CalSMP Community Engagement Grant Q&A

Unless otherwise noted, page numbers refer to the amended version of the documents.

Topic: Sub-grantee selection and administration

1. **As the administrator, it will be critical to partner with CBOs who have experience engaging residents and stakeholders in communities most impacted by methane plumes, especially those CBOs who also have expertise and experience communicating information related to emissions from relevant sources (landfills, oil & gas and/or dairies). Including such CBOs as partners in the proposal, funded by the sub-grantee budget allocation, would seemingly strengthen an administrator's application. However, the solicitation states that "The 3PA Grantee, in coordination with CARB, will be responsible for drafting, publishing, and awarding a competitive grant solicitation for CBO Sub-Grantees. CBOs will be selected by the 3PA, in consultation with CARB. CARB will have ultimate approval over all CBOs awarded sub-grants." Does this prohibit a potential administrator from including formal CBO partners (funded through the sub-grantee allocation) in their proposal?**

The 3PA may include letters of support and planned projects with CBO sub-grantees (page 30 of the Grant Solicitation), but CARB cannot guarantee selection of those sub-grantees. The sub-grantees (CBOs) must be awarded through an open, competitive solicitation process (page 8 of the Grant Solicitation). The sub-grantees awarded must meet the requirements of geographic and sector distribution for each region, as specified in the Scope of Work.

Sub-grantees or sub-contractors may do part of the administrative work or some of the functions of a 3PA, but that must fall under the administrative portion of the funding to the 3PA.

2. **Wondering if you have to have the CBO partners identified in the application?**

No, CBO partners should not be identified in the application. After the grant is awarded, CBO sub-grantee solicitation and selection will be conducted in consultation with CARB. Applicants can submit written letters of support from CBOs, which will be accounted for in scoring applications.

3. The solicitation appears to list every air district in the state as being included in one of the three regions of focus (with the northern California region including the Central Coast and eastern Sierras). The solicitation includes an emphasis on engaging disadvantaged communities, but there does not appear to be any prioritization of communities that are at higher risk of being impacted by fugitive methane-related emissions from landfills, oil & gas operations or dairy digesters. The solicitation also prioritizes cost-effectiveness in the process of selecting and funding CBOs ("Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose a cost-conscious approach that clearly supports the project objectives and maximizes money used for sub-grants for CBOs."). Should proposals utilize historical methane plume data (Carbon Mapper) to identify at-risk communities (previous HPEP events, super-emitters) and focus grant resources (CBO sub-grantee funding) based on the potential risk or should all counties in each region be included in the community engagement plan?

The proposals should focus primarily on communities impacted by methane emissions, as well as CBOs focused broadly on specific methane-emitting sectors, e.g., landfills. The requirements for selecting CBO sub-grantees vary slightly by region and are specified in the Scope of Work for each (pages 15, 21, 25 of the Grant Solicitation). This should draw on historical methane plume data from *Carbon Mapper*. All counties in a region need not be included in the community engagement plan.

4. Based on recent (2023-2025) Carbon Mapper data, some of the sources generating high priority plumes are near affluent communities. Should these communities be engaged to the same degree as disadvantaged communities adjacent to similar, high risk sources?

The application (Appendix A, page 12) states that the applicant must explain how they will build on the project's existing achievements and resources to achieve the overarching goal of providing coordinated community-based outreach and education to maximize program participation in disadvantaged and historically underserved communities.

This does not preclude outreach in other communities but does require particular attention in disadvantaged communities.

5. What are you looking for in terms of CBOs, focus areas? Priority CBOs?

There are requirements in the solicitation for CBO distribution, both in terms of focus and geographic representation. The requirements vary slightly by region and are specified in the Scope of Work for each (pages 16, 21, 25 of the Grant Solicitation). There are no requirements beyond those listed in the solicitation. There are no priority CBOs and CARB does not have any CBOs pre-selected. Besides the requirements in the solicitation, for the selection, the 3PA and CARB will look holistically at having a range of CBOs in terms of focus areas and geography, but there are no specific requirements.

