

Building Capacity and Water Resiliency for Tribal Governments and Disadvantaged Communities in CA

Organization: California Department of Water Resources – Office of the Tribal Policy Advisor, Executive Division, and Financial Assistance Branch, Division of Regional Assistance

Location: Sacramento, CA

Openings: 2 of 2

Project Focus: Water Management, Environmental Justice

Desired Skills: Community Engagement, Environmental Justice/Equity, Teamwork

Project Description

Drought Resilience for Small and Disadvantaged Communities

Organization: California Department of Water Resources – Water Use Efficiency Implementation Branch

Location: Sacramento, CA

Openings: 2 of 2

Project Focus: Water Management, Climate Adaptation

Desired Skills: Community Engagement, Graphic Design, Teamwork

Project Description

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Droughts are projected to become more frequent, longer, and more severe as climate change progresses, putting drinking water supplies at risk of running dry or becoming contaminated. As demonstrated by the most recent drought from 2012 to 2016, drought conditions disproportionately impacted low-income, small, and rural communities. Over 480,000 people relying on drought-impacted public water systems, jeopardizing health and exacerbating inequities for residents in disadvantaged and rural communities. Connecting with and providing informative guidance to the local governments and regional entities is critical to successfully improving drought resilience among the most disadvantaged communities in California. The Department of Water Resources (DWR)'s [Water Use Efficiency Implementation Branch](#) (WUE Branch) is seeking Fellows to assist in advancing a key initiative to support and guide local level drought planning among small water suppliers and county governments. Technical, managerial, and financial capacity make it difficult to follow new state requirements, especially when they are new and no guidance exists. As such, the project is proposed to improve this capacity by working with Lake County and Valencia Heights Water Company on the new drought planning requirements. At the same time, the proposed project seeks to support DWR to develop guidance, outreach and education materials for a larger set of small water suppliers (statewide, >4000) and county governments on how and why to implement the upcoming new drought planning requirements. The project will advance rigorous, structured planning for drought, which will better position Californian's to future recurring dry periods, as well as build preparedness and informed adaptation under the changing climate.

Upcoming legislation would require that small water suppliers and counties develop a Water Shortage Contingency Plan (latter for the residents on domestic wells). These would be new requirements and therefore necessitate state support through messaging, outreach materials, guidance, and data risk assessment tools. Before developing these materials for suppliers and counties statewide, piloting how to implement these requirements is a prudent first step, working directly with a small supplier and a county (both listed as beneficiaries above). Examples of tasks for the Fellows may include: (1) Focused discussions and a workshop with county planners in Lake County and other counties about planning and guidance needs for implementing new drought planning requirements; (2) Compile feedback from

discussions and workshops to develop priority areas for guidance and technical assistance needed for supporting counties and other regional organizations to conduct drought risk assessments; and (3) Develop draft guidance and communication (factsheets and instructions, others) materials on drought planning. The Fellows would take a lead role in crafting outreach materials and engage with the two local beneficiaries to design guidance tailored to their needs. The Fellows would work directly with the Lake County beneficiary to draft pilot guidance for developing a countywide water shortage contingency plan for rural households on domestic wells. As a parallel and related process, the Fellows would work with the Valencia Heights Water Company to develop guidance on assessing and mitigating drought risks. The Fellows would be hosted by DWR in downtown Sacramento and supported to engage with the two beneficiaries and other stakeholders to compile feedback and frame messaging and guidance in ways that it resonates with the beneficiaries.

The ideal Fellows will have an enthusiasm for and interest in learning about water resource management and drought resiliency planning for disadvantaged communities at a local and state level; willingness to engage with and listen to people with different interests and backgrounds; and willingness to travel to other parts of California occasionally as part of work. They should be organized, task-driven, and aware of various project timelines. Fellows that have excellent communication skills and experience with data management, databases, and statistics is preferred.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Serving with the Department of Water Resources offers the Fellows the opportunity to acquire a statewide view of issues and the demographics affected by water management issues. In addition to drought and climate resiliency efforts, DWR manages and makes public essential information to legislation and policy issues, for many water resources topics such as water management and water supply, power and infrastructure, dam safety and flood management, emergency response and education. DWR is headquartered in California's capitol city of Sacramento. The area is known as the City of Trees and as a Farm-to-Fork Capitol. It is rich in fresh produce with nearby agriculture, an abundance of natural recreation areas for hiking, camping, and boating, and also 2-3 hours away from Napa/Sonoma, Lake Tahoe, San Francisco and the Santa Cruz/Monterey Peninsula. The two Fellows will be a welcome addition to DWR's Water Use Efficiency team, comprised of environmental scientists, engineers, analysts and program managers. The fellowship will offer a unique career development opportunity for the Fellows by getting to work on implementing research and policies to help disadvantaged communities improve their capacity to manage drought conditions. During the program, DWR will offer coaching and mentorship, interacting with other DWR divisions and groups, introduction to staff in other state agencies also working on drought resiliency and climate adaptation, and participating in monthly Branch meetings.
