughout their networks. Engaging local partners is also generally appreciated because it allows those partners to drive the narrative about their own communities and helps ensure that the stories are accurate and resonate on the local level.
- **Use social media** – Ensure that TA providers and other partners take pictures of workshops, site visits, trainings, and other events and share them on social media as they happen. Tag other partners in those posts to ensure that they see the posts and may even share with their own networks.
- **Share relevant deliverables with stakeholders** – Simply posting deliverables such as case studies, videos, final reports, evaluation materials, and other content on your agency website does not ensure that your target audience will see them. Website traffic is usually limited to people who are looking for something specific, so if people are not notified that materials are available, they are unlikely to stumble upon them. Sharing these materials via your agency newsletter and social media accounts can be helpful and sending a personal email to stakeholders with content that may interest them is also effective.

11 Conclusion

While this document offers a comprehensive of overview of best practices and important considerations for the provision of TA and capacity building services, its contents are not exhaustive. Many other helpful resources exist to provide helpful guidance on effective TA and capacity building design, California State contracting policies, project management, evaluation, and communications. The Resources section (Appendix C) provides a jumping-off point from which to explore new perspectives and more detailed information about the topics covered in these TA Guidelines.

SGC is grateful to the members of the TA Guidelines Work Group, and for the depth of experience that many stakeholders and TA experts shared with us during the development of this document. As the State of California continues to expand its TA and capacity building efforts, best practices, lessons learned, and new models of TA provision will emerge. SGC will update this document regularly, at least once every two years, and welcomes any feedback from stakeholders to incorporate into future versions of the document.

Appendices

Appendix A - Tribal TA Guidance

This section is currently under development and will be released for Tribal comment in summer 2020.

Appendix B - Case Studies

Active Transportation Resource Center's Technical Assistance for Disadvantaged Communities Program

Image credit: LGC

Goals

Caltrans' Active Transportation Program (ATP) is a highly competitive grant program that funds infrastructure projects as well as planning, education, encouragement, and enforcement activities to increase the use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. In order to support the development of successful active transportation projects, Caltrans funds the Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC), which provides active transportation training, tools, and technical assistance. Additionally, recognizing that disadvantaged communities often face capacity barriers to applying for the program, Caltrans partnered with the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to pilot a TA approach in which non-profit TA providers provided intensive application assistance to five disadvantaged communities that had not historically received ATP grants. The ATRC's Technical Assistance for Disadvantaged Communities Program sought to:

- Develop strong ATP projects that benefit disadvantaged communities
- Facilitate partnerships between public agencies and community-based organizations
- Build the capacity of TA recipients to continue developing quality active transportation projects in the future

TA Providers

Caltrans partnered with SGC through the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program to contract with a team of non-profit organizations to carry out the TA. The selected TA team included the Local Government Commission, the California Bike Coalition, California Walks, and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

TA Recipients

- Willits
- Colton
- San Joaquin County
- Thermal and Oasis (Riverside County)
- Richmond

Total Budget

$150,000

Program Activities

The TA for each recipient consisted of a package of services, including a community needs assessment, site visit, training workshop, networking session, and assistance with the preparation of the ATP application. These TA activities aimed to:

- Identify relevant community needs and assess how ATP can provide direct, meaningful benefits to address those needs
- Build local partnerships that can help design a comprehensive, community-driven project
- Deliver training and networking workshops on active transportation planning, design, tools and strategies, partnership development and community engagement
- Develop an ATP project scope and application components or get prepared to develop an ATP project scope in the future, providing support on technical components, such as demographic analysis, traffic and transportation data, maps and drawings, documentation of community input, cost estimates and narrative responses
- Provide the TA recipients that are successful in receiving funding with assistance and support with next steps toward implementation of the project

Outcomes

Caltrans awarded three out of the five TA recipients ATP grants in a very competitive funding cycle. All five TA recipients acquired new skills and knowledge throughout the process that will help them apply in future rounds. In addition, all recipients reported that the TA resulted in higher quality, more competitive applications, and supported the continuation of TA in future rounds. Given the high demand for ATP funding and the success of the first round of TA, Caltrans expanded the program to support 10 additional disadvantaged communities (including at least one tribal community). In this round, the lead

TA provider will partner with local community-based organizations to provide context-sensitive TA to each of the TA recipients.

