

ENGAGE EMPOWER IMPLEMENT

Grant Application Guidelines

Application Period

May 24 – August 9, 2024, at 11:00 p.m.

Contact Information

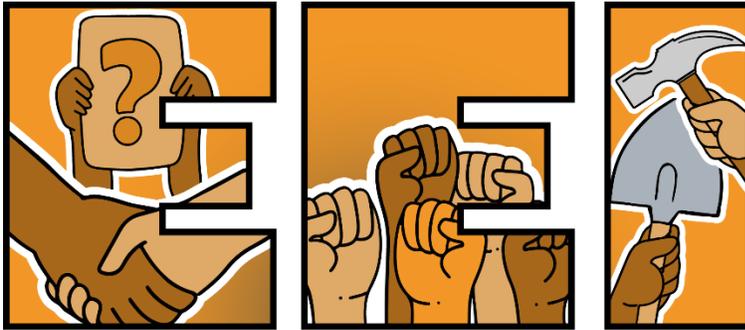
Rosie Ramos: rrosos@sacog.org

Nicole Zhi Ling Porter: nzporter@sacog.org

Learn more about the program:

[Visit the EEI Website](#)

Contents



ENGAGE EMPOWER IMPLEMENT	1
Grant Overview	3
Background	3
Purpose, Vision, and Goals.....	4
Funding Overview	4
Eligibility	5
Eligible Activities	5
Eligible Scopes of Work.....	6
Defining Disinvested Communities & Identifying a Community Engagement Area.....	6
Eligible Applicants	7
Application Types.....	7
Timeline.....	9
Screening Criteria.....	9
Award Selection	9
Project Rubric.....	10
Reporting Requirements.....	10
Grant Administration	11
Disbursement of Funds	11

Engage, Empower, Implement Funding Program Guidelines

Grant Overview

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is seeking applications for the Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI) funding program. This document outlines all grant application details and describes the eligibility requirements, program schedule, and application evaluation process.

This \$3.8 million program will fund partnerships between local government entities and community-based organizations (CBOs) for community-based planning and pre-construction project development activities in the six-county greater Sacramento region, with a specific focus on meaningful community engagement in disinvested communities. The six-county greater Sacramento region includes the counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba, and all the cities within them, minus the Tahoe Basin in El Dorado and Placer counties.

Eligible applicants include local government agencies, tribal governments, and community-based organizations. More detail for each type of applicant is included below.

SACOG staff will provide technical assistance during the application period to review project concepts and scopes of work or to offer networking or connection opportunities with CBOs and government entities. Interested applicants are highly encouraged to reach out to schedule a technical assistance meeting in the first four (4) weeks of the application period to ensure the eligibility of a proposals concept and scope. Please reach out to Rosie Ramos (rramos@sacog.org) or Nicole Zhi Ling Porter (nzporter@sacog.org) to schedule a meeting to discuss.

The application period is May 24 – August 9, 2024.

Background

The EEI program was developed in collaboration with community organizations and input from local jurisdictions. SACOG worked with a consultant team to engage with and understand the needs of CBOs and the challenges they experience when working with government entities. These engagement efforts informed the development of a [Briefing Book](#), which captured the feedback from CBOs and provided specific program recommendations, and [Program Framework](#), which outlined key components for the guidelines to be developed from, adopted by the SACOG Board of Directors in November 2023. The following guidelines were developed based upon the adopted framework, example peer funding programs, and meaningful community engagement best practices.

Community engagement is only truly meaningful when it is done with the intention of listening and then acting on what the community shares.

Purpose, Vision, and Goals

Engage, Empower, Implement will support community-based planning and pre-construction project development activities in the six-county region with a specific focus on meaningful community engagement in disinvested communities. This program provides local governments an opportunity to develop stronger relationships with CBOs, invest in meaningful community engagement, and commit to improving their planning processes – including making them more inclusive. It also provides community-based organizations an opportunity to learn about and participate in local planning processes, collaborate with local governments, and identify ways to work together in the future.

Planning efforts funded by EEI will include a robust community engagement process that commits to listening to and acting on community-identified priorities to plan, design, and implement projects that meet their needs.

The goals of Engage, Empower, Implement are as follows:

1. Focus on partnerships with community-based organizations that can build capacity and understanding at both the community and local government levels.
2. Establish authentic and meaningful engagement as the first step in the planning process.
3. Provide the tools, best practices, and incentives needed to make it possible for more public agencies to deliver equitable projects for the future.
4. Integrate racial equity considerations more fully into regional investment priorities.
5. Align planning with federal and state performance objectives and policy goals for advancing equity in decision making processes.
6. Position the Sacramento region for competitive federal and state funding.

