

 **NOSSAMAN** LLP | Memorandum

TO: Monterey County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Ashley S. Walker, Senior Policy Advisor

RE: Strategic Grant Services Program: 2024 Annual Report

DATE: January 28, 2025

I. Introduction

The Strategic Grants Services Program (SGSP) was created by the Board of Supervisors in recognition of the need to concentrate funding efforts on the County's highest priority needs and projects. Nossaman began working with County's CAO-Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division (IGLA) in September 2014 on the new program to enhance the County's success at securing grant funding. Nossaman works in close collaboration with the IGLA office to align our efforts with the County's Legislative Program.

Projects that Nossaman has/or will work on is based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the Board's Strategic Initiatives & Milestones.
- Alignment with the Board's Legislative Priorities.
- Need for support from the County Department overseeing the project.
- Availability of grant funding.
- Ability to meet grant requirements.
- Grant matching fund requirements.
- Analysis of the ability to develop a competitive grant application.

Nossaman engages on a regular basis with County Departments to provide feedback and suggest strategies regarding funding needs for priority projects. Often times this preparation work sets up projects for future funding opportunities, such as upcoming bond programs.

II. Summary of Accomplishments in 2024

The SGSP has been a very successful partnership between the County and Nossaman over the years. A summary of our accomplishments in 2024 include:

- **Total Grant and Funding Secured since September 2014:** Worked with County Departments to secure a total of **\$70,117,446** for high priority projects.
- **Total Pending Grant and State Funding in 2024:** Worked with County Departments to submit and/or gather support for pending grant applications totaling **\$85,352,270.**
- **Grant Applications Submitted:** Assisted various county departments with the submission of 3 grant applications.
- **Alerts:** Nossaman and the IGLA office alerted varies county department of varies funding opportunities on 58 occasions, that may be of interest to those departments and nonprofit

partners on topics such as homelessness, water, climate adaptation, public health, affordable housing, parks, and public safety.

- **Grant Application Support Letters:** Coordinated securing 9 grant application support letters for various projects benefiting the County.
- **Funding Needs:** Consulted with all department heads and Supervisors to collect updated information on critical unfunded projects within the County.
- **Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan:** Under the guidance of the Board's Legislative Committee and in collaboration with departments, developed a work plan for calendar year 2024.

III. Strategic Advice and Funding Related Assistance Provided on Projects

Nossaman regularly assists with on-going County projects in need of funding and provides research on grant opportunities at the request of Supervisors and/or Department heads. These efforts don't necessarily result in the immediate submission of a grant application, but rather lay the groundwork for future funding opportunities. Below is an outline of the projects we worked on in 2024.

- **County Department Meetings:** Nossaman sent out several potential funding opportunities to many County Departments. Nossaman focused on grants that had little-to-no matching requirement, and that pair well with projects on the grants need inventory. Additionally, Nossaman met with several Departments to discuss priority projects in need of funding, and potential grant programs that may be a good fit to pursue.
- **San Lucas Drinking Water Project:** Nossaman submitted this project to the County's entire Legislative Delegation should there be an opportunity for a "member request" process in the state budget, but there was not. Additionally, we evaluated and identified Proposition 4 funding programs that would be a good fit for this project.
- **Round 5 Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Implementation Grant:** The County considered applying for Round 5 TCC Implementation grant, which had award amounts of around \$30 million. Nossaman offered assistance with the application process.
- **Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program:** The County and Nossaman evaluated if this grant program would be good fit to support the County's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) & Pajaro Revitalization work. Nossaman offered assistance should the County decide to apply.
- **Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project (CRFREE):** The County needed an extension on grant secured through the Department of Water Resources Coastal Watershed Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program. We worked with the County's HCD Department to identify what steps need to be taken to extend the grant agreement and retain the funding for this project.
- **RAISE Grant Proposal for Davis Road Widening and Bridge Replacement Project:** The U.S. Department of Transportation announced \$1.5 billion in grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for

2024. The program helps communities around the country carry out projects with significant local or regional impact. RAISE discretionary grants help fund complete critical transportation infrastructure projects. The County submitted a grant application for \$24.5 million to construct the Davis Road Bridge Replacement and Road Widening Project (Project). The Project will transform this vital regional route connecting Monterey County's two largest population centers (the City of Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula) into a high quality, efficient, resilient, and safer multi-modal corridor. Nossaman reviewed the application and provided suggestions to strengthen the application. Nossaman also secured letters of support for the application from Speaker Rivas and Senator Caballero.