Lessons Learned

The TA providers outlined three key lessons learned during the ATP TA pilot. First, the success of the program in helping TA recipients develop stronger ATP projects demonstrated the need to expand the program to provide additional support to other disadvantaged communities as well. Second, providers found that starting TA earlier in the process is best. Providing ample time for TA providers to assist with the selection and development of projects helps maximize opportunities for deeper capacity building support. Third, creating flexibility in the scope of the TA allows TA recipients to select the support and specialized expertise that is most valuable for them.

Low-Income Weatherization Program - Community Solar Pilot Program

Image credit: Estolano Advisors

Goals

The Community Solar Pilot Program, part of the Department of Community Services and Development's (CSD) Low-Income Weatherization Program, helps reduce energy costs for households. Specifically, the program enables multiple households or buildings to participate in a larger scale shared solar installation located in their community. CSD recognized that developing and implementing a successful Community Solar pilot project required strong partnerships between a utility company, community-based organizations, local governments, and other potential partners, such as developers and financial institutions. To facilitate these partnerships, CSD developed a two-phase TA approach; Phase 1 supports potential applicants though partnership and capacity building, and Phase 2 to support awardees with TA on project implementation.

TA Providers

CSD partnered with the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) through the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program to contract with the TA provider Estolano Advisors (EA).

TA Recipients

Solar project developers, local governments, community organizations, utility companies, affordable housing developers, school districts, tribes, and investors

Total Budget

$100,000

Program Activities

Phase 1 activities supported potential applicants though partnership and capacity building, with EA leading the planning, coordination, and strategic engagement for a series of outreach events across the state. Phase II directed all TA funds to the two awarded projects to support the development and implementation of systems to meet new workforce reporting requirements including data on jobs, wages, and credentials provided through training programs.

Outcomes

In Phase I, the TA provider assisted CSD in hosting a total of ten events in Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and via webinar. EA's regional contact lists included over 600 contacts and the outreach events engaged nearly 300 participants, many of whom attended multiple events.

In Phase II, TA providers supported the successful implementation of two transformative solar projects. One of the funded projects – a community solar system on Santa Rosa Tribal lands in Riverside County – is expected to produce more than 42,000,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy over the next 30 years and provide up to $5.4 million in savings to participants over the life of the project. The other community solar system at the Port of Richmond will demonstrate how solar can play a key role in decarbonizing California's ports. The project will benefit 155 low-income households in designated disadvantaged communities in Richmond.

Lessons Learned

Few low-income communities in California have had access to community solar models, so potential applicants found it challenging to conceptualize eligible projects, making TA support and partnership development critically important. To facilitate partnerships, the TA outreach targeted new stakeholders who were likely to have existing land and potential capital capacity for a community solar pilot, such as non-profit and for-profit developers, school districts, community colleges, and charter school networks. While many expressed interest, further one-on-one engagement to facilitate connections to potential project partners and solar developers could have led to a greater number of competitive applications.

California Reducing Disparities Project

Image credit: Dante Allen

Goals

Funded by the Mental Health Services Act and administered by the California Department of Public Heath (CDPH) Office of Health Equity, the $60 million California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) seeks to improve mental health access and outcomes statewide among historically unserved, underserved, and inappropriately served communities. Through this investment, CDPH aims to build a strong evidence base to support the use of community-defined projects in California's Behavioral Health System. The technical assistance (TA) for CRDP has three main goals:

1. Increase organizational capacity of funded community-based organizations (CBOs) to expand their operations so their pilot projects can be evaluated for effectiveness
2. Increase the evaluation capacity of the CBOs for each organization to complete a culturally responsive evaluation of their specific pilot project
3. Support funded CBOs in developing and implementing sustainability strategies to extend their work beyond the CRDP funding period

TA Providers

CRDP takes a collaborative TA approach, engaging a range of providers including:

1. Office of Health Equity Staff
2. An external Statewide Evaluator
3. Five organizations to provide population-specific TA
4. An education, outreach, and awareness consultant

TA Recipients

CRDP funded 35 CBOs to implement and evaluate community-defined evidence projects to provide culturally grounded mental health prevention/early intervention services. The funded organizations all serve at least one of the five CRDP priority populations: African American; Asian Pacific Islander; Latinx; Native American; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ). This is the first time many of the participating organizations have received State funding.

Total Budget

$60 million dollars over six years with close to 25% of funds going to technical assistance.

