



Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience

FY25–26 Measure Q Grant Program Preliminary Funding Recommendations

Citizens Oversight Advisory Board | May 6, 2025

SECTION 1

**MEASURE Q FUNDING
OVERVIEW**

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildfire Protection Act



Authorized by voters in **November 2024**.

\$87 annual parcel tax; generates approximately **\$7M** annually.

Jointly administered by **County Parks/OR3**

40% of revenue expended through a **competitive grant program**



Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildfire Protection Act



Land Trust / RCD

20%

\$700k / ea

Cities

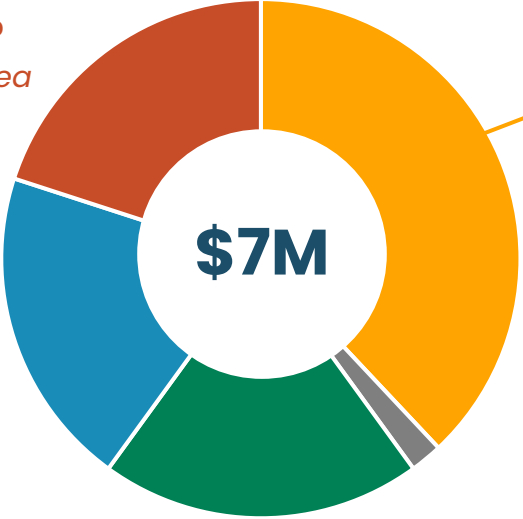
20%

- Santa Cruz ~\$546k
- Capitola ~\$200k
- Scotts Valley \$200k
- Watsonville ~\$456k

Unincorporated County

20%

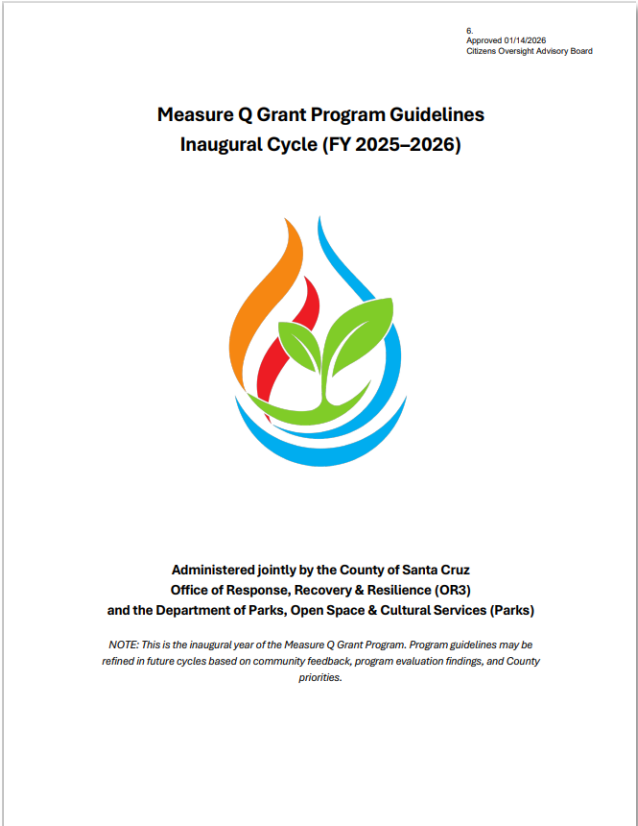
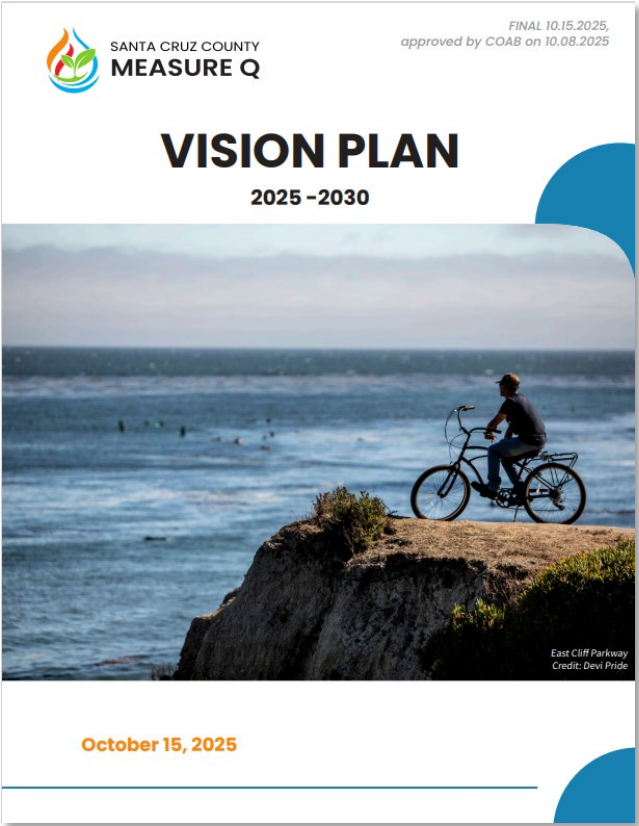
~\$1.4M



