



CIVICWELL

Transforming Local Vision into Action

Formerly Local Government Commission (LGC)

Impact Report 2022

civicwell.org

Green infrastructure elements at the Elk Grove Nature Park

2022 IMPACT

We inspire, equip, connect, and cultivate civic leadership for local innovation and community change.

**INSPIRE
EQUIP
CONNECT
CULTIVATE**

\$246

MILLION IN STATE BUDGET

Our advocacy contributed to \$246M included in the state budget for adaptive reuse, SGMA implementation, and multi-benefit land repurposing

34

MILLION+ RESIDENTS

live in areas where CivicWell is building local government capacity

171

CIVICSPARK FELLOWS

across our 21-22 and 22-23 service years are building local capacity to address resilience issues in communities in CA, CO, and WA

27K

LEADERS

connected through coalition work, projects, and events

164,490

HOURS SERVED

21-22 CivicSpark Fellows served nearly 165K hours, a value of \$5.86 million

\$39

MILLION AWARDED

Provided outreach and technical assistance to under-resourced communities, with \$39 million awarded to local governments, nonprofits, transit agencies, and tribal governments for active transportation, clean mobility, urban greening, and water sustainability projects

12

BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

We supported 36 bills, 12 of which were signed into law

70%

of CivicSpark Alumni are still working in the public sector, and more than 80% are working in a relevant field

25

RESOURCES

new reports, tools, webinars, and papers created

\$4.87

MILLION RAISED

for community revitalization with assistance from our Funding Navigation platform

155

MEETINGS & EVENTS

organized to engage communities and move priorities forward

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Dear CivicWell members and friends,

2022 has been another year of extreme weather, coupled with landmark legislation to invest in the infrastructure and resiliency of our communities. We are honored to be part of this community of leaders committed to creating a more resilient, equitable, and healthy world.

Over the course of this year, CivicWell has experienced a number of changes that are propelling us into an exhilarating new chapter.

As we entered our 40th anniversary, we rebranded from the Local Government Commission to CivicWell in order to share a deeper story with a name that encompasses our ever-broadening and inclusive vision, and relaunched our membership program which now includes more benefits.

In March, after 15 years with the organization, our CEO Kate Wright left to become the new Executive Director of Climate Mayors, and I was asked by the CivicWell Board of Directors to step in as the Interim CEO. We have been engaged in the search for our new CEO, and look forward to introducing our next leader in 2023.

After eight years of growth throughout California, our CivicSpark AmeriCorps program now has expanded to Washington state and Colorado to build capacity within local governments there. Our work in technical assistance, statewide program administration involvement, and the Funding Navigation program has helped communities access nearly \$44 million for community revitalization and clean mobility projects.

We supported several climate and housing bills, twelve of which have been signed into law. And our team created a host of resources including webinars, reports, legislative trackers, and tools to support policymakers and practitioners.

Additionally, CivicWell has worked over the last couple of years to define and fully integrate our foundational commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Our commitment is to foster and nurture a community that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive to our staff, partners and the communities we engage. We understand that this is a journey that requires the ongoing dedication of our leadership, staff, and partners; and CivicWell is committed to embracing this path as an organization.

In 2023 we will hold our 31st annual Policymakers Conference, this time in beautiful Pacific Grove. The biannual California Adaptation Forum will return, along with the invigorating Climate and Energy Forum. We hope to see you at these events, and invite those of you who are not yet members to join our ever-growing network.

As always, thank you for your partnership and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Chow', written in a cursive style.

Kathy Chow
Interim CEO

An aerial photograph of a city waterfront, likely San Francisco, showing a large body of water, a marina with a sailboat, and a dense urban skyline with various skyscrapers. A large, thick, green curved graphic element is positioned at the top of the image, partially overlapping the sky and the city. The overall color palette is dominated by blues and greens.

Climate Change and Energy

CivicWell's Climate and Energy team provided a range of capacity building support to help local governments and community leaders navigate the increasingly complex climate landscape to access resources to bolster local and regional climate action.



