

Technical Advisory Council

Item 6: Adaptation Planning & Regional Resilience Grant Programs Policy Memo

Oct. 25, 2024

Introduction

The Center for the Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE) developed a policy memo, *“Bridging the Implementation Gap: Challenges and Opportunities in California’s Adaptation and Resilience Landscape”* on behalf of the California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) identifying key challenges and opportunities for California's climate adaptation and resilience funding landscape. This memo builds on CLEE’s evaluations of the Adaptation Planning Grant Program (APGP) and the Regional Resilience Planning and Implementation Grant Program (RRGP), published earlier this year.

CLEE’s analysis identifies three intersecting challenges of the State’s adaptation and resilience funding landscape: oversubscription, inconsistency, and complexity. These challenges are nuanced, reflecting a high demonstrated need for adaptation funding as well as a need for strategic policy and programmatic decisions to ensure that funds are distributed efficiently and equitably. They are also not exclusive to California; similar challenges with unmet demand and complexity persist across national and international funding systems. Based on these findings, CLEE outlined opportunities for the State to strengthen its adaptation funding landscape to more effectively achieve the outcomes of the Climate Adaptation Strategy and support long-term climate resilience. CLEE identified three recommendations for State grant program administrators and State policymakers to alleviate and address key challenges of the landscape:

1. **State Grant Program Administrators: Leverage and Maximize the Effectiveness of Existing Funding Programs** by facilitating plan alignment and supporting local governance approaches.
2. **State Policymakers: Build a Stronger System to Make Adaptation and Resilience Funding Accessible** by institutionalizing navigation support for local implementation partners, including identifying opportunities to align State investments with Federal, private, and nonprofit funding.
3. **State Policymakers: Sustain and Maintain Funding for Adaptation and Resilience** by developing a comprehensive funding and investment strategy to advance the priorities of the State’s Climate Adaptation Strategy.

As communities across California experience more frequent, prolonged, and severe impacts of climate change, funding sources for climate adaptation and resilience planning are either nonexistent or oversubscribed. This memo provides an overview of the key

findings from our recent policy analysis, identifying both challenges and opportunities within the Adaptation Planning Grant Program (APGP) and the Regional Resilience Planning and Implementation Grant Program (RRGP).

Key Findings

CLEE's analysis identified the following opportunities and recommendations for the State grant program administrators and policymakers to strengthen its adaptation funding landscape to more effectively achieve the outcomes of the Climate Adaptation Strategy and support long-term climate resilience.

Challenges in the Funding Landscape

- **Funding Oversubscription:** A significant mismatch exists between the demand for funding and the available resources, leading to intense competition among applicants.
- **Funding Inconsistency:** Fluctuations in funding levels create uncertainty for grantees, hindering long-term planning and project viability.
- **Funding Complexity:** Navigating multiple funding sources and application processes can overwhelm potential applicants, particularly smaller or local organizations.

The above preliminary analysis of the broader funding landscape, coupled with evaluations of ICARP's adaptation and resilience grant programs, informed by a preliminary analysis of the broader funding landscape, illustrate opportunities for strategic and proactive action to address the implementation gap between the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy and the funding mechanisms necessary to deliver its resilience priorities for California's communities. Some of those opportunities include:

Opportunities for Enhancement

- **Leverage Existing Programs:** Maximizing the impact of current funding initiatives can amplify their effectiveness and reach.
- **Facilitate Plan Alignment:** Encouraging alignment between local adaptation strategies and state priorities will promote cohesive resilience efforts.
- **Improve Accessibility:** Simplifying application processes and providing targeted support can enhance participation from historically marginalized communities.
- **Sustain Predictable Funding:** Ensuring stable funding streams will allow for better project planning and implementation.

Discussion Questions

- With budget fluctuations impacting investment in climate adaptation and resilience, how can we sustain momentum and ensure continued progress during lean times? What role can storytelling, data, and community engagement play in keeping these priorities visible and supported?