

# We can help your community tackle climate change

*“Climate change is a global challenge that requires strong, sustained local action. This program gets young people into the communities across California to help reduce emissions and boost energy efficiency.”*

– California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

## BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TODAY

Local governments have been and will continue to take a leading role in California’s response to climate change. However, budget constraints, the loss of key tools and funding sources, and limited technical familiarity with emerging tools and practices, pose significant challenges to local communities – large and small – as they seek to implement these efforts quickly and effectively.

To help communities respond, the Local Government Commission partnered with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to launch CivicSpark, an AmeriCorps initiative that helps California communities improve their ability to respond to the defining crisis of our time – the economic, environmental and social impacts of climate change.



Each year, 48 CivicSpark members, organized in nine regional teams, work with a range of local and regional project partners such as cities, counties, regional agencies, school districts, MPOs and NGOs, helping them implement local climate-smart projects such as greenhouse gas inventories, complete streets plans and water-conservation campaigns. With this extra support, technical assistance and practical resources from CivicSpark, these projects will succeed, and move communities toward a healthier, safer and more resilient future.

## NURTURING LEADERSHIP FOR TOMORROW

At the same time, as we are making change in local communities, CivicSpark is paving the way for the next generation. Through their work on these innovative, real-world projects, CivicSpark members will gain exceptional career experience, preparing them to become future leaders in California’s climate-change response.



## CLIMATE-CHANGE BEST PRACTICES: SOMETHING YOUR COMMUNITY COULD USE?

Here are just a few of our 2014-15 projects this year to give you an idea of what we can do for your community. Refer to our website for more examples and ideas.

### ■ Climate Resiliency and Adaptation

In the Sacramento region, we are conducting a vulnerability assessment by auditing existing preparedness plans and policies, and developing recommendations to strengthen and scale these policies.

### ■ Clean and Alternative Transportation

In the San Diego region, we are increasing participation in the San Diego Association of Government’s iCommute program, a countywide ridesharing, public transit and bicycling program operating across three cities.

### ■ Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In the Sierra region, we are supporting Climate Action Planning, community climate research and climate-risk analysis for five communities.

In the Central Coast, we are supporting eight communities to reduce GHG emissions by increasing adoption of small-scale solar PV and providing community-based energy-efficiency education.

### ■ Urban Greening

In the San Joaquin Valley, members are providing outreach and education to increase adoption of urban forestry policies (and tree cover) by educating elected officials, staff and community leaders, and providing technical support and training.

## HOW CIVICSPARK WORKS

CivicSpark helps local governments build their climate response-capacity by working directly with local staff or in the community on projects that address their larger climate-action goals. Although every project needs to have a connection to local government staff, CivicSpark projects can be community-focused, and we can collaborate with nongovernmental organizations to implement projects.

Depending on the size, timeframe and location of a project, CivicSpark members can be embedded within a community for their whole service year, or work out of a hub centered around a Regional Partner and support local governments in the area remotely. CivicSpark may also implement more than one project at a time for a given local government, but work involved in each project will be defined and assessed independently.

The Local Government Commission organizes CivicSpark statewide and provides administrative support across the nine regions.

Each regional team includes 3-6 AmeriCorps members selected through a highly competitive, national application process. The team also includes a part-time, experienced coordinator who provides 1,000 hours of team training and supervision and acts as a local liaison and project advisor.

Each CivicSpark member will have at least a college degree in a relevant field, and will typically have workplace and community-service experience. Each member serves for 1,700 hours with 1,300-1,400 of these hours devoted to implementing projects, and the remainder dedicated to professional development and broader community service.

CivicSpark members provide support through a four-step “intervention” process.

- **Gap Assessments:** We interview staff and review your policy/program documents to determine current climate-change needs and define a project scope.
- **Service Projects:** Based on gap-assessment results, we implement a specific research, planning or implementation project.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** CivicSpark teams also support increased volunteer engagement by setting up a “climate fellows” program that seeks to match college students, recent graduates, retirees or other skilled volunteers who want to make a contribution to climate-change efforts in their communities.
- **Transitioning Expertise:** Members complete each project by providing transitional training to local government staff and/or sharing results with key stakeholders to transfer knowledge and build action throughout the community.