CCEC Forum plenary with Angie Hacker, David Hochschild, Samuel Assefa, Lynn von Koch-Liebert, and Genevieve Shiroma

YEAR AT A GLANCE

CivicWell organized over 100 learning and networking opportunities to connect practitioners with one another and with new research, replicable strategies, and inspiration to mitigate and adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change.

Through ARCCA's legislative and climate resilience grant trackers, CCEC's funding and technical assistance directories, and various newsletters and online tools, we helped participants stay abreast of new opportunities and resources to support their work.

CivicWell also served as a liaison between State agencies and local practitioners to ensure local needs and priorities are reflected in State policies and programs, including the Scoping Plan, new grant programs, and the State Budget. With billions of dollars in climate investments hitting the streets in the new year, we will support communities in accessing these funds for equitable, holistic climate resilience projects.

The 13th Annual CCEC Forum provided much needed resources that will help further our Climate Action and Sustainability efforts, as well as encouraging, inspiring and uplifting networking opportunities.

NJ Mvondo, Chair, Yolo County Climate Action Commission



CCEC Forum panelists Stephanie Lemus, Nancy Barba, Mabell Garcia Paine, and Susana Moncada

Through the California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC), CivicWell organized the 13th Annual CCEC Forum, which was hosted in person for the first time since the pandemic. This highly successful event saw 341 participants representing 122 cities.



The program featured 83 speakers across 23 sessions and posters. 98% of survey respondents rated the forum highly. CCEC's monthly Local Energy Resources Network (LERN) meetings continued in 2022 with the LERN network growing to include 440 practitioners. CCEC also served as a key liaison between state agencies and local governments, submitting comments in response to the Air Resources Board's draft Scoping Plan and CA Energy Commission's draft Integrated Energy Policy Report.



ARCCA
Alliance of Regional Collaboratives
for Climate Adaptation

The Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA), one of CivicWell's three coalition programs, focused on advocating for State climate resilience investments, informing new grant programs including SGC's Regional Climate Collaboratives Grant Program and OPR's Local Adaptation Planning Grant Program, and helping adaptation practitioners keep track of legislation and upcoming funding opportunities.

ARCCA formed a new Advisory Board and hosted a member meeting to foster knowledge exchange and identify priorities for statewide collaboration. In the new year, with additional funding through the California Resilience Partnership, ARCCA will play an even greater role in advancing equitable adaptation policies and building regional capacity for implementation.

NEW CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY RESOURCES

[Partners Advancing Climate Equity Pilot Resources](#)

- [PACE Pilot Final Report](#)
- [Recommendations Report](#)
- [PACE Curriculum Resources](#)
- [Community Needs Assessment Toolkit](#)

[Climate Crossroads: California's Readiness to Act on Climate Resilience](#)

This landscape analysis report includes recommendations to inform the State's grant programs to foster more equitable and resilient communities.

[2022 California Legislative Updates](#)

- [ARCCA's 2022 Climate Adaptation Legislative Update](#)
- [CCEC's 2022 Energy Legislative Update](#)

[Local Government Sustainable Energy Coalition Regulatory Tracker](#)

This tracker provides information on all the proceedings LGSEC is currently tracking and engaged in, as well as links to all regulatory comments and proposals. Also see [LGSEC's 22-23 Policy Platform](#).

[ARCCA Climate Resilience Grant Tracker](#)

Provides ARCCA's best estimation of program development and grant timelines for new climate resilience grant programs.

[Collaboration in Electrification Planning](#)

CCEC published parts 1 and 2 of an article series on recovery and resilience by the Statewide Best Practices Coordinator, Angie Hacker.

The background of the slide features a close-up photograph of water cascading over dark, textured rocks. On the left side, there is a large, curved teal graphic element that partially overlaps the water and rocks. The overall lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the water and the rocks.