6. **Does CARB allow CBOs serving communities without prior methane plume detections but with potential exposure to methane sources or co-pollutants to be eligible? Is there flexibility in the number of CBOs selected per region to reflect geographic diversity and community impact?**

For each region, there are requirements for CBOs that represent various interests and geographic areas. These requirements are listed in the Scope of Work for each region (pages 16, 21, 25 of the Grant Solicitation). There are no further requirements for the CBOs. The number of CBO sub-grantees for each region is flexible and should reflect the needs of the region.

7. **How many CBO sub-grantees do you expect to select per region?**

The "Project Objectives and Vision" section states (page 8 of the Grant Solicitation): "For Region 1, CARB requires awarding grants to a minimum of six (6) CBOs; for Region 2, CARB requires awarding grants to a minimum of three (3) CBOs; for Region 3, CARB requires awarding grants to a minimum of three (3) CBOs. Funding allocations among CBOs do not need to be equal and should be proportional to the scale and scope of each Sub-Grantee's proposed work."

8. **Under your current timeline would the solicitation of CBOs occur after the grants have been executed with the 3PA, so after April 16, 2026?**

Yes, after the agreement between CARB and the 3PA(s) has been executed, the 3PA(s) will begin solicitation of CBOs for sub-grants. The date has now changed to April 23, 2026 (see redline version of the Grant Solicitation for new dates.)

9. **Are the 3PAs allowed to help the CBOs put together their applications, and if so can will bill for that time. Most of the CBOs would not be able to put together an application on their own, and we would have to help them, which would take substantial time. We have to budget that in if we get solicitations from communities that we know that would require handholding. Need to budget for time. When putting together budget need to consider extra time. We don't want to be left on the hook to create material from CBOs that they can't do themselves.**

3PAs may provide any support to CBOs in applications for sub-grants, providing that support is available consistently (and advertised consistently) for all CBOs who wish to apply for those sub-grants. That support could include application templates, workshops on how to submit applications, or open sessions where applicants can ask questions and receive support. These tasks would fall under Task 2 in the Scope of Work for each region (CBO selection, coordination, and support, pages 15, 19, and 24 of the Grant Solicitation).

Topic: Grant Costs and Payments

10. **Are any of the following included in Grant Management: "Grant management costs may not exceed five (5) percent of the grant award amount":**

Execution of grant agreements with sub-grantees

Requesting reimbursements and disbursements to sub-grantees

These items do not fall under Grant Management costs. Execution of grant agreements with sub-grantees will fall under item 2 in the Scope of Work for each region, "CBO selection, coordination, and support." Requesting reimbursements and disbursements to sub-grantees would also fall under item 2, "CBO selection, coordination, and support." (Pages 15, 19, and 24 of the Grant Solicitation.)

11. **Are there any ineligible costs for the 3PA and/or the sub-grantees? We are interested in particular but not limited to costs such as food, childcare, giveaways etc.**

Eligible costs must be necessary to carry out the purpose of the approved activity. Incentives for participation, including food, childcare, and giveaways, are not eligible costs.

12. **Can Resource Entities or sub-grantees use grant funds to pay insurance costs during the grant term should they need to acquire additional coverage to meet insurance minimums to qualify for the grant program?**

The insurance requirement must be met prior to the award (see Appendix A, Attachment 9). Proof of Commercial General Liability insurance must be included as part of the application. If requesting advance pay, CARB may require proof of insurance for intentional, malicious or criminal acts. Other insurance may be required if applicable. Insurance requirements are included in the Sample Grant Agreement (Appendix B). Insurance is an ineligible cost.

13. **Will the eventual sub-grantees selected by the 3PA and CARB be eligible for advance pay?**

Advance pay may be available for certain sub-grantees but will be granted on a case-by-case basis, subject to State approval of a written justification.

14. **What is the intended frequency of invoicing for 3PA team costs as well as sub-grantee costs? IE, monthly, bimonthly, etc**

There is no intended invoicing frequency, and this can be addressed in negotiation of the grant agreement. Monthly is typical for many projects, but it may be more or less frequent depending on spending. As long as all required documentation is submitted with the invoice, the frequency is open.

