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.

CivicSpark Fellows serve for 11 months, implementing projects across California on a wide range of topics, including: water resources and policy, climate adaptation and mitigation, affordable housing, and alternative transportation. Fellows gain valuable experience in the sustainability field, build professional skills, and develop a strong network while having a lasting impact in local communities.

Our Impact

In the first 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

Our Success Stories

“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.

2020-21 Service Year Calendar

February, 2020
Project application opens.

Mid-March, 2020
First Priority Deadline to submit project applications.

May, 2020
Second Priority Deadline to submit project applications.

June - July, 2020
Rolling application and Service Agreement period.

August 23, 2020
Deadline to complete Service Agreements and Capacity Assessments.

September, 2020
The service year begins with Fellow orientation.

Mid February 2021
In-person Mid Year Gathering for all 2020-21 Fellows.

Mid-August 2021
Projects wrap up and the 2020-21 CivicSpark cohort graduates!
Project Examples

CivicSpark has supported a wide variety of projects, below is a small sample, more can be found on our website: civicspark.lgc.org/fellow-project-concepts

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

Sea Level Rise Adaptation:
Supporting the research and creation of an adaptation plan for sea level rise for the City of Alameda.

Disadvantaged Communities Involvement Program (DACI):
Completing a strengths and needs assessment to better engage and allocate funding and resources in support of overburdened communities in the Santa Ana River Watershed.

Water/Energy Nexus:
Identifying and implementing water and energy saving projects in San Mateo County schools and public buildings through an auditing program.

Regional EV and Fuel Cells:
Accelerating adoption of electric and alternative fuels vehicles for a robust alternative fuels market in the broader North Coast region.

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities:
Provide technical assistance for the Affordable Housing/Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant program.

Our Model

Gap Assessments
Fellows interview staff and review key documents to finalize the project scope.

 Volunteer Engagement
In parallel with their project, Fellows support increased volunteerism in the region.

Service Projects
Based on the gap assessment results, Fellows implement a specific capacity-building project.

 Transitioning Expertise
Fellows provide training to staff and/or share results with key stakeholders to sustain progress.

Our Success Stories

Creation of an online engagement platform called GoGreenSL in San Leandro → This platform supports resident engagement in local climate action initiatives and reduced environmental impact → 50 local resources shared on the platform, 200 students engaged, 278 households registered

Implementation of a Certified Blue Restaurant Program in Long Beach → This program reduces water consumption by recognizing restaurants in the area for their water savings → 90 water efficiency surveys completed, 32 restaurants Certified Blue, over 2 million gallons of annual water savings, 10 community partnerships formed, 2 awards received.

Contact

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