Water

In November, CivicWell and a diverse group of Groundwater Leadership Forum members under the leadership of the Water Foundation obtained a \$2 million Department of Water Resources grant to provide technical assistance to marginalized communities related to implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

2022 Water Projects

This year CivicWell's Water program focused on education and information sharing, community support, technical assistance, and funding identification. Here is a sampling of our water-related projects in 2022.

NGO GROUNDWATER COLLABORATIVE

As co-convenor and co-facilitator of the NGO Groundwater Collaborative, we welcomed 28 new members to our network of local community-based organizations, advocates, and nonprofit representatives working with local communities to ensure the equitable and effective implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Bilingual and Hybrid Annual Convening

In October, we organized and facilitated the 2022 NGO Groundwater Collaborative Convening with Clean Water Action. Attended by nearly 50 participants across two days, the event was held both virtually and in-person, with translation for Spanish speaking members and guests. Sessions covered sustainable groundwater management and ecosystems, water legislation, and key aspects of SGMA implementation. Participants received information on funding opportunities and tools to support local efforts, and had an opportunity to create the Collaborative's priorities and actions for 2023.

FUNDING SECURED FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY PLAN

CivicWell secured a \$277,539 Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant in partnership with the City of Newman for an intensive community-based planning effort for multimodal improvements, neighborhood connectivity, and multi-benefit green infrastructure.

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP

Led by the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative with CivicWell and Resilient Cities Catalyst, the Coastal Resilience Roadmap project is developing a model for equitable collaboration to align local planning priorities to advance projects that build coastal resilience. CivicWell helped establish a multi-sectoral cohort of ambassadors that includes community leaders, advocates, and local tribe, agency, institution and business representatives.



BORREGO SPRINGS

CivicWell worked closely with the Borrego Valley Stewardship Council (BVSC) to achieve nonprofit incorporation and obtain \$250,000 in funding from The San Diego Foundation and the Department of Water Resources to build organizational capacity and advance groundwater sustainability and community resilience.

FAIRMEAD GROUNDWATER RESILIENCE PROJECT

CivicWell helped Madera County Department of Water and Natural Resources obtain a \$180,188 Community Resilience Challenge Grant from the Bay Area Council Foundation to develop a plan for implementing groundwater recharge and land repurposing, and is helping coordinate the project partners (Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability and Sustainable Conservation) and outreach to local agencies.



Water Resources

SGMA AND SMALL FARMERS WHITE PAPER

We collaborated on [a report](#) with Clean Water Action, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, and others, revealing that among 14 local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies studied, few had considered the impacts of their Groundwater Sustainability Plans on small and underrepresented farmers. This report also includes projected impacts of groundwater decline on underrepresented farmers.

GROUNDWATER EXCHANGE WEBSITE AND WEBINAR SERIES

CivicWell revamped the [Groundwater Exchange online platform](#) that connects water managers, water users, and community members with tools and resources to support effective Groundwater Sustainability Plans. We also supported a [webinar series and office hours](#) on key groundwater themes.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WEBINAR

On October 18, CivicWell hosted [Implementing a Green Infrastructure Project: The Elk Grove Nature Park](#) with Cosumnes Community Services District Chief of Planning, Design, and Construction Paul Mewton and Board President Jaclyn Moreno; Urban Rain Design Principal Kevin R. Perry; City of Elk Grove Vice Mayor Darren Suen; and CivicWell Project Associate Diana Voss-Gonzalez. The webinar offered an overview of the Elk Grove Nature Park project and its grant funding process. The event has been watched by over 80 people.



Community Design

CivicWell hosted a webinar series, sponsored by Meta, that gathered leading experts to discuss housing topics. Events included housing in commercial corridors, Missing Middle Housing, and housing as a climate strategy. The webinars reached hundreds of people in multiple states and even abroad.