Activities

TA providers work with the CBOs funded by CRDP to improve administrative, programmatic, and evaluation support and capacity building. They also help the organizations improve operations, identify and secure additional resources, and build strategic partnerships. TA providers conduct annual assessments of each funded organization and develop a tailored TA and training- support plan to guide their work throughout the year. CRDP TA providers, including the Statewide Evaluator and Office of Health Equity staff, also provide ongoing intensive support to funded organizations to identify any emergent needs and develop collaborative strategies to address them.

Outcomes

CRDP strongly emphasizes robust and community-engaged evaluation, and preliminary outcomes of this ongoing project are currently under review. The TA evaluation will focus on the following:

1. CBO's satisfaction with provided TA services, collected using an anonymous TA Satisfaction Survey administered every six months
2. CBO's organization capacity growth over the course of the initiative, collected using a modified version of the Marguerite-Casey Foundation's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool administered at the start and end of the grant period

For more information about the evaluation process, contact CDPH's Office of Health Equity.

Lessons Learned

To implement equitable processes and build trust, it has been important for CRDP to incorporate adequate time and flexibility into the TA providers' scope of work. For example, incorporating a capacity building and assessment phase at the start of the initiative ensured there was dedicated time for TA providers to understand the interests and needs of the CBOs. This approach allowed TA providers to offer tailored capacity building support, which was critical to building trust and adequately preparing CBOs to implement their projects. CDPH also found that working closely with TA recipients to ensure that evaluation instruments such as participant outcome surveys are tailored to generate quality results was another important best practice.

BOOST Pilot Program

Image credit: George Swar

Goals

Under-resourced communities often struggle to navigate the broad range of State funding opportunities and TA resources available to them. Furthermore, many of the State's TA services are tied to specific grant programs, which may or may not match community needs and priorities. To address these concerns, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) partnered with the Institute for Local Government (ILG) to pilot a new TA approach that is more flexible and responsive to community needs. The BOOST pilot program provides under-resourced local governments with tailored support to help advance their climate and equity goals. The place-based pilot program provides services to help build local capacity, develop equitable plans, identify meaningful projects, and secure adequate funding to advance climate action and address community needs.

TA Provider

Partnership between ILG and SGC

TA Recipients

10 cities and 2 regions:

Cities - Arcata, Arvin, Bakersfield, East Palo Alto, El Centro, Mammoth Lakes, Paramount, Salinas, San Diego, Ventura

Regions - Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG)

Total Budget
$1,000,000

Activities
The pilot helps under-resourced communities create frameworks for sustainable community planning and helps them navigate funding opportunities to implement their visions. Recognizing that jurisdictions often have unique needs and priorities related to advancing climate and equity outcomes in their communities, BOOST tailored the scope of work to the needs identified by each TA recipient. Through BOOST, ILG offers one-on-one coaching to each community, including staff trainings, stakeholder and community engagement, partnership development, grant-writing assistance, and communications and storytelling support.

Outcomes
In just over a year, ILG has supported BOOST communities in submitting nearly 50 grant applications, totaling more than $45 million. ILG has also supported a variety of trainings on community engagement, COVID-19 recovery, climate planning, and other key topics for city staff, and providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning among BOOST communities. Through BOOST, ILG has worked with partners to develop greenhouse gas inventories, supported climate action planning and other planning efforts, and provided additional capacity by, for example, assigning CivicSpark fellows to support city staff.

Lessons Learned
The BOOST program's flexibility makes it possible to meet communities where they are and provide tailored services that respond to the specific needs of each community. While the common theme of climate action runs through all the activities funded through BOOST, the services provided for each community are different. BOOST communities have expressed appreciation for this approach, which allows them to focus ILG's support on local community priorities. BOOST's adaptable nature has also helped communities respond to COVID-19 because it was possible to review and update memorandums of understanding with each BOOST community to re-prioritize activities in light of the pandemic. The BOOST pilot's success demonstrates the value of tailoring services to the TA recipients needs and adapting the TA scope as needed to changing conditions on the ground.

California Department of Food & Agriculture's Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Program

Image credit: CDFA

Goals

The Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance (TA) Program focuses on increasing farmers' access to the Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) incentive programs: the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP).

