

Regional Climate Project Working Group

Grant: Urban Sustainability Directors Network
(USDN)

Advancing Equitable, Shared Governance for Monterey Bay Regional
Climate Investment Decision-Making



Monterey Bay Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG)

Climate change is a priority issue for organizations across the Monterey Bay Area Region. A focused and organized approach to accessing historic State and federal funding and resources is required to bring the region together to collectively achieve equitable and resilient outcomes. Access to large scale transformative grant opportunities has the potential to accelerate implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects and programs across the three county region.

Monterey Bay Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG)

- Charter Members: Counties of San Benito, Monterey and Santa Cruz & the Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville

RCPWG Mission:

To collaborate among groups and organizations in the Monterey Bay Area region, including Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties, to develop, prioritize, secure funding for, and effectively and equitably advocate for and implement regionally beneficial climate mitigation and adaptation projects and programs.

Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Planning Grant

The RCPWG has been awarded a USDN planning grant to increase equitable engagement in the RCPWG and to bring frontline and disadvantaged community members to the table to have a voice in how planning for climate change can shape our communities in the coming decades.

Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Planning Grant

- \$15,000
- Lead Applicant (Lead Community): City of Santa Cruz
- Primary Participants: City of Watsonville, County of Monterey
- Other Project Participants: Regeneracion, Ecology Action, Farallon Strategies
- To complete this project, staff and elected officials from the RCPWG jurisdictions and up to 8 Environmental Justice group representatives will each contribute 10 hours of time over the project's duration preparing for and participating in 3 virtual workshops and 1 elected body meeting

Project Objectives

1. Develop best practice guidance for equitable decision-making and the inclusion of environmental justice groups (EJ) in climate action planning
2. Secure funding for the RCPWG's continued work over the next three years
3. Build trust with EJ groups by cultivating elected representative “champions” for environmental justice issues.

What is an environmental justice “champion”?

The role of an elected environmental champion will be to:

- Be familiar with the RCPWG’s potential for impact and to support its work
- Understand the needs of EJ groups and the importance of including EJ groups in decision making for climate planning and investments
- Advocate for the climate action opportunities that center equity in their official capacity

Potential Environmental Justice Groups

- Community Bridges, Community Action Board, Regeneración, Central Coast Energy Services, MILPA, Mujeres en Acción, and the Center for Community Advocacy.
- EJ Groups will be compensated for their participation.

Monterey Bay Area Climate Justice Collaborative

- Mission
 - Center the voices of those most impacted by climate change in decision-making and ground partnerships in Indigenous learning and protocol so we can achieve better equity and climate outcomes for all and increase investment in under-resourced communities.
- Developing membership includes organizations such as:
 - CBOs: Center for Community Advocacy, MILPA Collective,
 - Public Agencies: City of Watsonville, City of Santa Cruz,
 - Environmental Groups: Let's Green CA, Watsonville Wetlands Watch
- RCPWG USDN Grant & MBACJC have similar goals to increase engagement

Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Planning Grant Next Steps

- Board of Supervisor member participation:
 - Virtual Workshop 1: February 15, 2024 from 2:00pm to 3:30pm
 - Virtual Workshop 2: April 4, 2024 from 10:30am to 12:00pm
 - Virtual Workshop 3: May 6, 2024 from 1:30pm to 3:00pm

Staff to return between June 2024 and August 2024 to present final report and resolution to the Board to support RCPWG's continued work

Questions?