

Evaluation Criteria for Providing Benefits To Priority Populations CAL FIRE FOREST HEALTH GRANTS



California Climate Investments 2018 Funding Guidelines Benefit Criteria Tables

Project Types: LAND RESTORATION & FOREST HEALTH LAND CONSERVATION



As part of California Climate Investments (CCI), a portion of CAL FIRE's Forest Health grants are required to meet minimum levels of investments in projects that benefit residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households, collectively referred to as "priority populations."

In order for a project to count toward these minimums it must be located within an identified community and benefit individuals living within that community, or directly benefit residents of low-income households anywhere in the State. In its evaluation of Forest Health applications, CAL FIRE will determine if a project meets the criteria for providing direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations using the following evaluation approach:

Step 1: Identify the Priority Population(s). Be located within a census tract identified as a disadvantaged community or low-income community, or directly benefit residents of a low-income household;

Step 2: Address a Need. Meaningfully address an important community or household need for the disadvantaged community, low-income community, or low-income household; and

Step 3: Provide a Benefit. Using the evaluation criteria, identify at least one direct, meaningful, and assured benefit that the project provides to priority populations. The benefit provided must directly address the identified need.

Only investments that meet these three criteria will be given full credit (10 points) for the Forest Health Grant Selection Criteria, "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit." CAL FIRE can and will fund projects that otherwise provide meaningful benefits, but do not meet these criteria; however, those projects will not be counted toward CCI investment minimums.

Attached are two criteria tables designed to enable applicants to make an objective "yes" or "no" decision about whether their proposed project provides a benefit to a priority population. The LAND RESTORATION & FOREST HEALTH table is to determine priority population benefit for land management treatment activities, while the LAND CONSERVATION table is to determine the benefit for acquisitions and conservation easements.

CAL FIRE refers to CARB's Funding Guidelines (www.arb.ca.gov/cci-fundingguidelines) for direction on how to use these criteria table in program design and implementation, project evaluation, project selection, and reporting.

Table 1 LAND RESTORATION & FOREST HEALTH: Projects will increase carbon storage through restoration and management of natural lands.

Projects must satisfy the applicable criteria through **Step 3** to be considered to provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and count toward CCI's statutory investment minimums. *Only those projects that satisfy all three Steps will be given full credit (10 points) for the Forest Health Grant Selection Criteria, "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit."*

Step 1 – Identify the Priority Population(s). Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria. Check all boxes that apply.

Note: For this project type, the majority of the project must be located within a disadvantaged or low-income community census tract. An online mapping tool and a “look-up” tool list of “low-income” thresholds by county and household size are available at:

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cci-communityinvestments>.

- A. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **disadvantaged community census tract**?
- B. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income community census tract**?
- C. Is the project located outside of a disadvantaged community, but **within ½-mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income community census tract**?
- D. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income household**?

*If a project does not meet at least one of the qualifying criteria in **Step 1**, the project does not meet the "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit," and no further evaluation is needed. If the project meets at least one **Step 1** criterion, continue the evaluation in **Step 2**.*

Step 2 – Address a Need. Identify an important community or household need and evaluate whether the project provides a benefit that meaningfully addresses that need.

To identify a need that the project will address, agencies and/or applicants can use a variety of approaches:

- A. **Recommended Approach:** Host community meetings, workshops, outreach efforts, or public meetings as part of the planning process to engage local residents and community groups for input on community or household needs, and document how the received input was considered in the design and/or selection of projects to address those needs;
- B. **Recommended Approach:** Receive documentation of support from local community-based organizations and/or residents (e.g., letters, emails) identifying a need that the project addresses and demonstrating that the project has broad community support;

