



Local Community Benefits Fund: Round 1 for Benicia and Surrounding Communities

Community Investments Office

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Background

About the Air District

- Formed in 1955
- Mission to improve air quality to protect public health, reduce historical and current environmental inequities, and mitigate climate change and its impacts
- Regulates stationary sources of air pollution in the 9-county Bay Area



Background

- The Air District collects penalties from entities that violate our air quality regulations
- In May 2024, the Bay Area Air District adopted the **Community Benefits Penalty Funds Policy** to direct resources back to the communities where violations occurred
- Some facilities also commit to providing mitigation funds to improve air quality in the communities affected by their violations
- The Air District has generated over **\$124 million** to date in penalty and mitigation funds to be reinvested into affected communities

Program Goals

- The Local Community Benefits Fund **reinvests in the specific communities affected by the air quality violations** that led to the penalty
 - Reduce air pollution or mitigate air pollution impacts, improve public health outcomes and build economic resilience for a just transition away from the harmful effects of a fossil-fuel-based economy
 - Advance integrated projects to holistically meet community needs
 - Strengthen community-led and collaborative solutions

Eligibility and Application Requirements

Eligible Communities



Eligible Applicants

Lead Applicants	Co-Applicants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, cities, counties, schools, unions and California Native American Tribes• <i>May submit one application each for a Catalyst, Opportunity and Seed Grant (if a non-profit organization)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entities that are eligible to be Lead Applicants, plus for-profit entities• <i>No limit on the number of applications a Co-Applicant may join</i>

Community Needs

- Projects must be driven by **community-identified needs, priorities, and solutions**, and should address an environmental justice, public health and/or just transition challenge(s)
- Applications must include **ongoing community engagement** to ensure that grant implementation continues to be informed by community feedback and expertise, particularly feedback from residents, community-based organizations, and other key stakeholders

Core Strategies

Reduce Air
Pollution and
Improve
Health
Outcomes

Build
Economic
Resilience for
a Just
Transition

Strategy: Reduce Air Pollution and Improve Health Outcomes

- **Mitigate air pollution harm, address health impacts** exacerbated by air pollution, and **identify opportunities for air pollution reduction**
- Eligible projects may:
 - Reduce air pollutant emissions
 - Reduce human exposure to air pollutant emissions
 - Improve understanding of local air quality impacts
 - Tangibly improve community health and well-being

Strategy: Build Economic Resilience for a Just Transition

- Build economic resilience that supports the **transition away from fossil fuels and delivers critical benefits, such as benefits in air quality, public health or a clean economy**
- Eligible projects may:
 - Promote high road economic development that ensures that high-quality local jobs benefitting the environment and public health are created
 - Build economic resilience through planning and projects that deliver air quality and related health benefits and create clean economy pathways

Grant Types & Available Funding

Benicia and Surrounding Communities: Available Funding

- In October 2024, the Air District, in conjunction with the California Air Resources Board, fined Valero Refining Company for air quality violations
- The Local Community Benefits Fund for Benicia and Surrounding Communities has **\$60,011,061** in available funding

Grant Awards

	Seed	Opportunity	Catalyst
Total Funding		\$60,011,061	
Anticipated Awards	1-5 grant awards anticipated	1-5 grant awards anticipated	1- 3 grant awards anticipated
Grant Size	\$100,000 - \$200,000	\$500,000 - \$5 million	\$10 - \$40 million
Grant Term	Up to 2 years	Up to 3 years	Up to 5 years
Eligible Applicants	Open to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, no Co-Applicants	Lead Applicant must partner with at least 1 Co-Applicant(s)	Exemption: no Co-Applicant required
Eligible Communities	Benicia and surrounding communities	Benicia and surrounding communities	Benicia

Seed Grant

- **Funds smaller-scale projects led by non-profit organizations.** Each application should center on one project
- Open to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations only
- Co-Applicants are not allowed
- Grant size ranges between **\$100,000 - \$200,000**
- Grant terms up to two years