Recognizing that Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers experience additional barriers to accessing his TA effort places an emphasis on supporting these farmers and ranchers who belong to a "group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities."[16] These groups include African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

TA Providers

Technical assistance providers access funding through a competitive grant solicitation open to non-profits organizations, resource conservation districts (RCD), and the University of

[16] Assembly Bill 1348

California Cooperative Extension. In 2019, the 30 entities served as TA providers throughout the state.

TA Recipients

Eligible TA recipients are California farmers, ranchers, and livestock operators, with an emphasis on Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

Total Budget

$2.14 million

Activities

TA providers conduct outreach to farmers in their service area about the CSA incentive programs. They provide support in the appropriate language during the application period by answering programmatic questions, consulting on project details, and preparing and/or submitting applications. Following the award of a CSA project, TA providers work with awardees to manage project implementation by coordinating vendors and consulting on project logistics, as well as preparing and submitting invoices and reports.

Outcomes

In the first quarter of the three-year grant period (January - March 2020), TA providers reported assisting 654 individuals with HSP and 29 individuals with the AMMP. This support resulted in 174 applications submitted to the HSP program and 22 applications submitted to the AMMP program. TA was provided in English, Chinese, Spanish, Hmong, and Portuguese. In 2019, 20% of the individuals supported through the CSA TA Program were socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Lessons Learned

So far, the program has benefitted many growers throughout the state. To more effectively match TA providers to TA recipients, CDFA is working on better organizing information about the TA providers that potential applicants have available to them. This information will help make it easier for growers to understand the TA opportunities that are available to them and simplify the process for receiving TA. CDFA also recognizes the importance of tracking relevant metrics to evaluate the outcomes of this new TA model and is working to identify additional metrics that can be collected from TA providers.

Appendix C - Resources

The following list of resources is meant to supplement these Guidelines, providing additional detail on specific topics that were not addressed in detail.

Community Engagement

Best Practices for Community Engagement & Building Successful Projects

California Air Resources Board

This document provides guidance for improving responsiveness to the needs of disadvantaged communities, and our mutual goals and best practices. These lessons can be used to incorporate community leadership at many different stages of a program or project.

Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning: A Framework

Movement Strategy Center

This document provides a framework to community-driven resilience planning and offers useful guiding principles and tools to develop community-driven planning processes.

From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Four Case Studies of Municipal Community-Driven Environmental & Racial Equity Committees

Urban Sustainability Directors Network

This document provides a framework of developmental stages from community engagement to ownership. The spectrum can be used as a tool to facilitate community participation in decision-making, and importantly offers clarity on the difference between merely "informing" to "empowering" community members.

Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Grant Programs: A Guidebook

The Greenlining Institute

This document offers a four-step guide to making equity real within climate policies and grant programs: embed equity into the mission, build equity into the process, ensure equity outcomes, and measure for equity. While the focus of this document is specifically centered on climate adaptation, the recommendations and steps contained within are applicable to operationalizing equity within any content area.

SB 1000 Toolkit: Planning for Healthy Communities

California Environmental Justice Alliance

This document offers robust, detailed, and comprehensive strategies for community engagement. While the focus of this document is specifically centered on SB 1000 implementation, it offers many strategies and frameworks that are applicable to equitable community engagement more broadly.

TIERS Public Engagement Framework

Institute for Local Government

The TIERS Public Engagement Framework and its companion program, the TIERS Learning Lab, provide a step-by-step approach to public engagement, including resources to plan and implement inclusive public engagement.

Contracting

State Contracting Manual Volume 1

California Department of General Services

This document is provided as a resource to those in California state government who are involved in the state's contracting process. It provides the policies, procedures, and guidelines to promote sound business decisions and practices in securing necessary services for the state.

State Contracting Manual Volume Fi$Cal

California Department of General Services

This document is provided as a resource to those persons in California state government who are involved in the State's procurement of non-IT and IT goods and services and are using the FI$Cal (Financial Information System for California). It provides the policies, procedures, and methods to promote sound business decision practices in securing necessary goods and services for the State.

California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS) Guide

California Department of General Services

This guide provides helpful information related to the process for executing contracts through CMAS, including an FAQ document.

CMAS Contractor Database

Department of General Services

A search tool to find CMAS suppliers.

Evaluation

Best Practices in Community Based Participatory Practice

Psychology Applied Research Center at Loyola Marymount University

The focus of this report is on Community-Based Participatory Practices (CBPP) in the California Department of Public Health's California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP). The report also provides more general advice based on lessons learned through CRDP, with a focus on community engagement in evaluation.