40 % (\$2.8M)
Competitive Grant Program
5% admin budget (~\$180k)

Grant Program Design

VISION PLAN + GRANT GUIDELINES



Vision Plan 2025 – 2030

Thematic Priorities (3)



Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health

Fuel reduction, defensible space, community preparedness, forest management, prescribed fire



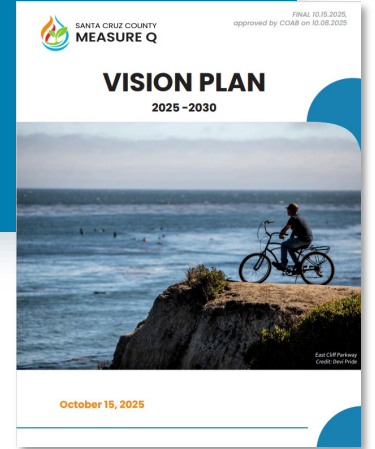
Water Resources Management

Watershed protection, stormwater management, groundwater recharge, water quality



Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Trail improvements, park access, community programs, equitable access to nature and open space

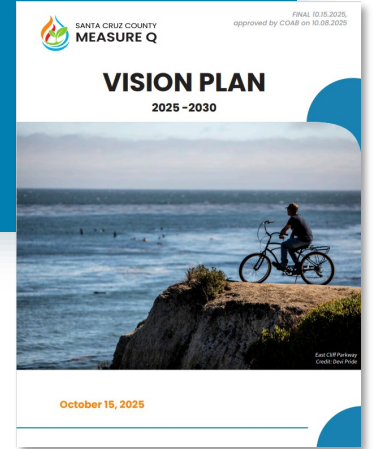


**Project types +
Priority
geographies**

+ 3 non-priority themes (Wildlife & Habitat, Agricultural Lands, Coastal Protection) – projects are eligible but will score lower against Vision Plan alignment

Vision Plan 2025 – 2030

Prioritization Principles



Core Principles

- Multi-benefit outcomes
- Match funding and leverage potential
- Equity impact
- Climate resilience value

Secondary Principles

- Public benefit
- Readiness
- Strategic alignment

Grant Guidelines FY25–26

~\$2.5M Annually

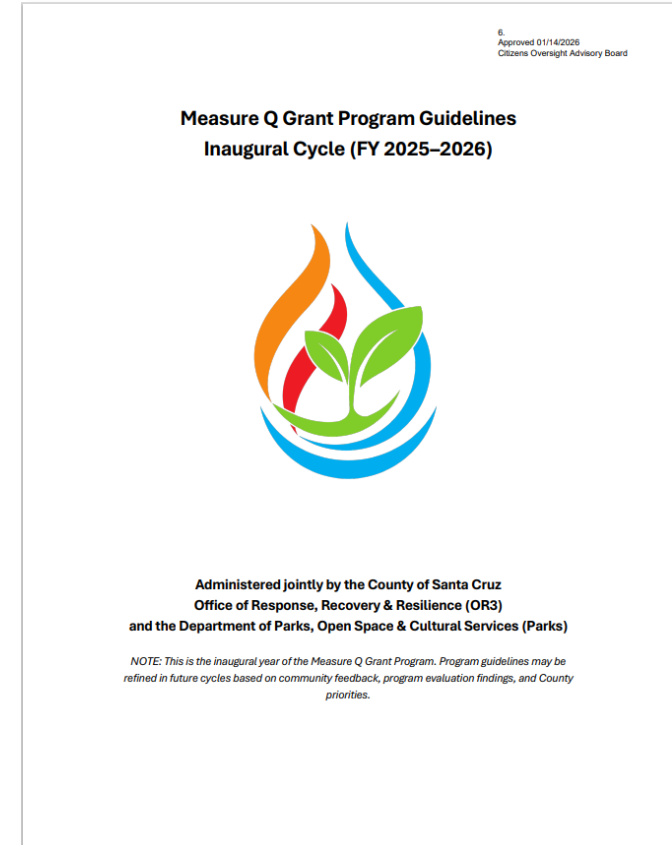
Nonprofits, Public Agencies, Tribes

Tier 1 – Community Catalyst | \$5k – \$50k

Tier 2 – Community Impact | \$50k – 500k

San Vicente Redwoods Set – Aside | \$600k

Pajaro Valley Set – Aside | \$600k



Scoring Rubric (100 Points)