Opportunity Grant

- **Funds multi-stakeholder collaboration over one project or multiple projects** to ensure robust and community-driven implementation outcomes
- Lead Applicant must partner with at least one Co-Applicant(s)
- Grant size ranges between **\$500,000 - \$5 M**
- Grant terms up to three years

Opportunity Grant: Re-Granting

- Opportunity Grant applications **may propose re-granting funds to other entities, particularly smaller entities with lower capacity**
- Such re-granting proposals are exempt from the Co-Applicant requirement
- **Re-granting must adhere to and be carried out in accordance with the Grant Guidelines**, and the applicant must demonstrate overall management capacity sufficient to administer a regranting process

Catalyst Grant

- **Funds multi-stakeholder collaboration over multiple projects** that address diverse community needs
- Lead Applicant must partner with multiple Co-Applicants
- Grant size ranges between **\$10 - \$40 M**
- Grant terms up to five years

Valero Refinery Closure

- Valero Refining Co. announced that it would close its Benicia refinery in 2026
- Due to the ongoing strain on the Benicia community's civic and organizational capacity resulting from the impending closure, the Air District is making the following exceptions for the Catalyst Grant in Benicia:
 - **Partnerships:** While Co-Applicants will not be a required element for the Catalyst Grant in Benicia, applications demonstrating diverse community support will be prioritized
 - **Application Review and Award Timeline:** Should there be a small number of applications for the Catalyst Grant in Benicia, the Air District may expedite the review of the applications within this grant category

Timeline & Resources

Timeline

Date	Activity
January 29, 2026	Grant Application opens
March 19, 2026	In-Person Partner Networking Session
May 1, 2026 (5pm PT)	Catalyst Grant Deadline
May 29, 2026 (5pm PT)	Seed Grant Deadline
May 29, 2026 (5pm PT)	Opportunity Grant Deadline

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



GRANT GUIDELINE NAVIGATION

- Grant type guidance (Seed, Opportunity, Catalyst)
- Interpretation of LCBF guidelines and requirements
- Navigational support for the Air District's Microsoft survey
- Clarifying timelines and required application components



ELIGIBILITY NAVIGATION & SUPPORT

- Geographic eligibility navigation (Benicia & Richmond)
- Partnership eligibility support
- Project type eligibility guidance
- Clarifying applicant and project alignment with LCBF goals



APPLICATION & REVIEW SUPPORT

- Project scoping support
- Budgeting guidance
- Work plan development
- Required document navigation and guidance
- Submission support
- Application review by an EPA alumni using the Air District's scoring rubric

Grants Support from Environmental Protection Network



TA Request Submitted

Applicant submits EPN's Technical Assistance Intake Form and identifies LCBF support needs.

TA Request Form

Day 0



Initial Review & Response

Region 9 Outreach Associate reviews the request and follows up to confirm needs, timing, and application status

Within 24-48 hours



1:1 Intake & Triage Meeting

Applicant meets with EPN staff to discuss eligibility, grant type, scope, and next steps.

Within 1 Week



Target Grant Support

EPN provides application support, such as project scoping work plans, budgeting, and document guidance

Ongoing through the application period



Expert Review & Follow up

When requested, EPN coordinates the EPA alumni review and continues follow-up through submission

As drafts become available ²⁴

Helpful Links

- **Grant Guidelines (Round 1 guidelines):** <https://tinyurl.com/CIOGuidelines>
- **Community Investments Office Website:** <https://tinyurl.com/CIOSite>
- **Application Instructions:** <https://tinyurl.com/CIOAppInstructions>
- **Local Community Benefits Fund Eligibility Maps:**
<https://tinyurl.com/FundEligibilityMaps>
- **Technical Assistance: Intake Form Instructions:** <https://tinyurl.com/LCBFTechnical-Assistance>
- **Application Information Form:** <https://tinyurl.com/LCBFInformation-Form>
- Sign up for the newsletter to receive the latest updates

Air District's Community Investments Office at communityinvestments@baaqmd.gov.

Q&A

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