What is CivicSpark?

CivicSpark is Governor Brown’s Initiative AmeriCorps program dedicated to building capacity for local governments to address climate change. CivicSpark is managed by the Local Government Commission in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

CivicSpark fellows serve for 11 months, implementing important climate change mitigation and adaptation projects throughout the state of California. Fellows have the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the sustainability field, build professional skills, and develop a strong network while creating a lasting difference in local communities.

Our Model

**Gap Assessments**
Fellow interviews staff and reviews key documents to determine current climate change needs and to finalize the project scope.

**Service Projects**
Based on the gap assessment results, the fellow implements a specific research, planning, or implementation project.

**Volunteer Engagement**
In parallel with their service project, the fellow supports increased volunteerism for climate action in the region.

**Transitioning Expertise**
Each service year concludes with the fellow providing training to staff and/or by sharing results with key stakeholders to sustain progress.

Our Impact

CivicSpark’s inaugural cohort of fellows provided over **62,000 hours of service** to California’s communities, implementing 37 targeted projects to support 88 local government agencies, 50% of which are “high-need” communities, and reaching over **2,500 community members**, including residents, business owners, and the general public. CivicSpark fellows supported a wide range of actions - developing, conducting, and organizing:

- 8 climate or energy action plans
- 100 energy assessment reports
- 17 climate action policies
- 10 vulnerability assessments
- 12 greenhouse gas inventories
- 31 community workshops
- 4 energy benchmarking assessments

The program leveraged **$1 million in local matching funds** statewide, and received 5 applications for each open position in year one and over 6 applications per position in year two.

“Without CivicSpark, our City would not be able to effectively implement our Climate Action Plan.”
Central Coast Project Partner

“Our CivicSpark fellows have brought a fresh perspective on how we engage the community energy planning in the Sierra Nevada, and they are not short on ambition.”
Sierra Nevada Project Partner
Some of Our Projects

Climate Change

**Climate Action Plan Implementation:**
Implementing Climate Action Plan measures in Emeryville, Hayward, Santa Monica, Piedmont, Union City, Walnut Creek, the Sierra Nevadas, Los Angeles County, Merced County, San Luis Obispo County, and Santa Barbara County.

**Local Government Climate Action Efforts:**
Developing a statewide climate action database to support local climate action research and local government policymaking.

Water

**Building Community Resilience to Climate Change Impacts:**
Assisting Water LA’s science lead in the department of bio-diverse landscape plan templates and supporting program-related policy efforts to adapt existing street tree and parkway plan.

**Regional Resiliency in the Sierras:**
Supporting water/energy system improvements and providing drought training for local government staff to support water-related resiliency initiatives in the region.

Transportation

**Regional EV and Fuel Cells:**
Supporting the accelerated adoption of electric vehicles and other alternative vehicle fuels to develop a robust market for alternative fuels in the broader North Coast region.

**High Speed Rail Vulnerability Assessment:**
Identifying specific climate risks and performing a quantitative assessment of the impacts on high-speed rail assets and future operations.

Our Success Stories

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<tr>
<th>Los Angeles CivicSpark fellows developed a Water Conservation Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The tool helped identify and prioritize potential water saving opportunities at county facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resulted in total potential savings of <strong>195-280 million gallons of water</strong> annually, <strong>$1.7 million</strong> in avoided costs, and <strong>300 MTCO2e of GHG emissions reductions</strong> annually.</td>
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**Approach**

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<tr>
<th>Southern California CivicSpark fellows developed the Energy Assessment Screening for Your Home (EASY) program for residents in the San Gabriel Valley</th>
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<tr>
<td>This no-cost program helps residents identify ways to make their homes more efficient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed <strong>70 energy assessments</strong> in 17 cities, organized <strong>25 formal presentations and workshops</strong>, and reached over <strong>1,700 residents</strong> through public events.</td>
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Contact

**Kristen Wraith**  
CivicSpark Project Manager  
Local Government Commission  
kwraith@lgc.org  |  916-448-1198 x309  

[www.civicspark.lgc.org](http://www.civicspark.lgc.org)
Receive Project Support

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. **Local government agencies or non-governmental organizations can contract directly with LGC** for CivicSpark fellows to support projects and programs as long as they have a local government connection.

CivicSpark operates out of 8 regional hubs. Each team includes 3-7 CivicSpark fellows selected through a highly competitive, national application process, and a part-time experienced coordinator who provides 1,000 hours of team training and supervision and acts as a local liaison, project advisor and mentor.

CivicSpark fellows have at least a bachelor’s degree in a relevant field, and will typically have workplace and community service experience. Each fellow serves for 1,700 hours with 1,300 of these hours dedicated to implementing projects, and the remainder dedicated to professional development and broader community service.

How to Get Started

Eligibility

All projects must involve specific local government agencies, and CivicSpark can only serve those agencies that demonstrate a “capacity need,” which is defined as the absence of at least one of the following elements:

- A full-time dedicated sustainability staff.
- A formally adopted Climate Action Plan.
- Specific formal mechanisms to annually track and report on climate-action progress.
- All projects must be a minimum of 200 hours.

Statewide, we also want at least 50% of the local governments served to be “high need” in terms of climate capacity.

Application and Startup Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Project Application</th>
<th>Service Agreement</th>
<th>Pre-Service Capacity Survey</th>
<th>Gap Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide basic project details.</td>
<td>• Describe project scope.</td>
<td>• Survey of climate issues and understanding in the community.</td>
<td>• Fellow reviews key documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include information about local government(s) receiving services.</td>
<td>• Set project hours and total cost.</td>
<td>• Define goals for project.</td>
<td>• Local agency contact meets with fellow to finalize goals and define volunteer and transitional strategies.</td>
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Project Costing

CivicSpark is funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service, however, participation in CivicSpark requires a fiscal contribution from project partners. Projects are defined for a fixed term that allows the fellows to dedicate their attention and time to a specific project. The chart below describes pricing for projects of differing sizes, duration, and associated resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>3 months (325 project hours)</th>
<th>6 months (650 project hours)</th>
<th>11 months (1,300 project hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>$12,350</td>
<td>$23,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate</strong></td>
<td>$20/hour</td>
<td>$19/hour (5% discount)</td>
<td>$18/hour (10% discount)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Benefits</strong></td>
<td>• 10-20 additional project-prep hours</td>
<td>• 20-40 additional project-prep hours</td>
<td>• 40-80 additional project-prep hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Up to $100 in project-related travel covered</td>
<td>Up to $200 in project-related travel covered</td>
<td>Up to $400 in project-related travel covered</td>
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Learn more at www.civicspark.lgc.org/join-civicspark/project.