

Local Community Investment Fund

Call for Projects:
Benicia and Surrounding Communities

Bay Area Air District
October 2025

BACKGROUND

Background

The Bay Area Air District established the Community Benefits Penalty Funds Policy to directly support communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution. When penalties are assessed against entities violating air quality regulations, this policy enables penalty funds to be reinvested directly back to communities through impactful projects. Penalty funds are allocated to the Local Community Benefits Fund or the Regional Community Benefits Fund.

The Local Community Benefits Fund reinvests back in the specific community affected by the air quality violations that led to the penalty. The Local Community Benefits Fund may also invest mitigation funds that are more limited in their scope.

The Local Community Benefits Fund goals are to:

- Reduce air pollution or mitigate air pollution impacts, improve public health outcomes and build economic resilience for a just transition.
- Advance innovative and integrated projects that drive transformation.
- Strengthen community-led and collaborative solutions.

This Call for Projects requests project proposals from eligible applicants in Benicia and surrounding communities. Please refer to the Local Community Benefits Fund Guidelines for overall grant information.

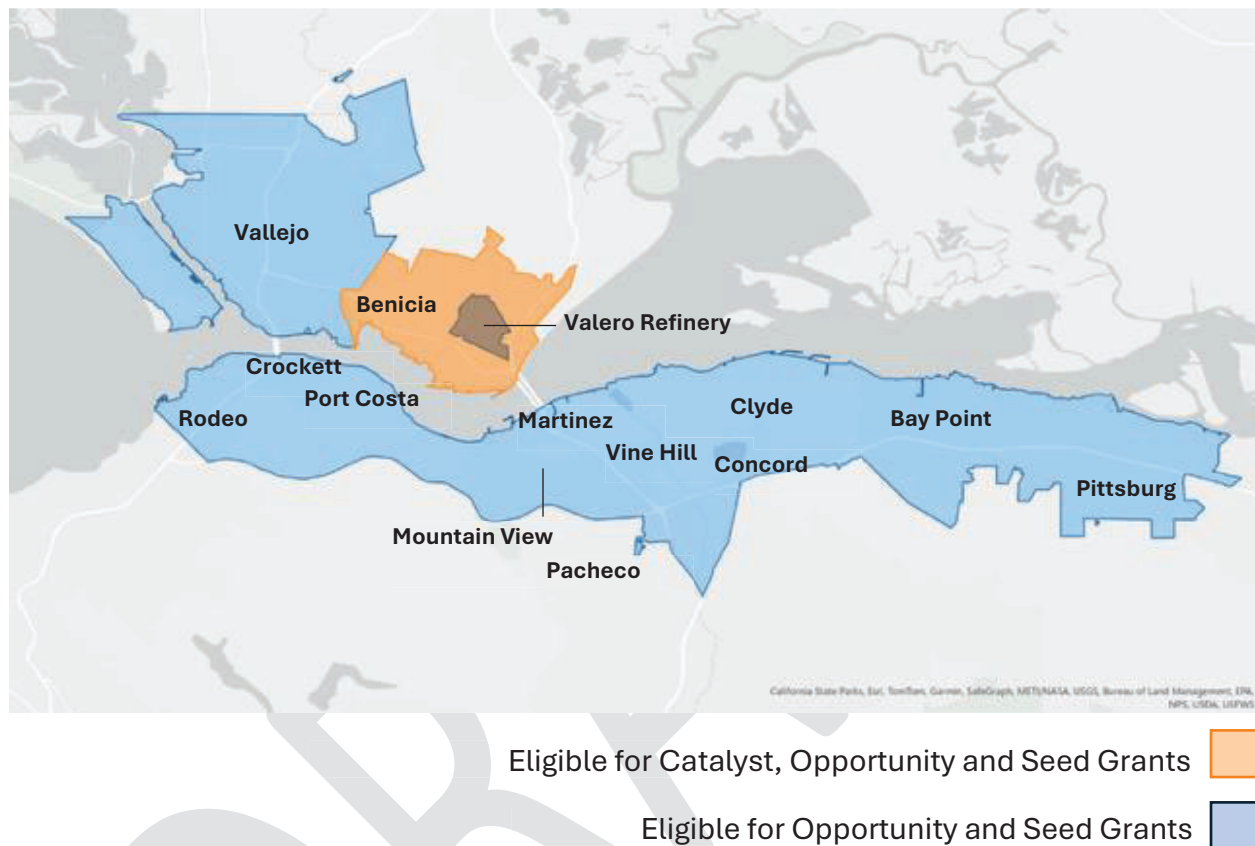
Funding Source

The Air District, in conjunction with the California Air Resources Board, fined Valero Refining Company for air quality violations in October 2024. A portion of the penalty money has been allocated to the Local Community Benefits Fund.