Funding Overview

- **Total funding available:** up to \$3,800,000 for eligible applications; full amount will not be awarded in the event of insufficient or ineligible applications.
- **Grant minimum / maximum request:**
 - Jurisdiction & CBO Partnerships: \$150,000 / \$500,000
 - Independent CBO: Up to \$80,000
 - Tribal government: Up to \$500,000
- **Required match:** no match is required.
- **Other considerations:**
 - Elevating the needs of rural communities – rural applicants can receive additional points (see project rubric).
 - The allocated award will be divided between the jurisdiction and CBO as follows:
 - At minimum, 50% of the total award budget will go to the CBO; up to 70% is highly encouraged.

- The balance, after accounting for the CBO share, is available to the jurisdiction for any costs associated with the project including staff time and consultant costs.
- For each grant award, the community-based organization partner can receive up to \$25,000 of their allocated budget upfront. Remaining expenses shall be submitted within the agreed-upon timing between the city/county lead and the CBO for reimbursement. *The amount of any upfront funding made available for CBO partners will be established based on need and funding availability but should be clearly indicated in the application.*

Eligibility

Eligible Activities

All proposed projects should focus on listening to community participants, centering their needs, and taking direction from the community. *Proposals should not include projects that are already identified or planned*, unless applicants can strongly demonstrate meaningful community engagement that led to the current project phase AND the critical need for meaningful community engagement leading into the next project milestone.

The following activities and project proposals are eligible, but the list below is not exhaustive. Please reach out if you have questions about eligible project scope activities. All eligible scopes are encouraged to consider their positive impact, if any, to a community's air quality and/or mobility.

Eligible proposal concepts:

- Community Needs Assessment
- Transportation Needs Assessment (including active transportation needs)
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Economic Development Assessment/Workforce Development
- Efforts related to improving air quality
 - Tree canopy assessment
 - Air quality assessment
- Safety Assessments
- Planning efforts with community that prioritize safety, mobility, and accessibility for all transportation network users.
- Transit and transit-related planning efforts that can provide an equitable and safe transportation network for disinvested communities facing historic disinvestment.
- Planning efforts that address climate change and sustainability.
- Education and training programs

There is a wide variety of eligible expenses because of the various funding sources being used for the program. Please reach out to program staff to discuss possible concepts. For reference, the Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#)) can provide guidance, but it is encouraged to reach out to staff.

Eligible Scopes of Work

Eligible scopes will include a robust community engagement plan with specific strategies to develop a final product / plan or identify a project and next steps for implementation; projects / plans should benefit historically disinvested communities. The scope will include a project closeout report and performance evaluation metrics to measure the project's success.

If activities proposed in the grant application scope of work are not allowable under the current funding sources being used, SACOG may seek to identify other funding sources that could be exchanged to allow for these activities. Applicants with questions about whether a proposal is eligible should reach out to SACOG staff to discuss. SACOG will work with applicants to identify which activities qualify for federal reimbursement and which do not. **SACOG recognizes that determining eligibility can be a complicated task. It is highly encouraged that interested applicants reach out to SACOG in the first four weeks of the application period to discuss possible scopes and make these determinations.** Please see the scope of work template for reference.

SACOG will work with each grant awardee to ensure that planned project activities meet the funding eligibility requirements and are prepared for programming in the federal Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and Regional Overall Work Program as applicable to assure timely access to funds.

Defining Disinvested Communities & Identifying a Community Engagement Area

SACOG recognizes that pre-defined areas for historically disinvested communities can often leave vulnerable populations out. For that reason, EEI provides flexibility to applicants in determining the manner in which "disinvested communities" are identified in a proposal. To the extent practicable, it is encouraged that engagement areas / communities be within an area designated by one of the definitions / tools listed below. While not a requirement, aligning a proposal with one or more of these tools can provide competitive advantages for future efforts to fund implementation activities by assuring alignment with various federal or state programs.