TRANSFORMING LOCAL VISION INTO ACTION

In 2022, CivicWell partnered with communities around the state to conduct local visioning, planning and implementation of solutions for equitable and sustainable transportation, housing, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and placemaking. We also provided intensive technical assistance to help underserved and marginalized communities develop proposals and access funding.

Local Plan Development

We worked with 12 jurisdictions to conduct collaborative community planning projects for which we had previously raised nearly \$2.75 million in Caltrans grants. We also prepared proposals partnership with jurisdictions which raised \$1.29 million for six communities whose projects will get underway in 2023.

Technical Assistance

Our efforts focused on building capacity and partnerships, equitable community engagement, grant funding landscapes, and translating ideas into competitive funding applications.

TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES

As a technical assistance provider on behalf of the Strategic Growth Council Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program, this year CivicWell assisted five tribal governments and three communities seeking funding for neighborhood-level planning and capital infrastructure projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve public health, and expand economic opportunity for residents.



Award Recipients
Of the ten TCC Awardees, six were assisted by CivicWell in their applications.



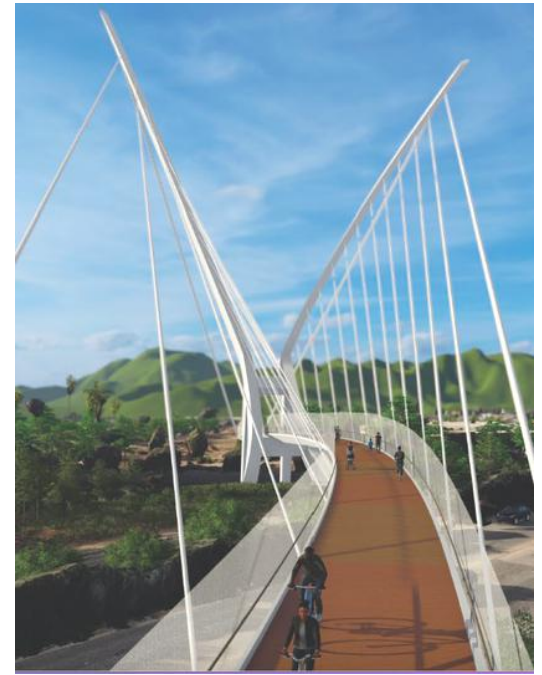
Total Awarded
The awardees whose applications CivicWell supported received a combined total of over \$39 million for their communities.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT *Richmond Greenway Gap*

The City of Richmond in partnership with CivicWell, Pogo Park, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and Fehr & Peers, is leading the development of a plan to connect the east and west ends of the Richmond Greenway by addressing the "Gap" at 23rd Street. The effort is funded by a \$208,280 Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant we prepared with the City.

This project will bridge the last remaining gap in the Greenway - a regional route connecting Marin County with the East Bay. In Richmond, the Greenway is divided by an active railway and arterial streets, requiring users to exit the trail and travel over ½ mile on a confusing route with stairs and difficult crossings.

The development of the plan is centered around an intensive outreach and community engagement effort that will result in a detailed plan with steps for the implementation of short and long-term solutions.



Top: Chula Vista Community Shuttle. Bottom: LACI's Zero Emissions Share Mobility for Rancho San Pedro

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT *Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program*

As part of the California Air Resources Board's Clean Mobility Options program administrative team, CivicWell has helped direct \$21 million to over 40 underserved communities and tribal governments since 2020 for shared mobility.

A portion of the funds are for collaborative assessments to identify unmet mobility needs, with the vast majority backing vouchers of up to \$1 million to implement shared mobility projects with zero emission vehicles, including bikesharing and scooter-sharing, carpooling and vanpooling, EV car sharing and innovative microtransit.

An additional \$21 million is available in the current round, and the application window for implementation projects will open in winter.



CivicSpark

Since the first cohort in 2014, CivicSpark Fellows have collectively served 962,832 hours.

With our current 22-23 cohort, CivicSpark will **surpass 1,000,000 hours** of service provided toward community resilience.