15. **Can funding for aligned activities be considered as match? If such aligned activity also includes grantmaking, can those grants be considered match?**

Match funding refers to funds contributed by the Grantee to the project. In-kind services refer to goods or services contributed by the Grantee but not charged to the projects, but which help to meet the goals of the projects more effectively and efficiently. No minimum match funding is required, but voluntary match or in-kind funding will be considered in the application scoring. Funding from other public or private sources may be combined with CARB funds and must be identified in a project budget (page 32 of the Grant Solicitation).

CARB has discretion to determine what is appropriate to be considered a match and will use the information submitted in the application to make this determination.

Topic: Indirect Costs

16. **What is IDC rate for the grant? Our SPO pre-award administrator said that he found the IDC rate is 5%, which is much lower than the negotiated rate between UC and CARB.**

17. **From the grantee perspective, unrecovered IDC can strain staff capacity and systems needed to administer these grants. Are there ongoing discussions or opportunities for future feedback around aligning IDC rates more closely with, at the very least, the Federal de minimus rate?**

18. **The solicitation notes a 5% cap on indirect costs. Can CARB clarify whether personnel costs for centralized administrative or fiscal functions (e.g., finance, grants management, compliance) are allowable as direct costs if those staff are directly supporting project activities and appropriately documented, or whether such costs are expected to be covered within the 5% indirect cap?**

Questions 16-18 are about indirect and overhead costs are together answered here:

There are no indirect costs or overhead allowed under this grant solicitation. Up to five percent of the funding for each region may be used for grant administration. The grant administration tasks covered by the administrative funding are listed under first part of the scope of work for each region (beginning on pp. 13, 18, and 22). These tasks include kick-off and regular meetings with CARB, maintenance of records, and quarterly and final reports.

The administrative funding does not include salary for work done on grant projects (e.g., CBO solicitation and selection, supporting CBO projects, and tracking expenditures of grant

funding), or any other costs associated with that work. These costs may be part of other tasks covered by the 3PA and may be covered by the remaining 3PA funding.

19. **The grant is primarily for an administrator, working with CBOs, rather than having the prime grant awardee(s) to do the work. However, CBOs often need technical assistance to understand details of methane and its impacts, as well as best ways to develop and test communication. To what extent can awardees provide technical assistance?**

The 3PA may provide technical assistance to CBOs up to whatever extent is feasible by the 3PA. That is, there is no limit on how much technical assistance the 3PA can provide to CBOs, so long as the work done by the 3PA does not exceed the budget requirements.

Topic: Corrections and Amendments to the Solicitation

20. **Region 2: North State (including Bay Area), but the scope of work says CBOs must include the South Coast and San Diego, which are not in Region 2. Region 3: South State, and the scope of work says it must include at least one CBO in the Bay Area, which is in Region 2. Should this be reversed? That is, should Region 2: North State, actually include CBOs from the Bay Area, and Region 3 actually include CBOs from the South Coast and San Diego areas?**

That is correct, and the solicitation mixes up the SOWs for Regions 2 and 3. The SOW for Region 2 should only refer to the areas described for Region 2 on page 7 of the Solicitation, and the SOW for Region 3 should only refer to the areas described for Region 3 on page 7 of the Solicitation. We have amended the Solicitation and posted a redline version *here* with this correction.

21. **Is there any chance that the deadline will be extended, given that universities and community colleges are closed for winter break and other people will be on holiday as well.**

Yes, we will extend the final application deadline to January 20, 2025. The amended redline version of the Solicitation, available *here* ("Timeline" section, page 9), shows this amended final application date.

22. **If we don't want to be a 3PA, is it possible to still be involved in the project? How would we find those opportunities?**

23. **Community colleges are not CBOs. Is there a way community colleges can be involved if we do not apply to be the 3PA?**

Questions 22 and 23 are answered together here:

Community colleges could serve as subcontractors in coordination with a 3PA applicant. They may also receive sub-grants (see amended red-line version of the solicitation, available *here*, Terms and Definitions, page 10).

Topic: 3PA Budget Questions

24. If more support is identified during the monthly meetings with the CBOs, who would pay for that support? Should the 3PA budget for it ahead of time?