[CivicSpark.LGC.org](http://CivicSpark.LGC.org)

## STARTUP CALENDAR FOR 2015-16 YEAR

- **April**  
Recruitment for CivicSpark projects starts – call for local government proposals opens.
- **May-September**  
CivicSpark projects defined and service agreements completed.
- **June-October**  
Member recruitment starts.
- **Late-October**  
CivicSpark’s 2015-16 service year kicks off with member orientation.
- **November**  
Local projects get underway.

## THE CIVICSPARK TEAM

**Local Government Commission:** A nonprofit with more than 30 years of local government experience, the LGC provides statewide program management, operations and implementation.

**Governor’s Office of Planning and Research:** California’s comprehensive state planning agency, OPR works to ensure that CivicSpark aligns with state goals and project teams are using cutting-edge tools and resources.

**Regional Partners:** Nine leading organizations already engaged in climate action and have strong networks that will help connect CivicSpark with local needs and opportunities.

**Regional Coordinators:** Working with Encore.org, we employ retired project management professionals to provide general coordination and project guidance for regional teams of AmeriCorps members, and to act as a local liaison with project partners.

**CivicSpark Members:** College graduates with relevant academic or workplace experience serve as AmeriCorps members by providing on-the-ground service to local governments in each region.

**CaliforniaVolunteers and Corporation for National and Community Service:** Coordinate state and national implementation of AmeriCorps service programs.

## WHERE WE ARE

CivicSpark operates out of nine regional hubs. For more detailed information on our regions and Regional Partners: [CivicSpark.LGC.org](http://CivicSpark.LGC.org)

- **North Coast**
- **Bay Area**
- **Sacramento Region**
- **Sierra Nevada Region**
- **San Joaquin Valley**
- **Central Coast**
- **Inland Empire / Greater LA Region**
- **Los Angeles Region**
- **San Diego Region**



*“CivicSpark is creating a model of climate action in California. We are looking to CivicSpark members to move the needle and take California to the next stage of its climate action efforts.”*

– Wade Crowfoot, Deputy Cabinet Secretary and Senior Advisor to the Governor



## ELIGIBILITY

All projects must involve specific local government agencies, and CivicSpark can only serve those local government agencies that demonstrate a “capacity need” – defined as the absence of at least one of the following elements: a full-time dedicated sustainability staff, a formally adopted Climate Action Plan, or specific mechanisms to annually track and report on climate-action progress.

Statewide, we also want at least 50% of the local governments served to be “high need” in terms of climate capacity. Visit our website for more information on eligibility and “high-need” criteria.

## APPLICATION AND STARTUP PROCESS

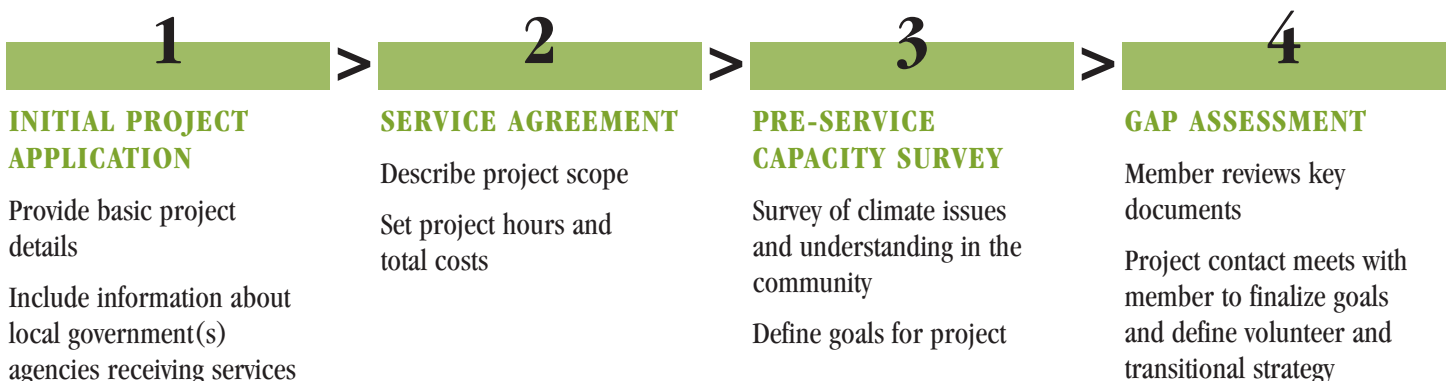
**1** Your first step is to complete an **initial application** that includes a description of the project, a timeframe for implementation, staff contacts and identify the local government that the project will support.