Grant GUIDELINES FY25-26



Tier 1 – Community Catalyst

Alignment with Vision Plan / **40**

Community Benefit / **30**

Feasibility / **20**

Innovation or Capacity / **10**

Bonus / **5**

Tier 2 – Community Impact

Alignment with Vision Plan / **25**

Community Benefit / **20**

Wildlife & Environmental Benefit / **15**

Project Feasibility + Readiness / **15**

Partnerships + Collaboration / **10**

Budget, Cost-Effectiveness & Leverage / **10**

Maintenance & Monitoring / **5**

Bonus / **5**

SECTION 2

**FY25-26 GRANT CYCLE
APPLICATION POOL**

Application Pool Overview

53

total applications received

29

Tier 1 Community Catalyst (\$5k - \$50k)

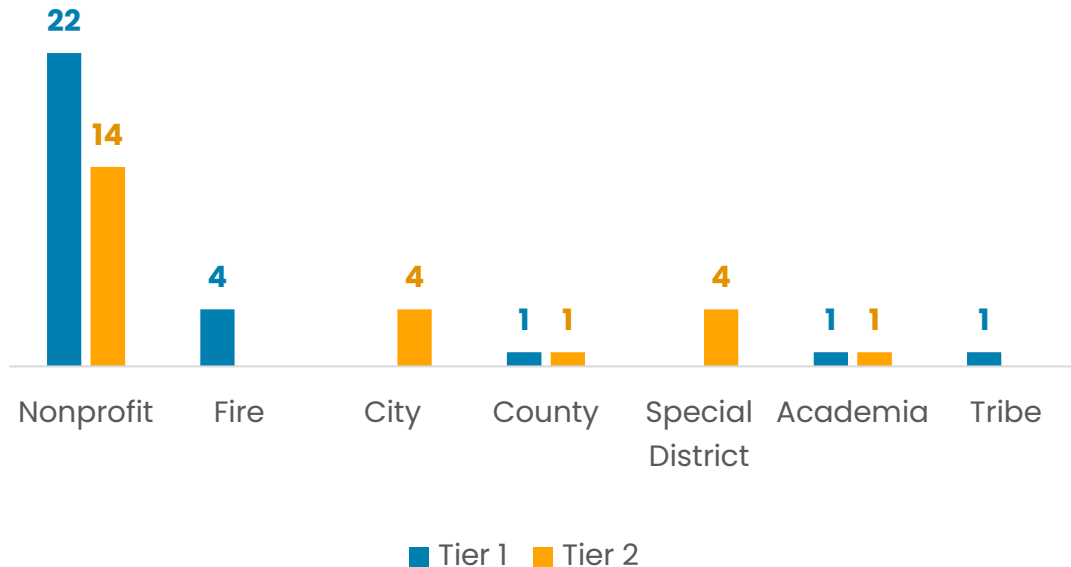
24

Tier 2 Community Impact (\$50k - \$500k)