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Table 1 Cont'd: LAND RESTORATION & FOREST HEALTH
<p>Step 2 – Address a Need (continued). <i>Identify an important community or household need and evaluate whether the project provides a benefit that meaningfully addresses that need.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> C. Alternative Approach: Where direct engagement is infeasible, look at the individual factors in CalEnviroScreen 3.0 that are most impacting an identified disadvantaged or low-income community (i.e., factors that score above the 75th percentile), and confirm that the project will reduce the impacts of at least one of those factors; or <input type="checkbox"/> D. Alternative Approach: Where direct engagement is infeasible, refer to the list of needs for priority populations in CARB’s Funding Guidelines Table 5 (see attached) and confirm that the project addresses at least one listed need.
<p>Describe identified community or household need(s):</p>
<p><i>If the project addresses a community or household need as described in Step 2, proceed to Step 3. If the project does not address a community or household need, it will not meet the "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit," and no further evaluation is needed.</i></p>
<p>Step 3 – Provide a Benefit. <i>Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria to determine if it provides direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations. The benefit provided must directly address the identified need.</i></p>
<p>Project must meet at least one of the following benefit criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A. Project restores a site that allows public access; <input type="checkbox"/> B. Project significantly reduces flood risk to households within one or more disadvantaged or low-income communities; <input type="checkbox"/> C. Project significantly reduces fire risk to households within one or more disadvantaged or low-income communities; <input type="checkbox"/> D. Project provides regular and ongoing educational opportunities through partnerships with schools or non-profit organizations located in disadvantaged or low-income communities and site access to residents of these communities.
<p><i>If the project meets the criteria in Steps 1, 2, and 3, it will be considered as providing direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and will be given full credit (10 points) for the Forest Health Grant Selection Criteria, "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit."</i></p>

Table 2 LAND CONSERVATION: Projects will protect natural and working lands from GHG-intensive development or conversion through acquisition of an agricultural land conservation easement, forest conservation easement or other protective measures such as a change to zoning ordinances, adoption of an urban limit line or agricultural greenbelt.

Projects must satisfy the applicable criteria through **Step 3** to be considered to provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and count toward CCI statutory investment minimums. *Only those projects that satisfy all three Steps will be given full credit (10 points) for the Forest Health Grant Selection Criteria, "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit."*

Step 1 – Identify the Priority Population(s). Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria. Check all boxes that apply.

Note: For this project type, the majority of the project must be located within a disadvantaged or low-income community census tract. An online mapping tool and a “look-up” tool list of “low-income” thresholds by county and household size are available at:

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cci-communityinvestments>.

- A. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **disadvantaged community census tract**?
- B. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income community census tract**?
- C. Is the project located outside of a disadvantaged community, but **within ½-mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income community census tract**?
- D. Is the project located within the boundaries of a **low-income household**?

*If a project does not meet at least one of the qualifying criteria in **Step 1**, the project does not meet the "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit," and no further evaluation is needed. If the project meets at least one **Step 1** criterion, continue the evaluation in **Step 2**.*

Step 2 – Address a Need. Identify an important community or household need and evaluate whether the project provides a benefit that meaningfully addresses that need.

To identify a need that the project will address, agencies and/or applicants can use a variety of approaches:

- A. **Recommended Approach:** Host community meetings, workshops, outreach efforts, or public meetings as part of the planning process to engage local residents and community groups for input on community or household needs, and document how the received input was considered in the design and/or selection of projects to address those needs;
- B. **Recommended Approach:** Receive documentation of support from local community-based organizations and/or residents (e.g., letters, emails) identifying a need that the project addresses and demonstrating that the project has broad community support;

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Table 2 Cont'd: LAND CONSERVATION

Step 2 – Address a Need (continued). *Identify an important community or household need and evaluate whether the project provides a benefit that meaningfully addresses that need.*

- C. **Alternative Approach:** Where direct engagement is infeasible, look at the individual factors in [CalEnviroScreen 3.0](#) that are most impacting an identified disadvantaged or low-income community (i.e., factors that score above the 75th percentile), and confirm that the project will reduce the impacts of at least one of those factors; or
- D. **Alternative Approach:** Where direct engagement is infeasible, refer to the list of common needs for priority populations in [CARB's Funding Guidelines](#) Table 5 (attached) and confirm that the project addresses at least one listed need.