Applicants can work with / in communities that are not designated by pre-defined terms or tools, so long as the applicant can demonstrate the community's need for planning support through demographics, income-levels, environmental impacts, and / or other issues. Applicants should define if their community is disinvested in some capacity. The pre-defined areas and tools used to assess historically disinvested communities can be viewed on [SACOG's web map](#) and are listed below for reference:

- Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)
- SACOG Environmental Justice Areas (EJ Areas)
- Locally defined environmental justice/disadvantaged communities etc.
- CalEnviroScreen 4.0
- [Justice40 Maps](#) (e.g. areas of persistent poverty, historical disadvantaged communities, urban, rural)

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Justice Screening
- Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
- Environmental Justice Block Groups
- Healthy Places Index

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include the following:

- **Cities, counties, and other federal aid eligible government entities** in the counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba (excluding the Tahoe Basin in El Dorado and Placer Counties).
- **Community-based organizations (CBOs)** operating in the aforementioned six-county region. For the purposes of this grant, a CBO is defined as a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that: (A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.
 - Eligible CBOs that apply independently (not partnered with a government entity) will need to provide proof of financial and management capacity to administer the grant.
 - Eligible CBOs that demonstrate financial and management capacity are eligible to apply independently, though applicants will need to demonstrate collaboration with a city or county partner through a letter of acknowledgement.
- **Tribal Governments** in the counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba and cities within are eligible to apply, either independently or in partnership with a community-based organization. Both federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes can apply.

Application Types

1) Partnership Grants

City / County / Tribal Government / other government entity in partnership with a CBO

Local government agencies (cities and counties), government entities (transit agencies, air districts, and other federal aid eligible recipients), and Tribal Governments in the counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba are eligible to apply **in partnership with a community-based organization**. The CBO must be representative of and / or trusted in the disinvested community identified in your application, and capable of continuing to build trust with the identified community.

For this type of grant application, the city / county / government entity / tribe will apply as the lead applicant and list the CBO as a sub-applicant. The sub-applicant must be identified and included in the scope development process.

For projects funded under the Partnership Grant type, the lead applicant, sub-applicant, and SACOG will enter into a three-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will identify each parties' roles and responsibilities as they relate to the proposed scope of work. The lead applicant (government entity) will be responsible for administering funds for the partnership and issuing payment to the sub-applicant, to be established in the MOU and general grant contract. The MOU will also establish the grant payment

process including fund-specific details, in particular for partnerships needing an up-front payment to the CBO from SACOG. The MOU will be established after selection of applicants.

Selected applicants in a partnership will be eligible to receive between \$150,000 and \$500,000.

II. Individual Community-based Organization Grants

CBO only; no partner applicant; requires letter of acknowledgement from City / County / other government entity

Community-based organizations (CBOs) that demonstrate fiscal and management capacity for grant oversight are eligible to apply for their own grant, **independent of a government agency**. For this grant type, a CBO will apply as the lead applicant. There will be up to two awards in this category for qualified applications.

CBO led applications are required to include a Letter of Acknowledgement with their application. This letter must be from the city or county that their identified disinvested community is located in. For example: if a CBO lead applicant proposes to work in the community of Knights Landing, they will need a Letter of Acknowledgement from Yolo County. Though not included as an official partner in the grant award contract, collaboration with the identified community's city or county is a key part of the EEI process and vision to co-create projects with a community that can be supported and implemented by cities / counties / other government entities in the future.

Selected applicants that apply independently will be eligible to receive up to \$80,000.

III. Individual Tribal Government Grants

Tribal Government only; partner applicant optional (either with a CBO or a city/county)

Tribal governments are eligible to apply as **independent lead applicants or with a CBO partner**. SACOG recognizes tribal government sovereignty and will not require contractual partnership with other government entities, but encourages it where meaningful and useful.

Selected applicants applying independently or in partnership will be eligible to receive up to \$500,000.

Timeline

Call for applications	May 24, 2024
Technical Assistance (scope development, networking, etc.)	May 24 – July 12, 2024
Applications due	August 9, 2024
SACOG Board approves final award list	October 17, 2024
Grant & Contract execution	November – January 2024
Post-award interviews, as requested	November 2024
Project Launch	March 2025
Project Completion	Early 2027

Screening Criteria

Eligible projects must meet the following eligibility criteria to be considered for award. This shall be at the sole discretion of SACOG pending recommendations by the EEI Review Board.

- Project must be located within the six-county SACOG region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and/or Yuba counties). Projects within the Tahoe basin of El Dorado and Placer counties are not eligible.
- Only one grant application may be submitted per proposed community/area.
- The application must follow the eligible scope of work requirements.
- The project must be planned for completion within two (2) years of the agreement being signed.
- The project must meet requirements described in these guidelines and support the Engage, Empower, Implement program purpose.