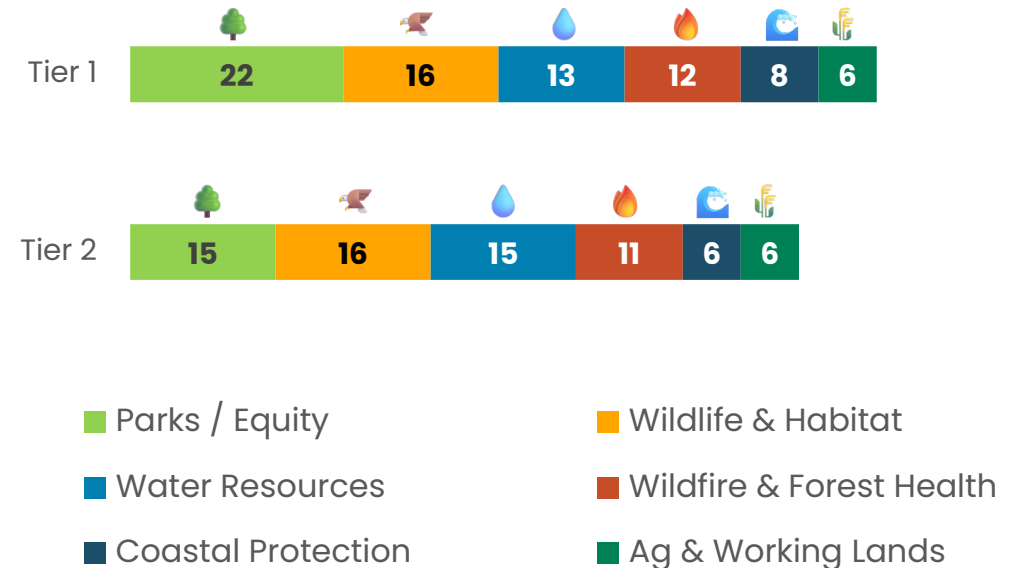
\$8.9M

Combined funding request

Application Count by Organization Type



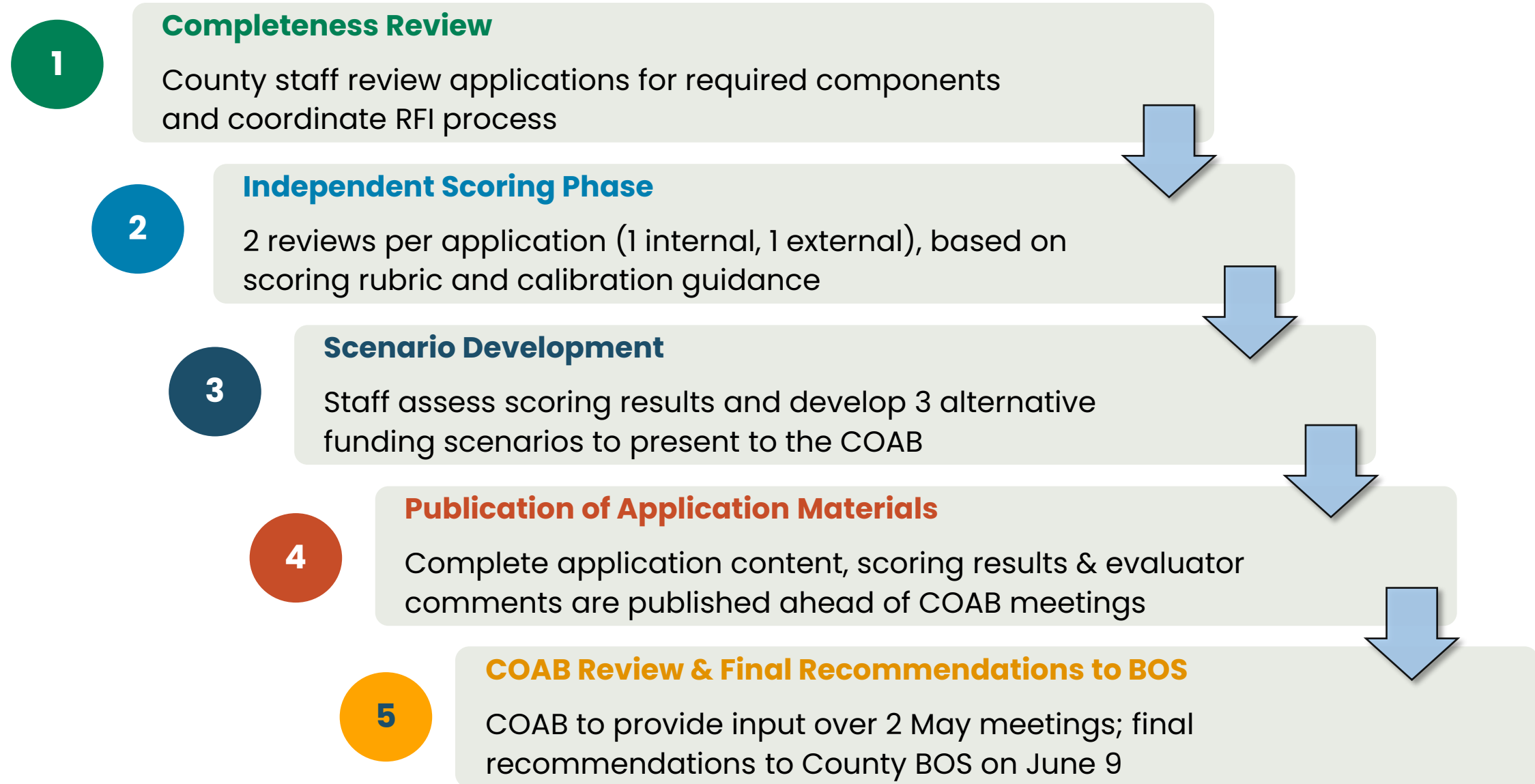
Application Count by Thematic Focus Area & Tiers



