

County of Monterey



COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE INTERGOVERNMENTAL & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION

Date: December 8, 2025

To: Legislative Committee

From: Nicole Hollingsworth, Legislative Program Manager

Re: 2026 Legislative and Grant Program Development

RECOMMENDATION

Receive reports, provide direction, and recommend that the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopt the 2026 Legislative Platform, 2026 Strategic Grant Services Program, State Budget Request, Federal Community Project Funding Requests, and 2026 Legislative Workshop Agenda.

BACKGROUND

At the last Legislative Committee (Committee) meeting on November 10, 2025, the Committee provided direction on legislative and funding priorities to be included in the 2026 Legislative Platform and 2026 Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan. The Committee also provided direction on the County's State Budget request(s) and federal Community Project Funding request(s) for 2026 – in the event they are solicited. The Committee also provided direction on priority legislative and funding items to be included on the agenda for the 2026 Legislative Workshop (February 13, 2026).

2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Working with County departments and the County's legislative and funding advocates (Ashley Walker with Nossaman LLP, and Katlyn Koegel and Maria Tripplaar with Ballard Spahr LLP), changes were made to the Legislative Platform document. The changes were made to bring the document up to date, expand on areas where additional legislative advocacy is needed, and to better organize the document for ease of reading.

Protecting Monterey County Values—Legislative Platform:

1. Protecting Monterey County Values – aimed at protecting the values that define our community, fundamental freedoms and rights, immigrants, public health, data privacy, etc. was developed extensively in early 2025. Therefore, no changes have been proposed for 2026.

Legislative Program Changes:

Updates have been made throughout the Legislative Program. What follows is a description of some major changes:

- 2026 legislative priorities for CSAC, RCRC, and NACo are not yet available, so were not included. If available before this item goes to the Board for approval in January, they will be added or referenced.
- San Lucas Clean Drinking Water project successfully obtained funding last year, but not enough for full project costs. This project has been updated to reflect ongoing needs.
- Scenic Road Protective Structure Project was added to the project priority list.

- California Proposition 4, new parks funding, was added to the legislative program. Supervisors identified areas for new parks to include San Ardo, Chualar, and additional facilities in Castroville.
- Porter-Vallejo Library and Mansion Historical Restoration Project was added to the project priority list.
- Under "Agriculture," data and statistics were updated to reflect 2025 data.
- Under "Libraries," language was added regarding "libraries as a cultural hub" and updated to reflect pending state policy updates.
- Under "Resilient and Sustainable Communities," language was updated to reflect stronger advocacy for wildfire protections.
- Under "Health and Human Services," language was added to advocate for "rural hospitals."
- Under "homelessness services," data and statistics were updated.

With the Committee's recommendation, the Legislative Platform will go to the Board for approval in January. A clean (**EXHIBIT A**) and a redline (**EXHIBIT B**) version of the 2026 Legislative Program are attached to this report.

DIRECTION ON POTENTIAL STATE BUDGET REQUEST(S)

At the November 10, 2025, Legislative Committee meeting, the Committee provided direction on recommended projects to submit if the County is allowed to submit State Budget requests in 2026. Due to the projected State Budget deficit, it's currently unknown if the County will be able to submit State Budget requests, and if so, these requests are likely to be very limited. The projects recommended, in order of priority, were:

1. **San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project - \$TBD**

This project would secure funding for a long-term project that provides a reliable source of safe, clean drinking water to the small, disadvantaged community of San Lucas.

2. **Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs Safety Projects - \$3M**

This project would provide flood management, water supply, groundwater recharge, fish habitat, recreation, and other benefits relating to the Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs, in compliance with federal and state "Safety of Dams" mandates. The exact scope of the discrete project is still being determined by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, as well as the related federal funding request amount.

With the Committee's recommendation, the potential State Budget requests will go to the Board for approval in January 2026. Notably, the Scenic Road Protective Structure Project will be added to this list should the project not be applicable for Proposition 4 funding.

DIRECTION ON POTENTIAL FEDERAL COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST(S)

At the November 10, 2025, Legislative Committee meeting, the Committee provided direction on recommended projects to submit if the County is allowed to submit Federal Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in 2026, for FY 27. Due to recent changes in the Administration, House and Senate, it is uncertain whether the County will be invited to submit CPF requests in 2026, and if so, those opportunities are likely to be more limited than in past years. The County was able to submit a limited number of requests for FY 26, and those applications are still in flux. The County should be prepared to pursue these opportunities if/when they become available. Frequently, the County is given very little notice to prepare

CPF requests for submission, so staff seek the Committee's recommendation and Board's approval to work on and submit the projects identified, and ranked, in advance of the invitation for submission.

The projects recommended, in order of priority, were:

1. San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project - \$TBD

This project would secure funding for a long-term project that provides a reliable source of safe, clean drinking water to the small, disadvantaged community of San Lucas.

- The project is located in Congressional District 18

2. Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs Safety Projects - \$TBD

This project would provide flood management, water supply, groundwater recharge, fish habitat, recreation, and other benefits relating to the Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs, in compliance with federal and state "Safety of Dams" mandates. The exact scope of the discrete project is still being determined by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency as well as the related federal funding request amount.

- The projects are located in Congressional District 18

3. Nacimiento Lake Drive Repaving Project - \$2.1 million

This project proposes to repave approximately 2 miles of Nacimiento Lake Drive, the only land access route to Nacimiento Lake Resort for both emergency responders and recreational users, and the primary route to and from Paso Robles for local residents.

- The project is located in Congressional District 19 and regularly serves constituents from Congressional Districts 18 and 24.

