

## **Questions and Answers for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

### **AB617 Community Air Grants**

**August 27, 2021**

As a part of the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Community Air Protection Program efforts, and pursuant to AB 617, CARB created the Community Air Grants Program. The Community Air Grants Program provides opportunities for community-based organizations to participate in the AB 617 process and to build capacity to become active partners with government.

CARB hosted two Community Air Grants virtual workshops on Thursday, July 22, 2021 from 4:00PM – 6:00PM PDT and on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 from 4:00PM – 6:30PM PDT to answer questions regarding the July 2021 Community Air Grants Request for Applications (RFA), eligibility, application completion, and other requirements. The questions answered in this document include both questions asked during the workshops and questions received via email by 11:59PM PDT on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Staff encourages applicants to read through this document as CARB has provided more written detail in their responses to stakeholder questions than what was discussed at the workshops. In the event of any differences, the following written responses take precedence over verbal responses up to this point.

Please note that CARB will not respond to additional questions regarding the Solicitation now that the public workshops have already taken place.

## Table of Contents

Workshop July 22, 2021 .....	3
Eligibility .....	3
Application.....	3
Budget.....	4
Conceptual Categories .....	5
Other .....	6
Workshop July 28, 2021 .....	6
Eligibility .....	6
Timeline .....	7
Application.....	8
Application Requirements.....	9
Budget.....	9
Conceptual Categories .....	10
Other .....	10
Other Questions.....	12
Eligibility .....	12
Application.....	12
Application Requirements.....	13
Budget.....	13
Other .....	13

## Workshop July 22, 2021

### Eligibility

1. I'm representing the College of Alameda and wondering if we qualify as an eligible entity.

Answer: Only organizations that meet our eligibility requirements are eligible to apply. Please review page 4 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Eligible Applicants. If a non-eligible organization wishes to apply for a Community Air Grant, they must do so in partnership with one of the three types of eligible organizations.

### Application

1. How competitive is a community that goes after two grants in the same zip code, census tract, or AB617 study area? Is geographical distribution a criterion that you have to evaluate?

Answer: Please see Table 1, page 11 of the [Request for Applications](#), which has the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals based on their administrative, scientific, and technical merit. CARB intends to fund as many eligible community projects as is possible, anticipating a diverse mix of projects from many communities with representation from across the state. Projects must meet location criteria. See also page 7, Capacity Outcomes.

2. Are you still giving grants out for air monitors?

Answer: Yes. Please see Community Air Grant Project Concept Overview, page 5, of the [Request for Applications](#) under Technical Elements which includes purchase of air quality monitors.

3. For the Targeted Project Type Emissions Reduction Strategy Development, do I have to work with the Air District or could I do the same type of project alone or with other groups of people?

Answer: CARB takes this to mean the Targeted Project Type "*Emissions Reduction Strategy Expansion*", which does have a required component to work with the air district on the expansion strategy. Please review page 6 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Emissions Reduction Strategy Expansion. The Targeted Project Type "*Emissions Reduction Strategy Development*" has no such requirement.

## Budget

1. The Budget worksheet from the CARB Request for Applications website says to look at the "Budget Items" and "Budget Template" tabs. There doesn't seem to be a "Budget Items" tab. Am I missing something?

Answer: To select a "Budget Item" you will need to select a "Budget Category". Each category will generate different budget items. The tab was removed when the Budget template was updated, and instructions need to be edited.

2. Why was there not any consideration to increasing the amount of grant funding from \$100,000 and \$300,000?

Answer: In the 2021 [Request for Applications](#), CARB introduced a new project category type: targeted. This project category type is a collaborative effort across CARB divisions and the funding maximum of \$300,000 was set to ensure funds reach more communities and was appropriate for the objectives of targeted project types.

3. What happened with the 350 million additional dollars that Governor Newsom announced would be coming to these programs? It sounds like with you guys you're still working on a shoestring budget as opposed to the additional funding that was supposed to be allocated and particularly focused on environmental justice inclusion and diversity.

Answer: The Cap-and-Trade expenditure plan has not yet been passed by the Legislature for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This means there are still funds that were anticipated for FY 2021-2022 that have yet to be appropriated. While some California Climate Investments programs have received funding for this fiscal year (for example, many Low Carbon Transportation programs), many other programs (including Community Air Grants) are still waiting to learn what the final budget decisions will bring. These decisions are expected to happen within the next few months, but ultimately, they must be made by legislature and program staff cannot be sure of when this will occur.