A 3PA may request up to 33% of the award amount for work performed. The budget cannot be expanded. Applicants should budget appropriately in their submission.

25. The bulk of the work specified for the 3PAs under the grant solicitation falls under Grant Administration, which is capped at 5%, but the 3PAs can apply for up to 33%, but it isn't clear what the 3PA can do under the remaining 28%. Can the 3PA budget to help the CBOs create content with the remaining 28%? Most of the CBOs we work with don't have the capacity to do the majority of what was listed, so if we're applying as the 3PA we'd need budget a huge amount of time to do the work for the CBOs. Alternatively we just wait for solicitations to go out & apply as a CBO.

Yes, the remaining 28% is intended to support the 3PA's work with CBO sub-awardees. Please see Table 1 below for a breakdown. In the Scope of Work for each region, only the first task, Grant Management, falls under the five percent administrative costs (pages 13, 18, 22 of the Grant Solicitation). The other three tasks listed would be under the remaining funding provided to the 3PA(s).

26. Has CARB tried to calculate whether or not the work they have listed as required under Grant Administration can be done for 5%? I Calculated the minimum amount of time it would take me to do each of the 6 things specified under grant management and for just my staff time alone it would cost at least $40k, but the max a Region 2 or 3 3PA could apply for is $391,875, so 5% of that would be $19,593.75, correct?

Please see Table 1 below for clarification of the maximum amounts for each category and region, along with the associated tasks in the Scope of Work.

Table 1. Breakdown of funding for each region across different categories

Region	Total Funding Amount	Maximum amount available for *all* 3PA work (work with CBOs *and* grant	Amount available for grant	Amount available for 3PA's work with CBOs (i.e., 28%)

		administration, i.e., 33%)	administration (i.e., 5%)	
1	$2,375,000	$783,750	$118,750 Task 1, Page 13	$665,000 Tasks 2-4, Page 14-17
2	$1,187,500	$391,875	$59,375 Task 1, Page 18	$332,500 Tasks 2-4, Page 19-22
3	$1,187,500	$391,875	$59,375 Task 5, Page 22	$332,500 Tasks 6-8, Page 23-27

27.   So just to be clear if we are applying to serve as a 3PA, our application would include the budget BOTH for our work as the 3PA and the budget for the CBOs in our region, so we'd be applying for up to the max amount of $1,187,500 for a single region (for Region 2 or 3), and not 33% of that for just the 3PA, correct?

That is correct. You may apply for up to the maximum amount for whichever region(s) you indicate in your application. This includes money for grant administration work (up to 5%), work performed by the 3PA to support CBOs (up to 28%), as well as money to be awarded to CBOs (minimum of 66%)

Miscellaneous Questions

28.   RFP does not specify if subrecipient/sub-grantee monitoring will be required by third party administration regarding the grants. Are there any requirements, expectations, or associate regulations which require subrecipient/sub-grantee monitoring?

As required in the Scope of Work for each region:

The 3PA must meet with each CBO at least once per month for the duration of the sub-grant agreement. The 3PA is responsible for ensuring these meetings are scheduled and using the time to verify that CBO projects are on track and to identify any support CBOs might need. The meetings can include multiple CBOs in the same meeting, if the topics and goals covered make it practical.

29.   The monitoring question was one of ours and ask a follow-up question. I think when you answered you talked about meeting with subgrantees and checking on the progress that they're making towards the proposed scope of work. Typically, for us monitoring would be about compliance with any funder and grant requirements and program regulations that overlay any such grant. That's different than scope of work progress. Our question was about monitoring in that context. Looking over grantee records and making sure they're not doing something out of compliance. Typically, above and beyond programmatic administrative support. That's where we're looking for clarity.

All provisions of the grant agreement flow down to sub-grantees, unless otherwise specified. The 3PA is acting as an agent of the State and must ensure sub-grantees remain in compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement. These provisions include appropriate use of funds, record keeping, and reporting. The Grantee is solely liable and responsible for the acts and omissions of its subcontractors or persons directly or indirectly employed by any of them.