4. Reclamation Ditch Restoration \$500,000

This project would fund restoration efforts for the "Reclamation Ditch," which is a series of channels and water-management infrastructure. The primary objective of the Reclamation Ditch is to protect life and property and to reduce the suffering that could be caused by storm events. In addition, it receives irrigation return water from adjacent farmlands and provides drainage service to an area of approximately 168 square miles.

- The Reclamation Ditch is located in Congressional Districts 18 and 19

5. Scenic Road Protective Structure Project -\$1.5 million

The Scenic Road Protective Structure Project is a coastal flood protection project for the Carmel Lagoon area, designed to protect Scenic Road from wave erosion and "northerly breach" of the lagoon. The project would also limit threats of flooding in nearby neighborhoods. The structure will be built at the toe of the sand slope along the road. The County of Monterey has approved the project's environmental review and is now seeking funding for the design, permitting, and construction phases.

6. Salinas Regional Soccer Complex - \$TBD

This multi-phased project would continue the significant expansion of the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, which is committed to fostering positive youth development and promoting health and wellness, and will provide equitable access to safe, family-friendly outdoor facilities and programming. The specific elements of this project for which federal funding would be requested is currently being finalized but may include stadium seating for 2,500; bathroom facilities; scoreboard; and, the remaining required underground infrastructure, including all utilities.

- The project is located in Congressional District 18.

7. Salinas Skate Park and BMX Pump Track - \$500,000

The project would construct a new 22,250 square foot regional Bike and Skate Park serving Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties. Located in densely populated East Salinas, the site will be linked by several multi-use trails connecting the project to some of the most underserved neighborhoods and schools. The construction of the track will benefit the surrounding recreational features at the campus (Veterans Memorial Park, Carr Lake, Natividad Creek Park, Twin Creeks Golf Course/ First Tee, and the Salinas Soccer Complex).

- The project is located in Congressional District 18.

| Project/Issue | Federal CPF Request |
|--|---------------------|
| San Lucas Clean Drinking Water | 1 |
| Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams/Reservoirs Safety Projects | 2 |
| Nacimiento Lake Drive Repaving Project | 3 |
| Reclamation Ditch Restoration | 4 |
| Scenic Road Protective Structure Project | 5 |
| Salinas Regional Soccer Complex | 6 |
| Skate and Bike Park | 7 |

With the Committee's recommendation, the potential Community Project Funding (CPF) requests will go to the Board of Supervisors for approval in January 2026.

2026 STRATEGIC GRANT SERVICES PROGRAM

At the November 10, 2025, meeting of the Legislative Committee, the Committee provided direction on projects to include in the 2026 Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan. The Work Plan identifies a small number of projects and potential funding areas that the County's grant funding specialists (Ashley Walker with Nossaman LLP) would work with the County to develop in 2026. The Work Plan maintains flexibility so that efforts can shift when new grant funding opportunities arise.

Work Plan: Recommended projects, include:

- San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project
- Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs Safety Projects

- County Park Facilities – including but not limited to the Skate and Bike Park, Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, new parks via Proposition 4 in Chualar, San Ardo, and additional facilities in Castroville
- Water Sustainability and Drought Related Projects
- Road, Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements – including the new addition of the Nacimiento Lake Drive Repaving Project
- Carmel Lagoon Adaptive Management
- Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
- Broadway Family Connection Project

Grant Needs Inventory: The program also includes a Grant Needs Inventory, a list of unfunded County projects which need funding. The inventory includes all unfunded projects in the [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) Online Database](#) and a list of other projects that have not been added to that database. The inventory guides the research of staff and grant consultants in identifying funding opportunities for departments. *This list is continually updated.*

With the Committee's recommendation, the Strategic Grant Services Program will go to the Board for approval in January 2026.. The complete 2026 Strategic Grant Services Program is attached to this report. (EXHIBIT C)

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP

Background: For the past seven years the Board has hosted an annual Legislative Workshop with the County's state and federal legislative representatives. The Legislative Workshop is a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the County's state and federal legislative delegation to discuss the County's priority issues for 2026.

Legislative Workshop – Friday, February 13, 2026: The 2026 Legislative Workshop is scheduled on Friday, February 13, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. In the past, the meeting has been conducted both in person at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers (Monterey County Government Center, 168 W. Alisal St., Salinas, CA) and via Zoom.

Participants: Legislative Workshop participants will include the members of the Board, appropriate County department heads to make the County presentations, and the elected officials and/or their staff representatives. A "save the date" email was sent to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator Adam Schiff, Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, Senator John Laird, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, and Assemblymember Dawn Addis in November.

County Priority Presentations: Staff will work with County departments to develop workshop presentations on County priority issues. Staff and the County's state and federal legislative and funding advocates recommend that the County focus on a limited number of topics due to time constraints – with the recommended County presentations aligning with the County's 2026 Policy Priorities as outlined in the 2026 Legislative Platform:

1. Protecting Monterey County Values
2. San Lucas Water Supply Project
3. Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs Safety Projects
4. Other County safety projects (such as Nacimiento Road, etc.)
5. Healthcare related concerns

Agenda: In the past the Legislative Workshop has followed the following format:

Welcome and Introductions (Board Chair)

1. Review of Agenda and Objectives (Legislative Committee Chair)
2. State of the County (County Administrative Officer)
3. County of Monterey 2026 Policy Priorities (County Staff)
4. Remarks by State and Federal Legislators (3 minutes each)
5. Remarks by County of Monterey Board of Supervisors (3 minutes each)
6. Roundtable Discussion
7. Public Comment on Agenda Items
8. Board Direction to Staff

Adjournment

With the Committee's recommendation, the Legislative Workshop Agenda will go to the Board for approval in January 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

- Exhibit A – 2025-26 Legislative Platform – DRAFT clean
- Exhibit B – 2025-26 Legislative Platform – DRAFT redline
- Exhibit C – 2026 Strategic Grant Services Program