After receiving your application, our staff will discuss the proposed project with you, and ensure the project is of a scale and type suited to CivicSpark.

**2** Following this review, we complete a **service agreement** with you that outline the terms, costs and basic project scope. (See page 4 for more information on project costing.)

**3** After completing the service agreement, LGC staff will share a **pre-service capacity assessment survey** with participating local government staff to get a baseline and to define their specific capacity building goals.

**4** The CivicSpark member will then start to work directly on your project by aligning the project scope with the local government needs, conducting a high-level **gap assessment** to review key documents. This process includes an interview with participating local government staff to finalize the goals outlined in the capacity survey and define the volunteer engagement and transitional strategies to be used to implement your project.



# Your Fiscal Contribution

CivicSpark is funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service. However, participation in CivicSpark requires a fiscal contribution from you.

Why would you choose to collaborate with CivicSpark for project support? CivicSpark provides high-quality, technical support services through a team-based model coordinated statewide by the Local Government Commission, in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

As a result, CivicSpark can offer an all-inclusive set of services to local governments for a low, fixed cost that covers workers’ compensation, liability insurance, workplace costs, member personnel benefits and job travel support. It applies to both AmeriCorps members and their coordinators; and it is based only on project work, not CivicSpark’s administrative or training costs.

Your project’s fiscal contribution can come from a variety of sources, including directly from a local or regional government we are working with, a state agency that wants to support local

project activity, from an NGO implementing a project that has a local-government connection, or even through private sponsors of CivicSpark activities. If your fiscal contribution is from a federal source, the funding agency has to approve using it as a match to AmeriCorps funding.

CivicSpark is a great resource for leveraging outside funding. Because of its flexible design, we can focus work on an interconnected suite of projects that align with available resources. For example, a regional foundation interested in supporting public health might finance a vulnerability assessment, while the local utility company might fund business energy audits. If there is an open RFP for climate-related work, CivicSpark could be built into responses as a supporting mechanism for completing the project.

Specific funding sources that could be feasible based on prior experience include Strategic Growth Council planning grants, Proposition 39 school-energy assessments and planning, and investor-owned utilities (IOU)-local government partnerships.

## Project Costing – Flexible Options to Meet Your Needs

Projects are defined for a fixed term that allows the members to dedicate their attention and time to a specific project. Each project’s cost is based on the core project hours provided, but each project also includes additional resources that support its successful completion. The chart below describes pricing for projects of differing sizes, duration and associated resources. Visit our website more info on project costing, the advantages of working with CivicSpark, and payment approaches.

**PAYMENT:** Your fiscal contribution is paid through a 10% deposit when the service agreement is signed, followed by monthly invoices throughout the duration of the project.

	THREE MONTHS	SIX MONTHS	11 MONTHS [embedded]
<b>COST</b>	\$6,500	\$12,350	\$23,400
<b>PROJECT HOURS</b>	325 @ \$20/hour	650 @ \$19/hour [5% discount]	1,300+ @ \$18/hour [10% discount]
<b>ADDITIONAL BENEFITS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10-20 extra project-prep hours</li> <li>Up to \$200 in project-related travel covered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20-40 extra project-prep hours</li> <li>Up to \$400 in project-related travel covered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40-80 extra project-prep hours</li> <li>Up to \$800 in project-related travel covered</li> <li>Member is “embedded” on-site with your organization</li> <li>Extra member activities and hours dedicated to project community</li> </ul>

### For more information

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