

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Purpose: The benefit assessment tool is used to determine if a project funded by California Climate Investments is located within and provides a benefit to a priority population.

Who uses it: Administering agencies, applicants, and/or funding recipients.

Background: Whenever possible, projects should have direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households. These three groups are collectively called *priority populations*.

This tool must be used to determine if a project benefits a priority population. California Climate Investments recognizes a project as benefiting a priority population if it meets one option in each of the three steps of the benefit assessment tool.

There are different *benefit assessment tools* for different types of projects. For complex projects, there may be more than one that is a good fit. Email the *GGRF Program* for any questions related to this tool.

Project Type Description: Projects provide high-quality jobs or job training opportunities for workers. Projects could include supporting existing training programs that work to increase the number of technicians able to repair and maintain zero emissions vehicles or training programs that provide upskilling opportunities to get energy-related certifications. Project activities may be implemented as a standalone project or as part of a larger, more comprehensive project. See the *Funding Guidelines* for more information on job quality principles.

Steps to Determine if a Project Benefits a Priority Population

Select one option per step to answer the question: “Does this project benefit a priority population?” with a “yes” or “no.” This tool does not capture all benefits a project may provide.

Step 1: Identify the Priority Population. The project must be located within a community identified as disadvantaged or low-income, or directly benefit residents of a low-income household;

Step 2: Identify a Need. The project must identify an important community or household need for the priority population identified in Step 1; and

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Step 3: Provide a Benefit. The project must provide one of the direct, meaningful, and assured benefits listed in Step 3. The benefit must be to the priority population identified in Step 1 and must directly address the need identified in Step 2.

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Step 1 - Identify the Priority Population

Instructions: Review the questions below and select one that is a “yes” for the project.

Note: Project location can be defined as the job site, training location, residential address of the persons receiving the job or training or households designated as low-income receiving the job or training. When using the residential address or low-income household designation, at least 50% of job or training recipients must be from priority populations. When completing the tool prior to implementing the project, agencies must maintain documentation of a local or targeted hiring mechanism. Agencies should select the priority population type that they are focusing their targeted hiring efforts on or the priority population with the highest percentage of trainees or workers.

Using residential address or low-income household designation is the preferred approach, however if the residential address or low-income household designation cannot be obtained, the project location can be the job site or training location.

Note: Only the portion of GGRF project funds associated with priority populations receiving high-quality jobs and training and related project administration is considered to benefit priority populations.

Resources: Visit the [California Climate Investments Resource Portal](#) for the:

- Priority Populations Map: a geographic tool to identify disadvantaged communities and low-income communities by address or census tract.
- Low-income Household Designation Tool: a look-up tool to find low-income thresholds by county and household size.

- ☐ **A. Disadvantaged Community:** Is the project located in a disadvantaged community census tract or disadvantaged community Tribal land?
- ☐ **B. Low-income Community:** Is the project located in a low-income community census tract?
- ☐ **C. Disadvantaged Community ½ mile neighbor:** Is the project located outside of, but within a ½ mile of, a disadvantaged community and also in one of the following:
 - a low-income community census tract?
 - a low-income household?

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



☐ **D. Low-income Household:** Is the project located in a low-income household?

Next Step: If the answer to one of the questions in Step 1 is “yes,” continue to Step 2. If the answers are all “no,” do not continue.

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Step 2 - Identify a Need

Instructions: Review the options below and select one that explains how the community or household need for the priority population identified in Step 1 was determined.

Note: California Climate Investments strongly encourages that program administrators and those that plan and implement projects work directly with local community residents and community-based organizations to identify and meaningfully address an important need.

Resources: Visit the [California Climate Investments Resource Portal](#) to explore promising practices, success stories, and other guides and resources about community outreach and engagement.

- ☐ **A. Direct Engagement:** Engage local residents and community groups in meetings, workshops, or other opportunities as part of the planning process to identify community or household needs, and document how the engagement informed the design and/or selection of projects to address those needs.

Note: For specific types of projects, direct engagement with the community may not be possible. Those types of projects can use option B and option C to identify an important need.

- ☐ **B. Local Documentation:** Receive documentation of broad support from local community-based organizations and/or residents (e.g., letters, emails) identifying a need that the project addresses or confirm the project furthers the goals identified in a local plan or initiative designed to address local needs (e.g., regional sustainability plan, transit agency strategic plan, community needs assessment) that was developed through a robust community engagement process.
- ☐ **C. Data Tools:** Refer to one of the tools provided [on the California Climate Investments website](#) and confirm that the project will reduce the impacts related to at least one of the factors or indicators.