4. The amount remains at the reduced \$300,000 despite taking a full year off. What's happening to the 2020/21 money that was never spent?

Answer: There was no money for FY 2020-2021 included in the Governor's budget. Please see the [Governor's Proposed Budget for 2021-22](#) for more information.

5. I'm not entirely clear on the distribution of money through the air grant years. Is this year's funding carry over money from the COVID year?

Answer: The first cycle of Community Air Grants was for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the second cycle was for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, and this third cycle is for the 2019-

2020 fiscal year. Total amount of funding available for this third year of the Community Air Grants is \$10 million. However, no other funding has been allocated, so far, to this program. See question four from this section, above.

6. The cap for technical grants is \$300,000. Is there any possibility of raising the cap for technical projects over this amount?

Answer: Not at this time. For this round of Community Air Grants, the maximum award amount for technical projects is \$300,000. Please see page 5 of the [Request for Applications](#).

7. You mentioned the \$10 million now and then you're waiting for the other 10 so basically this pot of money is from the previous year that wasn't funded and has now been released so this was supposed to be released the previous year. Are you saying it now hasn't been released so it's held up because earlier in the year we were told that the grant would come out earlier in the year and then we were told they were going to be releasing the second grant around summertime and here we are so that obviously has changed.

Answer: See questions four and five from this section, above.

8. Will you fund projects under the maximum for project types? Is there a project minimum?

Answer: Yes, there is no minimum grant amount.

## Conceptual Categories

1. Other agencies and entities have had a 2-part application with the first part less onerous describing what's going on in their communities but might not have the technical expertise and thinking about a helpful way to help some of our colleagues around the state. Could we have staff connect groups that might want to talk and as much as we can have synergy?

Answer: Not at this time. However, for current grantees, CARB does have staff from different divisions available to provide technical assistance when requested.

2. Could I have a nonspecific grant saying I will help educate the residents in some disadvantaged community about whatever subject that the Air Pollution Control District or CARB thinks is important at the time that the grant comes out?

Answer: Projects must have a specific focus. Please see Community Air Grant Project Concept Overview, page 5 of the [Request for Applications](#), for Elements that projects may be derived from.

3. Can a grant project deal with building decarbonization, which improves air quality indoors, and indirectly, air quality overall?

Answer: This funding cannot fund indoor air quality projects. However, if an outdoor source is affecting indoor air quality, the project must address the outdoor source. Please see Community Air Grant Project Concept Overview, page 5 of the [Request for Applications](#), for Elements that projects may be derived from.

## Other

1. Can we have formal AB617 communities be co-convened with air grant communities to build shared understanding to exchange best practices?

Answer: CARB's Community Air Protection Program maintains an Online Resource Center, containing technical and other resources related to AB 617. It is located here: Community Air Protection Program Online Resource Center: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ocap\\_resource\\_center](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ocap_resource_center).

2. Could CARB provide technical assistance for each applicant that needs it? Like the SGC's TCC program for sustainable communities affordable housing (AHSC) does.

Answer: Not at this time. However, see question one from this section, above, for resources related to AB 617.

3. Can you share information on the AB 617 conference planned for late September?

Answer: The convening is hosted by UC Davis and has been guided by a Community Planning Committee. The convening is intended for all participants in AB 617, including Community Steering Committee members, Air District staff, CARB Board and staff, other state agencies, members of the state legislature, and the [AB 617 Consultation Group](#).

## Workshop July 28, 2021

### Eligibility

1. Can any nonprofit 501(c)(3) apply? Do they need to be focused on the environment/climate change?

Answer: Any organization that meets our eligibility requirements are eligible to apply. Please review page 4 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Eligible Applicants.

1. Are Special Districts, such as Resource Conservation Districts, eligible?

Answer: Any organization that meets our eligibility requirements are eligible to apply. Please review page 4 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Eligible Applicants.

2. Are there still legislative restrictions regarding the CARB EJ (AB617) that prevent areas like small coastal communities like Morro Bay from qualifying? We applied for a CARB grant previously and were told that parameters under AB617 prevented us from being considered.

