

County of Monterey



COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE INTERGOVERNMENTAL & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION

Date: November 15, 2024
To: Legislative Committee
From: Annette D'Adamo, Legislative Coordinator (MAIII)
Re: 2025 Legislative and Grant Program Development

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report and provide direction on legislative and funding priorities to be included in the 2025 Legislative Platform and 2025 Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan.

IDENTIFICATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

Over the last few weeks, staff and the County's state and federal legislative and funding advocates have met with Board Members and County departments to identify legislative and funding priorities to recommend for 2025. This includes issues/projects that are in need of: 1) State legislative advocacy; 2) State Budget funding; 3) Federal legislative advocacy; 4) Federal Community Project Funding (CPF); and 5) Projects to include in the 2025 Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan.

A chart listing these priorities is included below, but in summary:

1. State Legislative Advocacy: One new state legislative proposal has been suggested related to the definition of "household" for employer sponsored housing.
2. State Budget: 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. Staff recommends priority be given to funding requests for the San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project, and if a second request is allowed requesting funding related to a dam safety project.
3. Federal Legislative Advocacy: Delete Farm Bill Reauthorization, otherwise no changes from 2024.
4. Federal CPF: Due to recent changes in the Administration and Senate, it is uncertain whether the County will be invited to submit CPF requests in 2025, and if so those opportunities are likely to be more limited than in past years. However, staff recommends that the County be prepared to pursue these potential funding opportunities if/when they become available. Frequently the County is given very little notice to prepare CPF requests for submission, so staff seeks the Legislative Committee's recommendation and Board's approval to work on and submit the projects identified in the table below, and ranked, in advance of the invitation for submission. Four new projects have been requested to be added to the list for consideration – two from County Parks and two from the Water Resources Agency.
5. 2025 Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan. The chart below also identifies the top grant opportunities the program will focus on in its Work Plan in 2025.

Annual Legislative Workshop: As a reminder, the legislative and funding issues identified in this list under the categories of State Legislative Advocacy, State Budget Requests, Federal Legislative Advocacy and Federal CPF Request, and approved by the Board, will be presented to the County’s state and federal legislative delegation at the Board’s annual Legislative Workshop (February 7, 2025).

Recommended 2025 legislative and funding priorities:

Project/Issue	State Legislative Advocacy	State Budget Request	Federal Legislative Advocacy	Federal CPF Request	2025 Grant Work Plan
San Lucas Clean Drinking Water	X	1	X	1	X
Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams/Reservoirs Safety Projects	X	2	X	2	X
FEMA Reimbursements	X		X		
NEW - Employer Sponsored Housing – RHNA definition of household	X				
Monterey County Veterans Home	X		X		
Immigration			X		
Skate and Bike Park				3	X
Salinas Regional Soccer Complex				4	X
NEW - Parks Outdoor Education & Environmental Stewardship Project				5	X
NEW - Parks Outdoor Accessible & Inclusive Fitness Project				6	X
NEW - Nacimiento Lake Drive Repaving Project				7	
NEW - Homeless Encampment Resolution – Reclamation Ditch Restoration				8	
Water Sustainability and Drought Related Projects					X
Road, Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements					X
County Parks Facilities/Habitat Management					X
Carmel Lagoon Adaptive Management					X
Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan					X
Broadway Family Connection Project					X

DISCRIPTIONS ON NEWLY PROPOSED ITEMS:

Legislative proposal: Employer Sponsored Housing – RHNA Definition of Households

This legislative proposal would seek to change the definition of “household” so that multiple individual workers who share housing are counted as individuals. This technical change would allow more housing to be counted as low and very-low income housing for RHNA purposes, and would potentially incentivize building of more of this type of housing.

County Parks Outdoor Education and Environmental Stewardship Project - \$200,000

Outdoor education and environmental stewardship are more important today than ever as our younger generations move to a more “online and connected” school and home environment. It is with this in mind that the County of Monterey Parks and Lakes Division is proposing a project that would provide a location and facility for schools, special programs and homeschool groups to engage with nature and provide a connection to our natural environments. This project would include a rehabilitation component of the Toro Regional Park Environmental Center which has been closed for over a decade, but which once provided environmental, cultural and nature-oriented education opportunities for our community. The Environmental Center is inside the original turn-of-the-century house from the Toro Ranch and needs electrical and plumbing upgrades to bring it into compliance with current building code. In addition, the cultural and biological displays which includes indigenous artifacts, relics, taxidermy animal mounts and hands-on interactive components, need repairs and modernization. The outdoor education portion of the project would take place at Toro, Jacks Peak and San Lorenzo County Parks and consist of constructing an open-air lodge-pole outdoor structure at each park with hard-surface tables, countertop and small sink for students to do lessons and get hands-on instruction.