Continue to next page for option D

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Note: Option D is for programs or projects serving individual households or businesses only, such as through vouchers or rebates distributed to qualifying applicants on either a first-come, first-served basis or on a needs-based model.

- ☐ **D. Direct Engagement During Program Development:** During program design, outreach, or updates, engage residents and community groups from priority populations to identify community or household needs and document how the engagement informed the design of the program to address those needs.

Instructions: Describe the community or household need and how it was identified. If option "B. Local Documentation" was chosen, briefly describe the documentation. If option "C. Data Tools" was chosen, include the name of the tool in the description.

Next Step: If an option in Step 2 is selected, continue to Step 3. If none are selected, do not continue.

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines

Priority Populations Benefit Assessment Tool

Project Type: Jobs and Workforce Development



Step 3 - Provide a Benefit

Instructions: Review the options below and select one that demonstrates how the project directly benefits the priority population identified in Step 1 and addresses the need identified in Step 2.

Note: Projects must avoid potential substantial burdens or harms to priority populations.

Resources: Visit the [Climate Investments Resource Portal](#) to learn more about strategies for projects to avoid causing burdens and harms, including working with community members and community advocates to identify potential burdens or harms whenever possible.

- ☐ **A.** Project provides jobs with employer contributions to health insurance coverage and retirement plans, and paid leave of at least 5 days per year or an accrual rate of one hour per 30 hours worked, and wages at or above [the regional median wage](#) or the applicable prevailing wage rate if subject to prevailing wage.

Note: For additional support with determining if a job satisfies all four criteria in Step 3, Option A, please see the supplemental guidance at the end of this document.

- ☐ **B.** Project is subject to a Project Labor Agreement or Project Workforce Agreement, as defined in the [Funding Guidelines](#).
- ☐ **C.** Project provides job training through a training program that partners with industry associations, employers, or provides in-house job placement services.
- ☐ **D.** Project provides job training that results in an industry-recognized, portable, stackable, or accredited credential. that allows a person to enter or advance in a specialized field.

Next Step: If the project meets one option in each of the three steps above, then it is located within and considered to provide a direct, meaningful, and assured benefit to priority populations.

California Climate Investments 2024 Funding Guidelines
Supplemental Guidance for Step 3, Option A
Jobs and Workforce Development Benefit Assessment Tool



Users claiming priority population benefits through Step 3, Option A of the Jobs and Workforce Development Benefit Assessment Tool must determine regional median wage or confirm that the applicable prevailing wage is being paid, ensure the job provides employer contributions to health insurance and retirement plans, and ensure the job has paid leave. Follow the instructions below to determine applicability.

- A. Use the most recent [Regional Median Wage Table](#) available at the time of completing the benefit assessment tool. Locate the county that aligns with the project location identified in Step 1 and note the hourly median wage.
 - If the project location spans multiple counties, then determine the median wage for each county.
 - If the jobs supported by the project are subject to prevailing wage, then it is not necessary to use the median wage table. Instead, confirm that the applicable prevailing wage is being paid and move to component C.
- B. Compare the result from component A to the wages paid by employers retained for the project.
 - If the employer compensates an employee at a rate equal to or greater than the hourly median wage for the relevant county, then the job meets the regional median wage criteria for Step 3, Option A.
 - If the employer compensates an employee at a rate less than the calculated regional median wage, then the job does not meet the regional median wage criteria needed to satisfy Step 3, Option A,
 - If the project location spans multiple counties, then only proceed to the next component for the portion of jobs completing work in the county(ies) that meet the respective median wage criteria.
- C. If the job meets the regional median wage criteria or the applicable prevailing wage, then proceed to determine whether the job meets the other three job quality elements listed in Step 3, Option A. For each element, read the definition and determine whether the job meets the criteria.
 - The job provides employer contributions to health insurance that meets the minimum requirements in the [Affordable Care Act](#).

- The job provides employer contributions to retirement plan on behalf of an employee to a retirement savings plan or account, such as a 401(k) or pension plan.
 - The job provides paid leave by the employer. Paid sick leave is defined as at least 5 days per year OR accrual at rate of one hour per 30 hours worked. Paid vacation is defined as any paid time off provided by an employer in addition to paid sick leave.
- D. If the job meets all the criteria in Step 3, Option A, then benefits may be claimed. If the project location spans multiple counties, then only the portion of GGRF project funds associated with priority populations receiving high-quality jobs in the county(ies) that meet the respective median wage criteria can be claimed as a benefit.