Answer: Please review Page 7 of the [Request for Applications](#). In order to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities, and to provide direct, meaningful and assured benefits to priority populations, projects **must** be wholly located in and benefit disadvantaged and/or low-income communities, as identified pursuant to California Health and Safety Code sections 39711 and 39713 (added and amended by [Senate Bill 535 and AB 1550](#)), or on Tribal lands. Specific project census tract location(s) must be included in Section 1 of the application narrative (see **Table 1**). CARB's priority population investments mapping tool may be utilized for location identification purposes:

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm>

3. Are organizations that are currently recipients of either a CalEPA Environmental Justice (EJ) small grant and/or CARB-AB617 grant are eligible to apply again?  
Answer: Yes. All third-year proposals will be evaluated under the current 2021 [Request for Applications](#). For more information on EJ Small Grants, please see [CalEPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants](#) program.

4. Can the same organization apply to both CARB and CalEPA grants during the same year?

Answer: Yes. However, each grant program is unique with its own specific programmatic requirements. CARB is looking for innovative projects that meet the Purpose and Goals of the Community Air Grant Program. Please review page 1-2 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Purpose of Community Air Grants and Community Air Grant Program Goals.

## Timeline

1. What is the expected end date of the projects, for CARB grants?

Answer: The Grant term ends March 30, 2025. Please review the Grant Timeline, page 9 of the [Request for Applications](#).

2. For the project timeline, could we write it as Month 1- Month 3 rather than specific dates?

Answer: This is not prohibited. However, please review Table 1, the Application Narrative, page 11 of the [Request for Applications](#), which states that anticipated start and end dates for project milestones must be included as part of the application.

3. When is the last day to submit the application?

Answer: The last day to submit a grant application is October 1, 2021 at 5pm. See page 14 of the [Request for Applications](#) that contains electronic submission criteria.

## Application

1. We are working with NGOs and tribal government. Will tribal grant applications be reviewed separately from NGO/CBOs, noting it seems tribal deadlines were extended to the fall?

Answer: See the Grant Timeline on page 9 of the [Request for Applications](#). All Grant Applications will be reviewed October 2021, with applicants notified of award during the end of 2021/early 2022.

4. Do we need COVID contingency plans in the project narrative?

Answer: This is not required.

5. Do we list all the benefits and goals under the grant narrative?

Answer: Define goals and objectives for each task (they need to be measurable and well-defined). Include mechanisms for qualitative and quantitative assessment of the project. Please see page 11 "Section 3: Scope of Work".

6. Is that 20 percent cap for the whole budget or just for that category?

Answer: Administrative costs may be covered up to a maximum of 20 percent. Please see page 10 of [Grant Provisions, Exhibit A](#), for more information on Budget Flexibility.

7. Is software covered under the budget? Is staffing costing covered under the budget?

Answer: Yes. Administrative costs include, but are not limited to: operating costs (including rent, supplies, and equipment), indirect costs (distributed and general administrative services, office space, rent, and telephone services), overhead, records retention, printing and mailing services not associated with staff working on the project, or any other costs that are not directly and fully incurred to support the grant. Please see page 9 of [Grant Provisions, Exhibit A](#), for more information on Eligible Costs.

8. Does the final report need to be done internally or could you hire someone to do it?

Answer: This is not prohibited. Please review page 3 of [Grant Provisions, Exhibit A](#) for information on the Scope of Work, Timeline, and Project Budget. "Grantee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, project development, outreach and education and/or data collection, storage, transmittal requirements per CARBs Blueprint, as applicable, project implementation, and project reporting, as described in the attached Scope of Work, Timeline/Milestones, Budget, and this Grant Agreement. Additional details and requirements are outlined in the Grantee's Application, (Exhibit C)."



## Application Requirements

1. Can the letters of support of be submitted with the application package or must they be mailed after the fact?

Answer: Include any letters of support or commitment as attachment(s) in your application package at the time of submittal. Information submitted after the Grant Application Deadline will not be accepted.

2. I'm reviewing the application documents, compared to previous years, are there significant or subtle updates that you would want to highlight?