BROADENING OUR IMPACT

Since CivicSpark's launch in 2014, the AmeriCorps program has broadened its reach from specifically climate action towards broader community resilience. With more local governments and community organizations reporting limited capacity to address resilience threats including staffing, technical experience, and funding, CivicSpark has helped ensure that communities on the front lines of climate change have the capacity they need to respond.

90

Graduating Fellows

In August 2022, we graduated our 8th cohort of 90 Fellows.

This year, our Fellows have built capacity at the local level through successful implementation of climate action plans, reduction of solid waste streams, and much more.

2

New States

Our 2022-23 service year is well underway, and we are excited that our recent planning grant has come to fruition, with CivicSpark now reaching into the states of Colorado and Washington for the first time.



Fellows Serena Gu and Stephanie Holmes

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

City of Goleta, CA

Our never-ending waste stream has become apparent with places like the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and new studies on the dangers of microplastics.

Stephanie Holmes tackled this looming problem to center human and environmental health with the City of Goleta. Through research and dedication to chipping away at plastic waste, Stephanie and her site supervisor drafted a Polystyrene and Single-Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance, taking the City's AB 1276 compliance one step further.

Stephanie and her supervisor met with 19 community groups, and collaborated with a Specialist who helped them reach the Spanish-speaking community.



Through CivicSpark I had the opportunity to gain experience in the planning field for the first time! I have always been interested in a housing planning career to be involved in addressing the state's housing crisis...I look forward to expanding my knowledge and strengthening my skills to continue navigating this space.

Angelica Gonzalez, CivicSpark Fellow 20-22
Southern California Association of Governments



I have learned so much in such a short time about City government, Climate Action Plan implementation, General Planning, and Environmental Programs.

I have had the opportunity to lead and collaborate on various projects which have allowed me to interact with so many aspects of local government sustainability initiatives. Beyond developing my project skills, this experience has also been truly foundational in terms of orienting me to sustainability as a career in the public sector and beyond.

Alexa Kerr
 Fellow, City of La Mesa



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

City of La Mesa, CA

CivicSpark partnered with the City of La Mesa to support its Climate Action Plan implementation. Fellows Jackie Weeden and Alexa Kerr led projects around energy, solid waste, green infrastructure, transportation, and water. They completed La Mesa's 2021 Climate Action Plan (CAP) Annual Report and Environmental Justice Element Recommendation Report, and helped launch the Edible Food Recovery Program and La Mesa Green Business Network.

The Fellows also supported active transportation and tree canopy initiatives, and conducted community outreach for low-cost renewable energy. Their diverse projects helped La Mesa lead on their CAP and address environmental justice and social equity issues.



Jackie Weeden

The image features a photograph of the Florida State Capitol building, a large white neoclassical structure with a prominent dome and a smaller lantern on top. The building is framed by lush green trees and a clear sky. A large teal circular graphic is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the building and the sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, set against a dark, semi-transparent background.

Policy

In 2022, CivicWell's policy team supported 36 bills supported, 12 of which were signed into law.

We co-sponsored SB 852, and will host a webinar in early 2023 to help local governments understand and utilize the new tool of Climate Resilience Districts.



2022 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

Climate and Housing

Climate and housing provided the underpinning to a big year legislatively, generating dozens of bills that became law. Among them, four major climate bills were signed into law by Governor Newsom as well as three significant housing bills. CivicWell played an active role in these areas as well as water, energy, and transportation. The highlight of the year came with the signing of SB 852 by Senator Dodd, sponsored by CivicWell, which allows local governments to form climate resilience districts.

While a second bill we sponsored, SB 1369 by Senator Wieckowski which would have allowed the adaptive reuse of office and retail buildings by right, was not successful, \$150 million was included in the state budget for that purpose. Advocacy by us and others also resulted in \$40 million for multi-benefit land repurposing of agricultural lands and \$56 million for further implementation of SGMA.