Describe identified community or household need(s):

*If the project addresses a community or household need as described in **Step 2**, proceed to **Step 3**. If the project does not address a community or household need, it does not meet the "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit," and no further evaluation is needed.*

Step 3 – Provide a Benefit. *Evaluate the project against each of the following criteria to determine if it provides direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations. The benefit provided must directly address the identified need.*

Project must meet at least one of the following benefit criteria:

- A. Project preserves a site that allows public access;
- B. Project significantly reduces flood risk to households within one or more disadvantaged or low-income communities;
- C. Project maintains water quality and health of watersheds serving priority populations through avoiding the conversion of forest lands or wetlands that would have resulted in impacts to nearby water bodies located in the same or a directly adjacent disadvantaged or low-income community as the project;
- D. Project increases food access to priority populations through regular farmers markets, donations to food banks or distribution centers serving residents of disadvantaged or low-income communities, or low-income households;
- E. Project provides regular and ongoing educational opportunities through partnerships with schools or non-profit organizations located in disadvantaged or low-income communities and site access to residents of these communities.

*If the project meets the criteria in **Steps 1, 2, and 3**, it will be considered as providing direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations and will be given full credit (10 points) for the Forest Health Grant Selection Criteria, "Disadvantaged and/or Low Income Community Benefit."*

**California Air Resources Board (CARB)
2018 Funding Guidelines**

Table 5. Examples of Common Needs of Priority Populations

Public Health
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce health harms (e.g., asthma) suffered disproportionately by priority populations due to air pollutants. 2. Reduce health harms (e.g., obesity) suffered disproportionately by priority populations due to the built environment (e.g., provide active transportation, parks, playgrounds). 3. Increase community safety. 4. Reduce heat-related illnesses and increase thermal comfort (e.g., weatherization and solar energy can provide more efficient and affordable air-conditioning; urban forestry can reduce heat-island effect). 5. Increase access to parks, greenways, open space, and other community assets.
Economic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create quality jobs and increase family income (e.g., targeted hiring for living-wage jobs that provide access to health insurance and retirement benefits with long-term job retention, using project labor agreements with targeted hire commitments, community benefit agreements, community workforce agreements, partnerships with community-based workforce development and job training entities, State-certified community conservation corps). 2. Increase job readiness and career opportunities (e.g., workforce development programs, on-the-job training, industry-recognized certifications). 3. Revitalize local economies (e.g., increased use of local businesses) and support California-based small businesses. 4. Reduce housing costs (e.g., affordable housing). 5. Reduce transportation costs (e.g., free or reduced cost transit passes) and improve access to public transportation (e.g., new services in under-served communities). 6. Reduce energy costs for residents (e.g., weatherization, solar). 7. Improve transit service levels and reliability on systems/routes that have high use by disadvantaged and/or low-income community residents or low-income riders. 8. Bring jobs and housing closer together (e.g., affordable housing in transit-oriented development and in healthy, high-opportunity neighborhoods). 9. Preserve community stability and maintain housing affordability for low-income households (e.g., prioritize projects in jurisdictions with anti-displacement policies). 10. Provide educational and community capacity building opportunities through community engagement and leadership.
Environmental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce exposure to local environmental contaminants, such as toxic air contaminants, criteria air pollutants, and drinking water contaminants (e.g., provide a buffer between bike/walk paths and transportation corridors). 2. Prioritize zero-emission vehicle projects for areas with high diesel air pollution, especially around schools or other sensitive populations with near-roadway exposure. 3. Reduce exposure to pesticides in communities near agricultural operations. 4. Greening communities through restoring local ecosystems and planting of native species, improving aesthetics of the landscape, and/or increasing public access for recreation.