Answer: Yes. Based on feedback during community meetings and community discussions the following significant changes were implemented in this year's Program: Grantee must submit reports to CARB biannually rather than quarterly as was previously required; edits were made to pare down the size of the Request for Applications as well as improve overall organization, and electronic options including separating out components on website and accepting electronic submittal and signatures were also implemented. This Request for Applications also includes a new project type category – Targeted Project Categories. Please see page 5 of the [Request for Applications](#) for more information on targeted project types. Minor edits in this cycle's Request for Applications includes edits to Minimum Qualifications checklist, Application coversheet, budget template, technical work plan, CEQA documentation, and Draft Grant Agreement.

## Budget

1. Are payments distributed as reimbursements, lump sum, or scheduled payments?

Answer: Payment disbursements are issued as both reimbursements and advance payments. Please review Grant Disbursement Request and Advance Payment Request forms at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ourwork/programs/community-air-protection-program/community-air-grants/for-grantees>.

2. Where in the budget would we place the time to write the reports?

Answer: Report writing may be included in staff time, under administrative costs, or may be included as an overall deliverable with one set price.

3. In the final RFA, it says on page 16 that advance payment is possible. Would all potential awardees be eligible for advance payment?

Answer: Yes. Please review [Title 17, California Code of Regulations, sections 91040 – 91044](#).

## Conceptual Categories

1. Regarding project location/benefit DAC and/or low-income communities: Is there a specific percentage of the project that must be in a DAC and/low income community (e.g., 50%? 100%?)?

Answer: Projects must meet the location criteria. Please review page 7 of the [Request for Applications](#). In order to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities, and to provide direct, meaningful and assured benefits to priority populations, projects must be **wholly** located in and benefit disadvantaged and/or low-income communities, as identified pursuant to California Health and Safety Code sections 39711 and 39713 (added and amended by Senate Bill 535 and AB 1550), or on Tribal lands.

2. Is urban forestry a project type that has been funded or is possible for funding?

Answer: Yes. Please see Table 1, page 11 of the [Request for Applications](#), which has the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals based on their administrative, scientific, and technical merit.

3. Can projects be multifaceted? Can projects touch other project types?

Answer: Yes, if included in one project proposal.

## Other

1. How is CalEnviroScreen used to score suitability?

Answer: Page 11 of the [Request for Applications](#), Table 1, Section 1, shows the maximum number of points that can be awarded for general project information which includes the project location.

2. Related to how suitability is scored, how will areas be evaluated in regards to demographics and their designation in CalEnviroScreen?

Answer: See question one from this section, above.

3. Does the drinking water score given in CalEnviroScreen include only municipal sources? The community I work in has a significant population of folks on domestic/private drinking water well sources rather than municipal.

Answer: For questions regarding CalEnviroScreen, please contact [CalEnviroScreen@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:CalEnviroScreen@oehha.ca.gov) or (916) 324-7572. Please also review page 36 of the [CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Report](#) for description of Drinking Water Contaminants.

4. I'm concerned about the use of CalEnviroScreen and other tools and how they are moving away from the term "disadvantage" What is happening in regards to labeling of communities from CalEnviroScreen 3.0 and 4.0?

Answer: See question seven from this section, above. Disadvantaged communities are identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency<sup>1</sup> as the top 25% most impacted census tracts in *CalEnviroScreen 3.0* – a screening tool used to help identify communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and with population characteristics that make them more sensitive to pollution. Low-income communities and households are defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development’s (HCD) *2016 State Income Limits*.<sup>2</sup>

4. What are the criteria for determining whether a community is an environmentally disadvantaged or frontline community eligible for environmental justice-focused funds?

Answer: Please review Page 7 of the *Request for Applications*. In order to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities, and to provide direct, meaningful and assured benefits to priority populations, projects **must** be wholly located in and benefit disadvantaged and/or low-income communities, as identified pursuant to California Health and Safety Code sections 39711 and 39713 (added and amended by *Senate Bill 535 and AB 1550*), or on Tribal lands. Specific project census tract location(s) must be included in Section 1 of the application narrative (see **Table 1**). CARB’s priority population investments mapping tool may be utilized for location identification purposes:

<https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm>

5. CARB Grants seem to avoid racism based on census tract information and only look at low-income minority communities rather than middle income communities directly bordering stationary source emissions. When will these communities be directly addressed under environmental racism these communities being primarily minority communities?

Answer: Please see question five, above.