30.   What type of data are you looking for from the outreach?

Data should be considered in broad terms in the solicitation. It should include both quantitative and qualitative data. Data may include, depending on region, community feedback on CARB materials or feedback from communities on the need for notification methods. Other feedback on existing materials or what should be included in new materials should also be included.

31.   Will there be a preference to select a team that can address all three regions?

No, there is no preference for a group that can address all three regions. The best 3PA for each region will be selected.

32.   If different 3PAs are selected for regions 1, 2 and 3 is any coordination, interaction, or collaboration among 3PAs expected in development of dashboards, SOW, convenings of grantees, or other activities , etc.? Is each region/3PA completely independent?

If the 3PAs wish to collaborate, CARB will support and facilitate it, but it is not generally required. If 3PAs and/or sub-grantees want to coordinate on projects, that is encouraged and CARB will support in any way we can, but it is not required and will not be determined before awarding 3PAs.

33.   Kern County is listed in two different regions. Do we choose one? Or do we go for both?

Organizations may apply to be the 3PA for 1, 2, or 3 of the regions. You do not need to be based in a region to be able to apply.

34. **If you were to apply for all 3 regions. I was assuming you'd consolidate the tasks for all 3 regions, but wondering if you intended for each regional group to have its own separate tasks? More burdensome to come up with 3 versions of the same tasks**

If applying for all three regions, applicants should take advantage of the efficiencies by combining tasks, as appropriate. If CARB awards an applicant fewer than the number of regions applied for, CARB will try to negotiate to cover those regions. If negotiations are unsuccessful, CARB will choose the next ranked applicant.

35. **For deliverables, such as 'educational materials' and 'public education websites', will this work be exclusively completed by sub-grantees or also require direct involvement from the administrators?**

It is expected that the CBO sub-grantees will conduct the bulk of the work, with direct involvement by the 3PA. For instance, a sub-grantee may develop content for material with the 3PA, providing help on delivery and formatting. In another example, the sub-grantee and 3PA may collaborate on a project in which the 3PA has greater expertise. There may also be projects where the 3PA's role is primarily administrative support. This should be determined during the sub-grantee solicitation and award process and need not be consistent across all sub-grants.

36. **Methane is a significant climate pollutant and a key target for climate mitigation; however, communities that are overburdened by environmental exposures often prioritize pollutants with immediate and tangible health impacts. Does CARB view the integration of methane plume detections with co-pollutant information, such as PM2.5, NO2, VOCs, and air toxics, as an appropriate and complementary approach to CalSMP's methane-focused community outreach?**

This is not a research project and we are not seeking a method to link other pollutants with observed methane plumes. However, one of the projects is "Developing a pathway for community members to suggest new areas for program evolution" (page 7 of the Grant Solicitation) which may include recommendations about co-pollutants.

37. **Should we provide contact information for each example of past projects?**

Applicants may provide details for up to three (3) grant agreements the Applicant managed and implemented within the last five (5) years. These must include contact information. In addition, applicants may optionally include up to two references from past/current partnerships.

More information on this can be found in *Appendix A* of the Grant Solicitation (page 10).

38.   **Can we have a placeholder for consultants/subcontractors and select them after executing a contract with CARB?**

Subcontractors do not have to be selected before the contract is executed. All subcontractors selected after the contract is executed must meet the requirements in the contract and are subject to CARB approval.

39.   **What level of detail and documentation will CARB provide to 3PAs regarding CalSMP methane products, including spatial resolution, temporal coverage, uncertainty, and appropriate use in outreach? Additionally, does CARB encourage or permit the use of complementary or emerging remote sensing methane datasets to provide broader spatial or temporal context, particularly for communities served by CBOs that are affected by methane-related sources but do not experience frequent super-emitter plume detections, provided that CalSMP products remain central to engagement activities?**

CARB can point to any public facing information about CalSMP data at this time. Public information about CalSMP can be found on or linked from the CalSMP *website*. CARB will be happy to meet with 3PA(s) after selection to answer any specific questions about the data and technology. Other remote sensing datasets may be used to highlight the unique role of CalSMP methane products as a tool to support mitigation. However, the project must focus on CalSMP data.