The Local Community Benefits Fund for Benicia and surrounding communities has \$60,011,061 in available funding. This funding estimate may be revised to account for any accrued interest.

ELIGIBILITY

Figure 1: Communities eligible for funding from the Local Community Benefit Fund



Eligible Communities

Projects located in Benicia and surrounding communities, as shown in Figure 1, are eligible for funding.

- Projects located in Benicia are eligible for Catalyst, Opportunity, and Seed Grants.
- Projects located in the surrounding communities highlighted in blue in Figure 1 are eligible for Opportunity and Seed Grants:
 - Vallejo
 - Rodeo
 - Crockett
 - Port Costa
 - Martinez (areas north of Highway 4)
 - Mountain View
 - Vine Hill

- o Pacheco
- o Concord (areas north of Highway 4, and south of Highway 4 between I-680 and Highway 242)
- o Clyde
- o Bay Point
- o Pittsburg

How Community Eligibility Was Determined

The Air District identified the City of Benicia, where the Valero refinery is located, as an eligible community.

To identify additional eligible communities, the Air District conducted an analysis and developed an eligibility map that was informed by estimates of long-term air pollution exposure and community vulnerability:

- The analysis modeled PM_{2.5} contributions from the Valero refinery on an annual-average basis and weighted the results by population to create a proxy for overall refinery-related exposure. The Air District compared these population-weighted exposure levels in surrounding places with those in Benicia.
- The analysis also assessed community vulnerability using CalEnviroScreen, a statewide tool that combines pollution burden and population factors such as exposure to multiple pollutants, rates of asthma, and socioeconomic data.
- Finally, the analysis considered common-sense geographic and jurisdictional boundaries, terrain features, and transportation corridors to simplify eligibility criteria and ease implementation (for example, areas north of Highway 4).

The Air District recognizes that any map-based eligibility designation reflects underlying data and methodological limitations. Air quality modeling is based on the best available information, but they cannot capture every source of exposure, every variation in community vulnerability, or short-term pollution events. Please see Appendix A for additional details on the methodology used to identify eligible communities.

Grant Awards

The Local Community Benefits Fund supports integrated projects that reduce air pollution or mitigate air pollution impacts, improve public health outcomes, and build economic resilience for a just transition. Where sufficient funding is available, the Local Community Benefits Fund is focused on funding consolidated, larger grants with multiple projects that result in more immediate benefits within the community.

The Local Community Benefits Fund for Benicia and surrounding communities has \$58,631,131 in available funding. Funding will be distributed through three grant types. Catalyst Grants are the primary focus of the Local Community Benefits Fund, and it is expected that a majority of the available funding will be awarded to Catalyst Grants.

	Catalyst	Opportunity	Seed
Objective	Integrated projects that holistically meet community needs.		
Funding Availability	\$60,011,061		
Grant Size	\$10 - \$40 million (1 – 3 grant awards anticipated)	\$500,000 - \$5 million (1 - 5 grant awards anticipated)	\$100,000 - \$200,000 (1 - 5 grant awards anticipated)
Grant Term	Up to 5 years	Up to 3 years	Up to 2 years
Eligible Applicants	Lead Applicant must partner with multiple Co-Applicants	Lead Applicant must partner with at least 1 Co-Applicant(s)	Open to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations only, no Co-Applicant required
Eligible Communities	Benicia	Benicia and surrounding communities	Benicia and surrounding communities

APPENDIX A: ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES METHODOLOGY

To identify an initial list of eligible communities, the Air District applied a place-based method that pairs modeled refinery-attributable PM_{2.5} with CalEnviroScreen 4.0:

- Exposure. To characterize relative exposure to air pollution from the Valero refinery, the Air District modeled annual-average PM_{2.5} attributable to typical refinery operations; population-weighted averages for other places were compared to the average level for Benicia.
- Community Vulnerability. To characterize vulnerability, the Air District used scores from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#). CalEnviroScreen publishes score for Census tracts, which were combined using population-weighted averaging to produce scores for cities, towns, and unincorporated areas, including those labeled in Figure 1.

Why PM_{2.5} Exposure? PM_{2.5} is emitted by a variety of refinery sources with different release characteristics and serves as a useful proxy for exposure impact from a facility. Air quality modeling accounts for meteorology and topography, as well as the distance between sources and places. Available modeling of PM_{2.5} impacts from Bay Area refineries was used in this analysis, and the modeling results represent annual-average PM_{2.5} impacts from typical refinery operations, not short-term impacts from a specific release or event.

Why CalEnviroScreen? CalEnviroScreen is the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's mapping tool that identifies California communities that are most affected by many sources of pollution, and where people are especially vulnerable to pollution's effects. CalEnviroScreen considers environmental, health and socioeconomic data to assess overall cumulative impact.