CivicSpark is a Governor’s Initiative AmeriCorps program dedicated to building capacity for local public agencies to address emerging environmental and social equity resilience challenges such as: climate change, water resource management, affordable housing, and mobility. CivicSpark is managed by the Local Government Commission (LGC) in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

**Our Impact**

Over the past four years, CivicSpark Fellows provided over **360,000 hours** of service to California’s communities. Fellows implemented roughly **340 projects** with more than **170 local public agencies** and reached over **35,000 community members** (including residents, business owners, and the general public). CivicSpark Fellows supported a wide range of actions, including:

- 22 vulnerability assessments
- 32 climate or energy action plans
- 97 water efficiency surveys
- 134 climate action plan policies written
- 155 energy reports and benchmarking assessments
- 230 community workshops
- 1,861 water monitoring surveys and reports
- Over 3 million gallons in water use reductions

**Receive Project Support**

CivicSpark focuses on supporting local government capacity to respond to emerging environmental and socioeconomic resiliency challenges including climate change, water management and water resources, affordable housing, and transportation sector mobility.

CivicSpark Fellows are placed with local project partners across California (ideally in teams of two or more for Fellow experience and impact). Public agencies, State agencies, Native American Tribes, and Non-Profit Organizations can contract directly with LGC to host CivicSpark Fellows as long as the project work is closely connected to a specific local public agency beneficiary. Beneficiaries can include counties, cities, towns, special districts, school districts, MPOs, COGs, JPA’s, etc. who have a defined capacity need (see eligibility below), will “benefit” from the project’s implementation and can commit to completing a pre- and post-service capacity survey, and to participating in at least one project interview with the Fellow. The host or project partner does not have to be a “beneficiary”.

All CivicSpark Fellows are AmeriCorps Members selected through a highly competitive national application process. Fellows have at minimum a college degree in a relevant field, and typically have workplace and community service experience. Project partners have the opportunity to select their Fellow from a curated list of highly qualified individuals.

Each Fellow serves for a total 1,700 hours during the service year; 1,300-1,400 of these hours are dedicated to implementing partner projects. The remaining 300-400 hours are allocated for professional development and community service.

CivicSpark Partners provide project oversight and professional development support to Fellows. LGC Regional Coordinators conduct monthly Fellow trainings and act as local liaisons to the partner. LGC staff also provide monthly cohort calls and content or project specific support (e.g. climate, water, housing, transportation, etc.).

**2019-20 Service Year Calendar**

- February 11, 2019: Project application opens.
- March 15, 2019: First Priority Deadline to submit project applications.
- May 3, 2019: Second Priority Deadline to submit project applications.
- June - July, 2019: Rolling application and Service Agreement period.
- August 23, 2019: Deadline to complete Service Agreements and Capacity Assessments.
- August 25, 2019: The service year begins with Fellow orientation.
- September 3, 2019: Local project work begins! Fellows begin work on Gap Assessments.
- Mid February 2020: In-person Mid Year Gathering for all 2019-20 Fellows.
- Mid-August 2020: Projects wrap up and the 2019-20 CivicSpark cohort graduates!
Eligibility

Partners are responsible for securing at least one target local public agency “beneficiary” for each Fellow’s project work. Participating public agency beneficiaries must demonstrate a “capacity need,” measured by meeting at least one of the following criteria:

**Significant community-wide burdens**, demonstrated by any of the following indicators:
- CalEnviroScreen >33
- Distressed Community Index >50,
- Unemployment above state average
- Regional Opportunity Index (People or Place) above state average

**Absence of an adopted and up-to-date strategy** (plan, element or other) that comprehensively addresses the target resiliency issue with appropriate funding, programs, and policies, to implement the strategy

**A defined resiliency capacity gap as evidenced by at least 1 significant program**, policy, or planning goal for a specific resiliency issue that has not been met, or cannot be met, without resource or system development assistance.

Application and Startup Process

**Initial Project Application**
- Applicant provides basic project details.
- Applicant includes information about local government “beneficiaries” receiving support.

**Service Agreement**
- Applicant describes project scope.
- Applicant sets project hours and total cost.
- Project Partner executes contract with LGC

**Pre-Service Capacity Survey**
- Local agency “beneficiary” completes survey of agency capacity and understanding of issues.
- Local agency “beneficiary” defines project goals.

**Gap Assessment**
- Fellow reviews key documents.
- Beneficiary contact meets with Fellow to finalize goals and define volunteer and transitional strategies.

Project Pricing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Project Support Provided per Fellow</th>
<th>Additional Benefits per Fellow</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$51,000 / 2 Fellows</td>
<td>11 Months and 1,300+ project hours</td>
<td>80 additional project-prep hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$26,000 / 1 Fellow</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 volunteer engagement hours</td>
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“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.”

Former California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

Contact

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