40.   **Do you expect 3PAs to have domain-specific expertise in methane emissions from agriculture, landfills, and oil and gas operations to support community engagement and interpretation of CalSMP data?**

The primary purpose of this grant is community outreach, not methane research. CARB can provide expertise in interpretation of CalSMP data. 3PAs may have expertise in methane emissions and sources, but it is not required.

41.   **The solicitation references health and community impacts as part of the program objectives. Could you clarify how CARB is envisioning those health-related components being supported in practice? Does CARB anticipate that health analysis and translation would primarily come through subawardees, or whether CARB expects to play a more centralized role in defining or supporting those health frameworks?**

The solicitation states that the 3PA(s) will partner with CBOs to develop and implement community engagement projects, which may include "Organizing speaker series or local events open to CBOs, local stakeholders, and the public that focus on methane sources, emissions, and health or climate impacts" (pages 6 and 7 of the Grant Solicitation). The 3PA(s) and selected CBOs can develop projects, beyond the projects required for each region, as they see fit, using the stated projects as examples or creating their own, provided they are *community engagement* projects, as stated in the solicitation, and with CARB's

approval. This solicitation will not support research projects or projects that are not rooted in community engagement.

42. **Wondering about overall goal of CARB in doing community engaged public awareness on methane. Why do you really care? People might say methane itself is nontoxic to health. What are your base objectives for having increased community awareness on methane? Is this priming the population to have a better understanding of methane as a GHG that really needs to have much more action taken on it from the state? Community education is often first step for political advocacy. Is that a futuristic interest of CARB or state?**

The solicitation states, "The goal of this is to bridge the gap between technical satellite methane data and meaningful, community-driven engagement" (page 6 of the Grant Solicitation). CalSMP is a first-of-its-kind project worldwide, and CARB wishes to ensure that CalSMP data are useful and accessible to communities. This solicitation is designed to produce materials both CARB and community groups can use to communicate about methane emissions and CalSMP data, as well as host opportunities for community groups to provide feedback to CARB on existing public materials and communication pathways (see the CalSMP *website*). We cannot comment on current or future political advocacy by communities.

43. **Do you want the products of the project? Educational projects developed by CBOs. Would CARB want them to put up somewhere? What will happen once the projects are over?**

CARB and community groups can use educational products developed through the Community Engagement Grant to communicate about methane emissions in their regions. Some products may be hosted on CARB's website, some by CBOs or other community groups, and some may be used for communication at certain times. The goal is to make products that will be useful and used in the future.

44. Can CBOs have subcontractors to advise them like community colleges and universities? Would this come out of the 3PA budget or the CBO budget? My understanding of the way you've structured this is you're looking for an administrator that handles the admin portion of it, but expecting CBO to do the heavy lifting, including creating additional outreach material to their communities. Most CBOs don't have that capacity, but they would go to professionals like universities to get help making those materials. If we're applying as CBO or 3PA can we have subcontractors, and if so, which budget would it come out of? Cutting all experts in this area, particularly anybody skilled in communicating this information, out of the grant process, doesn't seem like the best solution here. We want to have some way of including universities, community colleges, and maybe private subcontractors that specialize in this, but none of those would qualify as a CBO. I don't know of any for-profit company or university that would be able to do this as a 3PA with a 5% admin. So I'm trying to figure out how to include those voices in the project, and get CBOs the help they need in creating the content that it looks like they're on the hook for creating.

The expectation is that CBO sub-grantees will be experts in community work and communication. They should lead the projects and conduct the bulk of the work. If there are certain technical areas (e.g., translation or facilitation services) where the sub-grantee needs assistance, they can subcontract out for those services. Evaluating CBO capacity to conduct this work will be part of the selection criteria for sub-grantees.

3PAs may have subcontractors, but those must be funded out of the appropriate pool of funding for the 3PA (either the five percent administrative cost, or the 28 percent that can be used for other project costs.)

Community colleges are eligible for subgrants (see Amended redline Grant Solicitation available *here*, page 10, for more detail.)