



Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative Awarded \$1.75 Million

January 17, 2023

The California Strategic Growth Council has awarded \$1.75 million to the Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative (GCRCC), a new multi-stakeholder partnership comprised of the Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative, TreePeople, GRID Alternatives, the Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office, with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) leading this dynamic group of partners to enable just climate solutions in Southeast LA. The GCRCC proposal was ranked first of the six teams approved for this inaugural round of funding of just over \$8.5 million, and the 45 collaboratives that applied. This grant will deliver technical assistance to the area and ensure that the areas targeted will be ready to apply for additional investment for climate solutions like clean air technology, active transportation, vehicle electrification, zero emissions buildings, and extreme heat preparedness.

The GCRCC partners will focus on building capacity to drive and sustain climate action within the SELA Collaborative's geography: the Gateway Cities COG member cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, South Gate, and Vernon, and the unincorporated communities of Florence-Firestone and Walnut Park. These communities are ground zero for the inequitable outcomes anticipated to be wrought by the climate crisis. The County's 2021 Climate Vulnerability Assessment found that while Latinos make up about 50% of the County's population, nearly two-thirds of LA's communities vulnerable to extreme heat were Latinx, demonstrating the urgency of centering communities like Southeast LA in climate solutions and funding.

The GCRCC will leverage existing policy agendas, the SELA Agenda ([SELA Agenda](#)), and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, to jump-start, inform, and guide its work. The GCRCC will also use the SELA Collaborative's successful model for engaging community in planning to educate and empower residents, build the capacity of nonprofit organizations, identify key policy issues that impact the region, and implement community-led strategies to advance policy change. The GCRCC will activate the SELA Collaborative's Regional Recovery Hub model funded by the California Community Foundation to implement the SELA Agenda in collaboration with the network of SELA Leaders.

"For the SELA Collaborative, this means we have the opportunity to leverage our SELA Leaders Network. Our network includes community, community-based organizations, business, faith-based leaders, agencies, and community leaders to coordinate in preparation for the implementation of projects and initiatives that will address climate challenges that continue to impact the quality of life for our SELA residents," explained Dr. Wilma Franco, Executive Director of SELA Collaborative.

More specifically, the Collaborative's focus will be on the needs of the SELA communities within a ½-mile radius of two ongoing transportation projects in development: the planned West Santa Ana Branch

light rail line which will extend from Union Station through the GCCOG sub-region, and the I-710 Corridor which serves the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, sending over 40,000 diesel trucks a day through the SELA communities.

The RCC capacity building grant was designed to enable under-resourced communities to address climate challenges by independently competing for grants and implementing projects while strengthening local coordination, leadership, knowledge, and skills.

The RCC is perfectly suited to serve the needs of cities within the GCRCC boundaries that suffer from high pollution burden, exposure to climate threats, like extreme heat, and the health and economic disparities that come in part from the infrastructure and industry that surrounds and cuts through them. This RCC grant will enable the GCRCC partners to collaborate in new ways with communities that have long been underserved, to ensure that community-designed solutions to climate challenges are funded and implemented.

“The Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative (GCRCC) partners are thrilled to be in the inaugural cohort of RCC grant awardees. Through this opportunity, we can continue to strengthen and formalize our relationships, while ensuring a community-driven response to climate change in our communities of focus in Southeast Los Angeles that have been historically underserved. We hope this funding is the catalyst for a sustainable initiative that can collaborate now, and in the future, in order to improve the quality of life of the residents of Southeast Los Angeles.” Nancy Pfeffer, Executive Director of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (Gateway COG).

About the California Strategic Growth Council

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a 10-member council comprised of seven state agencies and three public members with the mission to build healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all. Funded through California’s Cap and Trade system and the California General Fund, SGC’s grant programs, strategic initiatives, and interagency coordination focus on multi-benefit and community-centric solutions at the nexus of climate and equity. Since 2008, SGC has invested over \$3 billion in projects strengthening communities and addressing climate change. <https://sgc.ca.gov/>

About the Partners

The Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative is a network of organizations working together to strengthen the capacity of the nonprofit sector and civic engagement in Southeast LA. Founded in 2011 by eleven core organizations, the SELA Collaborative seeks to revitalize the communities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Florence-Firestone, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, South Gate, Vernon, and Walnut Park. Through its partners, SELA Collaborative works to strengthen the SELA community,



build, collective power, and encourage innovation to drive regional systemic change. For more information, please visit www.SELACollab.org

The Gateway Cities Council of Governments is a joint powers authority composed of 27 cities and unincorporated Los Angeles County that undertakes targeted initiatives including economic development, climate, and air quality, housing and homelessness, and transportation. The COG will serve as the GCRCC's Managing Stakeholder leading the governance of the Collaborative and grant implementation and integrating the eight SELA cities into the GCRCC. www.gatewaycog.org

GRID Alternatives empowers communities in need by providing access to green technology and energy efficiency services, equipment, and training. GRID Alternatives' role in the GCRCC collaborative will be to identify opportunities and develop strategies for clean energy technology adoption, particularly among low-income homeowners and renters, as well as to develop a workforce development plan for local trainees and businesses. [GRID Alternatives | People. Planet. Employment.](#)

TreePeople inspires, engages and supports people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun, and sustainable and to share their process as a model for the world. The organization's role in the GCRCC collaborative will be to support the improvement of environmental health and climate resilience through nature-based solutions. <http://www.treepeople.org>

The Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office provides comprehensive and coordinated policy support and guidance for the Board of Supervisors, County Departments, the unincorporated areas, and the region to make our communities healthier, more livable, economically stronger, more equitable, more resilient, and more sustainable. The Office will provide access to the information and knowledge that the County has accumulated, through their leadership in creating the OurCounty Sustainability Plan and the LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment. [CSO - Home \(lacounty.gov\)](http://lacounty.gov)