



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
For Agenda Of: September 10, 2024
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Jesús Armas, Community Services Department, 805-568-2467
Director(s)
Contact Info: Garrett Wong, Climate Program, Manager, 805-390-2983

SUBJECT: EPA Environmental Justice Community Change Grant Application

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Community Services Director to apply to the Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice Community Change grant program to implement various activities under the Resilient Cuyama Valley initiative (Attachment A);
- b) Approve and authorize the Chair of the Board to execute the Statutory Partner Agreement with Blue Sky Center (Attachment B); and
- c) Determine that the above recommended actions are not a “Project” with the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) per CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), since the recommended actions are organizational or administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

Staff are requesting that the Board authorize the Community Services Director to apply for a grant award

of \$20,000,000 from the Environmental Justice Community Change grant program. Staff are also requesting that the Board authorize the Chair of the Board to execute a Statutory Partnership Agreement with the Blue Sky Center (Attachment B), a necessary component of the application.

This item provides an overview of the Environmental Justice Community Change grant funding opportunity from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which will support community-based organizations, stakeholders, and residents in Cuyama Valley in implementing projects that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve community quality of life, and improve resilience to climate change (Attachment A).

Background:

On December 14, 2023, the County was awarded \$1,084,660 from the Transformative Climate Communities Program from the Strategic Growth Council to support the development and pilot demonstration activities to reduce energy and water use, increase composting and food resilience, advance active transportation infrastructure in the Cuyama Valley. Staff launched the Resilient Cuyama Valley initiative to highlight the various projects and partners.

The Environmental Justice Community Change grant program (CCGP) was authorized under the Inflation Reduction Act (2022) and administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The CCGP is designed to:

- Fund community-driven pollution and climate resiliency solutions.
- Invest in strong cross-sectoral collaborations with partners working with and for communities. Unlock access to more significant resources.
- Deliver technical assistance and capacity-building support.
- Strengthen communities' decision-making power.

The CCGP also identifies disadvantaged unincorporated communities as a Target Investment Area.

Resilient Cuyama Valley Proposal

Staff from the Community Services and Planning & Development Departments met with stakeholders, including the Cuyama Valley Community Association, Family Resource Center, Blue Sky Center, Quail Springs, Cuyama Joint Unified School District (CJUSD), Cuyama Community Services District (CCSD), and Community Environmental Council (collectively, stakeholders) over a 9-month period to discuss the CCGP grant opportunity, identify community priorities, and develop an approach to prepare the grant application and implement expanded and new activities under the Resilient Cuyama Valley initiative.

The projects below have been carefully developed and vetted with community-based partners and technical assistance providers to request the maximum amount of \$20 million. The projects, descriptions and funding amounts are subject to change as more planning and coordination continue before final submission. A more detailed summary of each project is provided in Attachment A. The final application summary will be made available on the Resilient Cuyama Valley website available at www.countyofsb.org/cuyamavalley.

Table 1. Resilient Cuyama Valley
 EPA CCGP Portfolio of Projects

CCGP Strategy*	Project Title	Budget	Lead
Resilience Hubs	Blue Sky Center Resilience Hub	\$900,000	Blue Sky Center
	Buckhorn Resilience Hub	\$2,000,000	Buckhorn
	Ventucopa Resilience Hub	\$500,000	The Place
Energy Efficient, Healthy & Resilient Housing & Buildings	Energy Resilience – Fire Station, Family Resource Center	\$150,000	General Services Dept.
	Home Energy Upgrades	\$4,000,000	Community Services Dept.
	Greywater: Laundry-to-Landscape	\$400,000	Quail Springs
	CJUSD Facility Upgrades	\$5,000,000	CJUSD
Clean Water & Resilient Water Infrastructure	Water Distribution Line	\$3,000,000	CCSD
	Community Hydropanel Station	\$350,000	Blue Sky Center
	Cuyama Valley Coalition of Water Stewards	\$300,000	Quail Springs
Waste Management & Circular Economy	Backyard and Community Composting	\$500,000	Quail Springs
Mobility & Transportation	Public Fast EV Charging	\$450,000	Community Services
*CCGP requires at least two strategies be addressed	Community Engagement	\$450,000	Comm Env Council
	Admin & Project Management	\$2,000,000	Multiple County depts.
	TOTAL:		\$20,000,000

Implications for the County

Below are descriptions of requested funding amounts and staff resources.

- The Sustainability Division is requesting the following funds:
 - \$1,085,960 to administer the grant and contracts and provide overall project management.
 - \$4,000,000 to implement and administer the Home Energy Upgrades. Funding would support staff hours and various contractors conducting outreach and engagement, home retrofits, and fund disbursement.
 - \$500,000 to facilitate improvements for The Place in Ventucopa to become a Resilience Hub.
- The General Services Division is requesting funds \$150,000 to install a battery system at the New Cuyama Fire Station and a solar system and battery for the Family Resource Center.
- The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is requesting \$372,300 to hire a limited term Emergency Manager to lead the establishment and capacity building activities for the Resilience Hubs. This position would also support general grant administration and project management.
- The Long-Range Planning Division is requesting \$317,780 to implement, monitor and report progress toward achieving goals and measures identified in the forthcoming Environmental Justice Element and Climate Adaptation Plan.

None of the above-mentioned requests would generate ongoing costs beyond the grant period. General Services projects would generate cost savings from solar and battery utilization. OEM’s limited term position would be limited to the grant period to implement grant-funded activities.

Partnership Agreement

All of the activities would be led or supported by local stakeholders and the Sustainability Division through the collaborative stakeholder structure (CSS), already established with the County, Blue Sky Center, Quail Springs and Community Environmental Council. The CSS provides an inclusive environment for equitable decision making amongst co-applicants and future participants, like local organizations and community members.

The CCGP requires that the lead applicant (in this case, the County) have an agreement with a Statutory Partner to co-lead the application submission and implementation of projects. Staff identified Blue Sky Center as the Statutory Partner. The Blue Sky Center has participated in the County’s Resilience Hub pilot program and has served as a vital community institution for information dissemination, community engagement and project development and implementation. Blue Sky Center was nominated by Quail Springs and Community Environmental Council to serve as the Statutory Partner. Staff have prepared a partnership agreement to be submitted with the application (Attachment B).

Timeline

Below is an overview of the grant application and implementation timeline. If awarded, staff would return to the Board to request authorization to accept the funds.

Board Authorization:	September 2024
Staff Submits Grant:	September 2024
Deadline to Submit:	November 21, 2024
Anticipated Award Notification:	January-March 2025
Anticipated Start Date:	July 2025
Anticipated End Date:	July 2028

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Once staff are notified of the award, the grant will be included into various department budgets.

Fiscal Analysis:

N/A. If awarded, staff will return to the Board with funding agreement and indicate any budget adjustments needed at that time.

Special Instructions:

Please deliver one (1) Minute Order to Garrett Wong.

Attachments:

- A. EPA Environmental Justice Community Change Grant Resilient Cuyama Valley Initiative Summary of Projects
- B. EPA Environmental Justice Community Change Grant Partnership Agreement with Blue Sky Center

Authored by:

Garrett Wong, Climate Program Manager