Award Selection

SACOG staff will assemble and convene an Engage, Empower, Implement Review Board to review applications and make award recommendations. The review board will be comprised of SACOG and local city and county staff, representatives from community-based organizations, and community leaders. SACOG will announce a call for interested participants in June, then provide informational and instructional meetings for all selected review board members. The review board will be expected to review and score applications in August 2024 over a two-to-three-week review period using the included rubric.

EEI is intended to fund a variety of innovative and community-focused projects in different locations and contexts throughout the region including rural, suburban, and urban communities. In addition to including individuals from both the public and community organizing sectors, participants on the review board should represent the diversity of places throughout the region to ensure strong representation from rural, suburban, and urban communities. The review board will recommend a list of applications for consideration that will then be taken to the SACOG Board for final approval.

Project Rubric

The EEI Review Board will score eligible applications using the EEI rubric. Along with the rubric, it is an important aspect for EEI to have geographic diversity. We would like to see this program implemented across the six-counties and while the geography of an application will not be scored, the review board will be asked to consider geographic diversity of where projects are being awarded.

Reporting Requirements

The items below should be planned and budgeted for in an applicant's scope of work:

Required Deliverables

- **Final Product Deliverable** (varies by applicant): the final product identified in an applicant's scope of work (e.g. community needs assessment, policy toolkit, etc.)
- **Project Closeout Report:** documentation of the included engagement strategies (e.g. focus groups, meetings, surveys summaries, etc.)
- **Evaluation Metrics:** Specific details of how an effort will be measured, including but not limited to pre- and post- engagement assessments and levels of participation.
- **Community Documentation of Needs and Opportunities:** community engagement findings, potential next steps to address findings, and regional opportunities that can be leveraged to further identified next steps.
- **Best Practices & Lessons Learned:** documentation of strategies and activities that worked well, that did not work well, and why.
- **Local Government Support (1):** Post-project presentation to the respective City Council or Board of Supervisors sharing out lessons learned, project concepts, and other relevant information collected.
- **Local Government Support (2):** A letter of intent from the local government describing the commitment to seeing through the implementation of the efforts / ideas / plans that came from the engagement effort funded through EEI.

Additional Deliverables

The following items may be asked of applicants to continue to share lessons learned, highlight stories and evaluate EEI impact.

- Presentations to SACOG Committees and/or Board of Directors: up to 4 presentations
- Process Interviews / Narratives: documentation of if / how the EEI process had an impact on community trust and relationship building (visual, narrative, social media, etc.)
- Communication Materials: infographics, final reports, etc. that can be shared on the SACOG website and social media platforms

Grant Administration

The following section outlines some key features for the grant administration:

- Applicants will have two years to implement and exhaust the awarded funds following programming of funds.
 - If a project is seeing challenges to close out the effort within two years, the lead applicant must notify SACOG in writing six-months in advance.
 - SACOG staff will make all efforts to help grantees ensure the funds can be spent within two years of award. SACOG encourages applicants to reach out to SACOG staff early if projects may experience delays to discuss solutions, including potential for extensions on a case-by-case basis.
- For partnership grants, the lead city / county / tribal government / or other government entity will act as the fiscal agent and enter a three-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SACOG and the partner CBO. The MOU will identify each party's roles and responsibilities.
- CBOs (independent and partnered) can receive an advance direct payment from SACOG for up to \$25,000. Remaining costs will be billed directly to the awarded applicant (city or county) as reimbursements, based on tasks in the scope of work. Reimbursements should be billed on the agreed-upon schedule between the city or county and the CBO.
- For federal money, agencies will submit their request for authorization paperwork before January 31, 2025, as feasible. If more time is needed, SACOG will assist.
- For cities/counties already receiving federal money, SACOG can work to consolidate federal funds if possible, with a city or county lead agency.

Disbursement of Funds

After review and selection of awardees, selected recipients will receive funds as follows based on federal aid eligibility and if they are an independent applicant or in a partnership. For federal aid eligible partnerships, the lead agency, CBO, and SACOG, or individual tribal governments, will need to enter a federal contract to receive the federal funds. The federal funds will then be programmed directly to the lead agency. The lead agency, CBO, and SACOG will also enter into an MOU that states roles and responsibilities and an agreement to provide a payment from SACOG to the CBO directly for up to \$25,000 in advance funds if waiting for federal reimbursement would be a burden for the CBO partner. For the federal awards, the grantee will follow reimbursement processes directly with Caltrans by submitting monthly to quarterly requests. For non-federal eligible and independent applications, the grantee will enter a direct contract/MOU with SACOG.

If you anticipate wanting to use the upfront payment of up to \$25,000 from SACOG, please also fill out the Advance Funding Request.