



Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: September 5, 2024

Agenda Item No. 7

Update on Engage, Empower, Implement

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Attachments: Yes

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

Issue:

Engage, Empower, Implement Update – Applications closed August 9, and are currently under review.

Request:

Review & Discuss at Meeting

Recommendation for Board:

No recommendation is requested, this item is for information only.

Recommendation for Committee:

No recommendation is requested, this item is for information only.

Background:

Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI) is a board-led funding program from the 2020 Funding Round dedicated to investing regional funds into disinvested communities across the six counties of the region. The SACOG board allocated \$3 million in 2020 towards EEI to begin addressing disparities and in September 2023, the board increased the amount to \$3.8 million. Since 2020, staff have been working on developing the funding program to create a planning process that encourages partnerships between cities and counties and local community organizations to plan for more equitable projects together.

SACOG hired HR&A Advisors and AIM Consulting to help engage the region's community-based organizations (CBOs), create a program that reflected the needs of CBOs, and create a process that would be most conducive to incubating strong partnerships. From this engagement with CBOs and staff engagement with local jurisdictions, staff presented the final framework and [briefing book](#) to the board in November 2023, for action and it was unanimously approved. With the approved framework, staff created the program guidelines and application process. The EEI program is based on three considerations of equity: (1) structural equity that looks at underlying factors and policies that affect disinvested communities; (2) procedural equity that looks at designing decision-making processes that are transparent and inclusive; and (3) distributional equity that looks ensuring the fair and diverse distribution of services and resources.

Applications for EEI opened on May 24, and closed August 9.

Discussion/Analysis:

EEI will strategically invest \$3.8 million in low-income communities with an emphasis on communities that have faced the largest inequities which can include Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino and other communities of color, as well as other marginalized groups. Through this funding program, SACOG aims to establish a planning process to create a pipeline of equitable, safe, and sustainable projects throughout the Sacramento region that are community-led and co-designed, starting from the identification of issues and needs, solution ideation, and project design. The EEI planning process will create projects ready for implementation through local, state, and/or federal funding. The framework developed from all the work HR&A Advisors and AIM Consulting did led to the final guidelines and applications process.

EEI's guidelines and application are focused on highlighting the narrative of the identified in-need communities and allowing communities to share their own struggles that may not appear in existing tools typically used for assessing disinvested communities, such as SACOG's Environmental Justice Analysis or the state's Cal Enviroscreen. The application requirements and rubric are focused on giving the city or county applicant and their CBO partner the opportunity to describe why they need this seed funding and how it will help catalyze efforts that can bring real benefits to residents in the area. There is also an opportunity for two awards to be given to CBOs independently. The process also recognizes the need to pay special attention to the region's rural communities.

The application was open from May 24, 2024, to August 9, 2024, a total of 11 weeks. This application window followed months of a pre-application period where staff circulated draft guidelines and provided CBOs and jurisdictions the opportunity to talk with staff and begin thinking about potential projects and application proposals. During the application process, staff made themselves available for on-going consultation and technical assistance for applicants preparing their proposals.

In its first round, EEI recruited a total of 19 applications: 12 applications from city/county and CBO partnerships and 7 applications from independent CBOs. The total requested amount is \$5,066,967.24, with \$3,800,000 available, making this program over-subscribed and identifying a need from jurisdictions and CBOs of resources focused on community planning.

Based on the recommendations of the adopted EEI framework, staff developed an EEI Review Board that will use the published rubric, included as an attachment, to review the applications and provide final recommendations that will be brought to the SACOG board for final approval. Staff sent out an interest form to jurisdictions and community partners to recruit volunteers in July to be on the review board, looking for regional representation as well as diverse perspectives. The final EEI review board consists of 12 reviewers that include jurisdiction and partner staff and local community-serving organization staff. The review board is currently reviewing applications and will meet in early September to discuss their final recommendations.

Staff will return to the Transportation Committee and the board in October with final award recommendations. Selected applications will be notified following the board decision and will move into contracting, anticipating that all contracts will be finalized in early 2025. Selected recipients will have two years to complete the work identified in their scopes of work upon a notice to proceed.

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

Included in the Overall Work Program/Budget

List of Attachments:

1. EEI Guidelines
2. EEI Rubric
3. EEI Framework