County Parks Outdoor Accessible and Inclusive Fitness Project - \$200,000

It is a proven scientific fact that outdoor exercise is not only good for our bodies but also important for overall wellness and mental health, this was made even more apparent during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. It is so important to overall wellness that there is an international movement for doctors to prescribe outdoor and park experiences as part of a patient’s health plan. In considering this important aspect of human health and wellness, the County of Monterey Parks and Lakes Division is proposing a project that would not only aid the public in accessing outdoor fitness opportunities but also provide facilities for our underserved populations. Approximately 90% of visitors to Toro Regional Park in Salinas and San Lorenzo Park in King City are from Latino communities that are often underserved with regards to outdoor recreational facilities. While visitors engage in walking, hiking and biking in our County parks, other fitness opportunities do not exist or are difficult to access for socio-economic reasons. In addition, a sector of our communities are not able to fully participate in outdoor recreation due to accessibility shortfalls. This project would seek to provide outdoor fitness opportunities at Toro and San Lorenzo Parks and would include an accessible trail loop coupled with outdoor gym equipment and interpretive signage detailing healthy life topics such as diet, fitness, and mental health. The exercise equipment is gym quality, designed to be outdoors and would be able to be used by all ages of individuals from children to seniors. The course would provide an exercise opportunity for those without access to a gym due to accessibility or socio-economic factors.

Nacimiento Lake Drive Repaving Project - \$2.1 million

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 2 miles of Nacimiento Lake Drive, a public road, that travels over the Nacimiento Dam, in San Luis Obispo County. Nacimiento Lake Drive is the only land access route to Nacimiento Lake Resort for emergency responders and recreational users and serves as the primary route to and from Paso Robles

for local residents. The Agency recognizes the substantial benefits repaving would provide but is limited in its ability to fund the project with existing revenues that have been necessarily prioritized toward addressing current dam safety projects. The road is located in Congressional District 19 and regularly serves constituents from Districts 18 and 24; State Assembly District 30 and routinely serves constituents in District 29; and in State Senate District 17.

Homeless Encampment Resolution – Reclamation Ditch Restoration \$500,000

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) operates and maintains a series of channels and water management infrastructure in an area commonly referred to as the “Reclamation Ditch”. The Reclamation Ditch is generally situated in the northwestern portion of Monterey County and provides an outlet to the sea for three Gabilan Mountain streams and is the storm drain for a major portion of the City of Salinas. 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 presence of homeless encampments and, particularly, the accompanying debris and trash along the Reclamation Ditch waterways pose concerns related to public health, safety, and environmental hazards. The Agency has been collaborating with the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey to address these encampments, including through the past pursuit of public financial assistance. The Reclamation Ditch funding source is a flood assessment zone formed in 1967 known as “Zone 9”. Revenues from Zone 9 are insufficient to keep pace with the growing number of homeless encampments and resultant trash and debris. The Reclamation Ditch is located in Congressional Districts 18 and 19, State Assembly Districts 29 and 30, and State Senate District 17.

Items removed from priority list from 2024:

- Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project (CRFREE): The project is fully funded.
- Homeless Funding Formulas: Exhausted efforts to find more beneficial funding formula.
- Farm Bill Reauthorization: Expected to be concluded this year.
- Blight Removal at Fort Ord: Project submitted for CPF funding several times unsuccessfully.
- Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project: Project received CPF funding.
- Pajaro County Sanitation District Sewer Improvements: Project received CPF funding in FY23 and request for funding is pending for FY24.
- Broadway Family Connection Project/Casa de Noche Buena: Moved to Grant Work Plan, revisit for 2026.
- Old Monterey County Jail: Removed due to State Budget situation, revisit for 2026.

NEXT STEPS

December 2, 2024, Legislative Committee - Recommend 2025 Legislative Platform, State Budget requests, Federal CPF requests, 2025 Strategic Grant Services Program to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

January 28, 2025, Board of Supervisors - Adopt 2025 Legislative Platform and 2025 Strategic Grant Services Program, in the event the County is able to make submissions authorize work on identified State Budget requests and Federal CPF requests and approve the 2025 Legislative Workshop agenda.

February 7, 2025, Board of Supervisors - Annual Legislative Workshop - Special meeting of the Board of Supervisors with the County’s state and federal elected representatives to present the County’s legislative and funding priorities for 2025.