KEY CLIMATE BILLS

[AB 1279 \(Muratsuchi\)](#)

Requires achieving carbon neutrality by 2045.

[AB 1757 \(Christina Garcia\)](#)

Requires "ambitious" targets for natural carbon sequestration and nature-based climate solutions.

[SB 1020 \(Laird\)](#)

Establishes interim standards for clean energy production to reach 100% by 2045.

[SB 1137 \(Gonzalez\)](#)

Establishes a 3,200 foot buffer around sensitive land uses from new fossil fuel wells and facilities.

KEY HOUSING BILLS

[AB 2097 \(Friedman\)](#)

Eliminates parking minimums for residential and commercial building in high transit areas.

[AB 2011 \(Wicks\)](#)

Permits conversion of office and commercial properties to residential uses by right with designated percentages of affordable units.

[SB 6 \(Caballero\)](#)

Makes residential uses allowable in office and commercial zones under specified conditions.

CivicWell was instrumental in the success of SB 852 by providing timely, professional, knowledgeable, and critical support at each step of the legislative process. Thanks to CivicWell, local governments will now be able to take on their most significant climate challenges.

*Bill Dodd
State Senator
Author, SB 852*



BILL SPOTLIGHT

SB 852 by Senator Bill Dodd

SB 852 by Sen. Bill Dodd gives local communities the option to fashion a comprehensive, unified approach to the greatest challenges of climate change facing their region. For the first time, communities will be able to establish a predictable flow of funding for projects.

The law:

- Authorizes cities, counties, or special districts, singly or in combination, to establish climate resilience districts
- Gives districts the flexibility to identify the most important priorities for their own community
- Authorizes the districts to undertake and maintain projects related to wildfire, drought, flooding, and extreme heat, cold, rain, or snow
- Emphasizes the need to use nature-based approaches and to focus on vulnerable populations
- Allows the districts to be financed by tax increment funds or voter-approved supplemental property taxes, benefit assessments, or fees
- Allows districts to receive federal, state, local, or private funding to help underwrite projects and programs

BILL SPOTLIGHT

AB 2011 by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks

AB 2011, the Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022, addresses two categories of housing: 1) 100% affordable projects, and 2) mixed income projects. Projects that are 100% affordable have the right to be built subject to a streamlined ministerial review where office, retail, or parking are permitted uses if, among other requirements, it:

- Is within an urbanized area
- Is surrounded by at least 75% urban use parcels
- Is not on a site or adjoined by a site with 33% or more industrial uses
- Is not an environmentally sensitive site
- Has at least two-thirds of square footage for residential uses
- Meets or exceeds minimum specified density requirements.

The bill makes mixed income projects a use by right and subject to streamlined ministerial review where office, retail, or parking are permitted uses if, among other requirements, it:

- Is within an urbanized area with a minimum frontage on a commercial corridor of 50 feet and is a parcel less than 20 acres
- Does not demolish existing housing
- Is not on a site or adjoined by a site with 33% or more industrial uses
- Has at least two-thirds of square footage for residential uses
- Meets or exceeds minimum specified density requirements

CIVICWELL IN THE MEDIA



The Sacramento Bee

California Has Been in a Megadrought for More Than a Decade



USA Today

Electric vehicles for everyone?



CalMatters

State Lawmakers Reject Bill to Curb Farms' Water Pumping.

Join the CivicWell network to receive event discounts, webinars, resources, information about funding opportunities, and more.

Become a CivicWell Member

I joined [CivicWell] because I want to be a part of a solution oriented statewide organization that integrates civic engagement with environmental, social, and economic priorities.

Zach Hilton

Councilmember, City of Gilroy



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Supervisor, Kern County



Mike Wilson, Board Vice-Chair
Supervisor, Humboldt County



Heidi Hall, Board Secretary/Treasurer
Supervisor, Nevada County



Catherine Blakespear
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Tom Butt
Mayor, City of Richmond



Ronaldo Fierro
Councilmember, City of Riverside



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