- **Department of Transportation's Rural Surface Transportation Grant program - Davis Road Widening and Bridge Replacement Project:** The Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks submitted a proposal for the Department of Transportation's Rural Surface Transportation Grant program (Rural) for the Davis Road Widening and Bridge Replacement Project improving South Davis Road from Reservation Road to Blanco Road. Nossaman helped secured letters of support for the application from Speaker Rivas and Senator Caballero.
- **Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Program:** PWWP applied for just over \$11 million in funding through the NSFLTP program for the Palo Colorado Storm Damage Repair Project. Nossaman reviewed the application and providing suggestions and comments to enhance the competitiveness of the application.
- **Dam Safety Grant Program:** The Water Resources Agency submitted a grant application to request funding from the Dam Safety Grant Program on October 21, 2024. The Agency's proposal is to make improvements to the low-level outlet works at San Antonio Dam to complement its ongoing efforts to replace the dam spillway, as mandated by the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams. Nossaman secured letters of support from Senator Laird and requested one from Speaker Rivas for the pending application.
- **Proposition 4:** Proposition 4 - Authorizes Bonds for Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, and Protecting Communities and Natural Lands from Climate Risks, was approved by the voters in November. Nossaman has evaluated the funding opportunities in the Bond that the County could potentially benefit from and has provided that in a separate memo. In summary, those funding opportunities include:
 - **Safe Drinking Water, Drought, Flood, and Water Resilience (\$3.8 billion)**
 - \$1.9 billion for increasing water availability and quality, including storage and purification.
 - \$1.1 billion for flood risk mitigation via dam repairs and stormwater reuse.
 - \$800 million for river and lake restoration.
 - **Wildfire and Forest Resilience (\$1.5 billion)**
 - Tree thinning, vegetation clearing, and wildfire risk reduction near communities.
 - Home-hardening initiatives to prevent damage from wildfires.
 - Wildfire mitigation grants.
 - **Coastal Resilience and Sea-Level Rise Mitigation (\$1.2 billion)**
 - \$890 million for restoring wetlands and coastal areas to buffer sea-level rise.
 - \$310 million for improving marine habitats and protecting wildlife.
 - **Land Conservation and Habitat Restoration (\$1.2 billion)**

- Focus on protecting and restoring natural areas, including land acquisition for conservation.
- **Parks and Recreational Access (\$700 million)**
 - \$300 million for park trail expansions and climate resilience improvements.
 - \$200 million for new or renovated local parks.
 - \$200 million for repairing state parks and promoting environmental education.

IV. Upcoming Grant Opportunities in 2025

There are several upcoming grant opportunities we have identified that align with County priorities and projects. Some of these programs are outlined in our SGSP 2024 Work Plan. Examples of upcoming opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- **Active Transportation Program (ATP):** Bike and pedestrian improvements, connectivity improvements.
- **Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC):** Affordable housing related infrastructure, sustainable transportation infrastructure.
- **CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention and Forest Health Grants:** Wildfire Prevention Grants Program seeks to award local projects in and near fire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Forest Health Grant Program will award funding for landscape scale forest restoration projects that restore forest resilience to catastrophic disturbance.
- **California Clean Water State Revolving Fund:** Projects that address violations of waste discharge requirements or National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, and projects that connect previously unsewered areas or join communities to regionalize wastewater treatment. To encourage the regionalization of wastewater service, receiving systems may be eligible for a maximum of \$10 million in 0% interest rate financing per consolidated community/wastewater system for planning or construction of an Incentive Project.
- **California Drinking Water State Revolving Fund:** Assists public water systems in financing the cost of drinking water infrastructure projects needed to achieve or maintain compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requirements.
- **Dam Safety and Enhancements Program:** The Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program (DSCR) provides State funding for repairs, rehabilitation, enhancements, and other dam safety projects at existing State jurisdictional dams and associated facilities.
- **Habitat Conservation Fund:** Eligible projects include nature interpretation programs to bring urban residents into park and wildlife areas, protection of various plant and animal species, and acquisition and development of wildlife corridors and trails.
- **Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant:** This opportunity provides funding for communities to implement mitigation activities to reduce risk to life and property from natural hazards. In CA, natural hazards include wildfire, earthquake, drought, extreme weather, flooding, and other impacts of climate change. HMGP funding can also support the development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP) and project scoping activities.

- **Local Housing Trust Fund:** Provides matching funds for entities that set aside funding in a trust fund for affordable housing.
- **Outdoor Equity Grant Program:** OEP will increase the ability of residents in low-income communities to participate in outdoor experiences at state parks and other public lands by funding program operation and transportation costs. OEP encourages applicants to establish a home base in an underserved community as the hub for local activities and trips to natural areas. OEP empowers youth and families through outdoor leadership education, career pathways, and access to nature.
- **Proposition 4:** Authorizes \$10 billion in Bonds for Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, and Protecting Communities and Natural Lands from Climate Risks.
- **Strategic Partnerships Transit:** Strategic Partnerships Grants are available on an annual basis and through a competitive application process. Grants are for multimodal transportation planning activities such as planning for regional and interregional public transit.
- **Tire-Derived Aggregate Grant Program:** This competitive tire grant program provides opportunities to divert waste tires from landfills, prevent illegal tire dumping, and promote markets for recycled-content tire products.