6. Please explain what each agency considers environmental racism versus environmental justice.

Answer: Environmental racism may be interpreted differently. In California, environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development,

---

<sup>1</sup> Disadvantaged community designations per Senate Bill (*SB*) 535 (De León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Low-income definitions per Assembly Bill (*AB*) 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016)

adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. "Environmental justice" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: (A) The availability of a healthy environment for all people. (B) The deterrence, reduction, and elimination of pollution burdens for populations and communities experiencing the adverse effects of that pollution, so that the effects of the pollution are not disproportionately borne by those populations and communities. (C) Governmental entities engaging and providing technical assistance to populations and communities most impacted by pollution to promote their meaningful participation in all phases of the environmental and land use decision making process. (D) At a minimum, the meaningful consideration of recommendations from populations and communities most impacted by pollution into environmental and land use decisions. (E) "...the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental racism may be interpreted differently.

7. What is the average amount of the Community Air Grants?

Answer: About \$270,000 over the first two cycles of Community Air Grants.

## Other Questions

### Eligibility

1. Is it possible to apply more than one application? Such as a different idea focused in different areas. Or can one agency only apply once?  
Answer: Yes. There is no limit to the number of applications that an entity can submit.
2. Would the University of California system be an eligible applicant for this program?  
Answer: No. See question one on Eligibility from the July 22, 2021 workshop, above.
3. Can we submit several applications with the same goals in different locations? Can we obtain grants for various aspects of the same project such as land acquisition, equipment acquisition, training, distribution planning and permitting?  
Answer: See question one on Eligibility from the July 22, 2021 workshop, above.

### Application

1. For Community Air Grant projects seeking to deploy ZEVs, must existing diesel vehicles be scrapped first?  
Answer: This is not prohibited based on CCI requirements alone, however, CARB has no specific recommendation for this, as this depends on the nature of your proposal.

## Application Requirements

1. If we do partner with middle and/or high schools or school districts, do we still need to partner with a Community Based Organization?

Answer: Only organizations that meet our eligibility requirements are eligible to apply. Please review page 4 of the [Request for Applications](#) on Eligible Applicants.

2. Will middle and/or high schools or school districts qualify as partners under the instructions given in Section 2, Applicant Background?

Answer: Yes. Please review page 11 of the [Request for Applications](#). Describe any partnerships of two or more (not counting sub-grantees) of the following groups: community-based organizations, academia, government, researchers or institutions, local air district, business entities, health professionals, school district representatives, California Native American Tribes, faith-based organizations. (This is not an exhaustive list and partners may include other entities).

## Budget

1. Is EVSE purchase/installation an eligible cost?

Answer: Yes, as long as this is part of your project.

## Other

1. Are Community Air Grant funds stackable with Carl Moyer/AB617 program funds, and if they are stackable with HVIP?

Answer: If leveraging funds from multiple sources of the [GGRF/CCI](#), please describe so in the application materials. See page 13 of [Request for Applications](#) on the Application Narrative – Formatting and Specific Information Required for Evaluation. Describe any in-kind services or additional funding sources that are being leveraged or utilized in your project. Except for public transit buses, stacking HVIP with State-funded incentives is not allowed. Please review the [Implementation Manual for the Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project \(HVIP\)](#). Please also see [The Carl Moyer Program Guidelines](#) for more information on these program funds.

2. How do I mention this grant funding source in my outreach materials?

Answer: Please see page 22 of [Grant Provisions, Exhibit A](#), for more information on California Climate Investments Logo. All outreach and education materials, such as fact sheets, infographics, multimedia tools such as videos, and websites must display the California Climate Investments logo. The California Climate Investments logo and name serves to bring under a single brand the many investments whose funding comes from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The logo represents a

consolidated and coordinated initiative by the State to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gases, while also investing in disadvantaged communities and achieving many other co-benefits. The Grantee agrees to acknowledge the California Climate Investments program as a funding source from CARB's Community Air Grants program whenever projects funded, in whole or in part by this Grant Agreement, are publicized in any news media, websites, brochures, publications, audiovisuals, or other types of promotional material. The acknowledgement must read as follows: 'This publication (or project) was supported by the "California Climate Investments" (CCI) program. Guidelines for the usage of the CCI logo can be found at: [www.arb.ca.gov/ccifundingguidelines](http://www.arb.ca.gov/ccifundingguidelines)