Evaluation Guide: Fundamentals of Evaluating Partnerships

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This guide provides guidance on approaches to and methods of evaluation to aid in skill building on a wide range of general evaluation topics. Although the guide was developed for use by Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention programs, the information provides useful information on evaluating partnerships for government programs more generally.

Logic Model Development Guide

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

This guide provides presents a basic introduction to the logic model as an action-oriented tool for program planning and evaluation, including sample logic models, exercises, and examples. It also provides guidance on how to expand a basic logic model to explore and explain the theory of-change that describes the rationale for your program.

Communications

How to Develop a Success Story

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

A short guide to highlighting the achievements and progress of a program or activity, including clear steps, style recommendations and examples.

Training

Delivering Training and Technical Assistance

The National Resource Center

This guidebook is geared towards non-profits, but it includes a wealth of useful guidance on delivering training, technical assistance, and capacity building that may be useful for other entities as well.

Appendix D - Glossary

Capacity Building

The process by which individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions grow, enhance, and organize their systems, resources, and knowledge.[17]

Community Based Organization

Any organization incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons within its designated community.[18]

Community Engagement

The process of working collaboratively with a diverse group of stakeholders to address issues affecting their well-being. It involves sharing information, building relationships and partnerships, and involving stakeholders in planning and making decisions with the goal of improving the outcomes of policies and programs.[19]

Critically Underserved Communities

A community that meets either of the following:

- Has less than three acres of usable parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Is a disadvantaged community, as defined by subdivision (g) of Section 75005 and can demonstrate to the department that the community has insufficient or no park space and recreation facilities.[20]

Disadvantaged Community

- For the purposes of California Climate Investments programs, Disadvantaged communities are defined by CalEPA as the top 25 percent of communities experiencing disproportionate amounts of pollution, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic and public health conditions according to OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen tool.[21]

- Section 79505.5a of the California State Water Code defines disadvantaged communities as "a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income."

Low Income Community

Assembly Bill 1550 identifies low-income communities as census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low- income by HCD's State Income Limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093.

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[17] Adapted from: Khan, Mizan R, et al. *The Paris Framework for Climate Change Capacity Building*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2018.
[18] Adapted from New York Department of State
[19] California Air Resources Board. *Best Practices for Community Engagement and Building Successful Projects*.
[20] California Code, Public Resources Code, Section 5642
[21] California Air Resources Board. Priority Populations.

Priority Population

The residents of:

- census tracts identified as disadvantaged by California Environmental Protection Agency per Senate Bill 535
- census tracts identified as low-income per Assembly Bill 1550
- a low-income household per Assembly Bill 1550

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, meaning a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all the following:

- African Americans
- Native Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Hispanics
- Asian Americans
- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders[22]

State Agency

Any department, division, independent establishment, or agency of the executive branch of the state government.[23]

Severely Disadvantaged Community

A community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the statewide average. This definition is included in the language of water bond Propositions 1 and 84, which stipulate funding preference for severely disadvantaged communities.[24]

Technical Assistance

The process of providing targeted support to an agency, organization, or community with a development need or resource gap. TA may be delivered in many ways, such as one-on-one consultation, small group facilitation, technical resources and analysis, or through a web-based clearinghouse. TA is one of the most effective methods for building the capacity of an organization.[25]

Technical Assistance Provider

The organization, individual, or other entity that is providing assistance through a TA program.

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[22] Assembly Bill 1348 (Aguiar-Curry, 2017)
[23] California Government Code Section 8557
[24] California Health and Safety Code Section 116760.20(n)
[25] Adapted from: Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center. *Delivering Training and Technical Assistance*.

Technical Assistance Recipient

The organization, individual, or other entity that is receiving assistance through a TA program.

Under-Resourced Community

Communities that are identified pursuant to one, some, or all the following sections of the California Health and Safety Code:

- Section 39711, which reads, "The California Environmental Protection Agency shall identify disadvantaged communities … [that] may include, but are not limited to, either of the following: (1) Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. (2) Areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment.
- Subdivision (d) of Section 39713 of the Health and Safety Code, which reads, "(1) 'Low-income households are those with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093. (2) 'Low-income communities' are census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 .
- Subdivision (g) of Section 75005, which reads, "'Disadvantaged community' means a community with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average. 'Severely disadvantaged community' means a community with a median household income less than 60% of the statewide average."