SECTION 3

**GRANT EVALUATION
PROCESS**

Grant Evaluation Process (March 16 – April 15)



Evaluation Results Overview

53

total applications received

29

Tier 1 Community Catalyst (\$5k - \$50k)

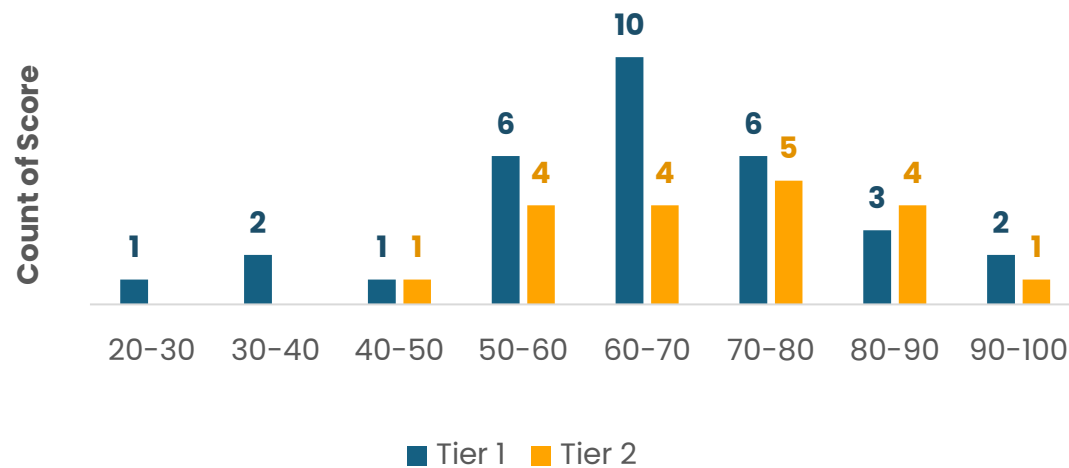
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Tier 2 Community Impact (\$50k - \$500k)

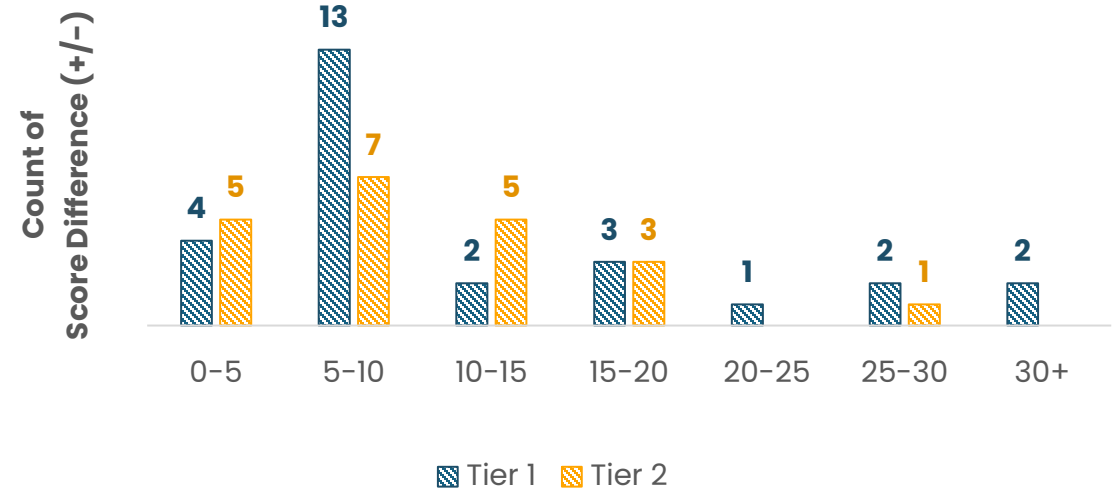
\$8.9M

Combined funding request

Score Distribution by Tier

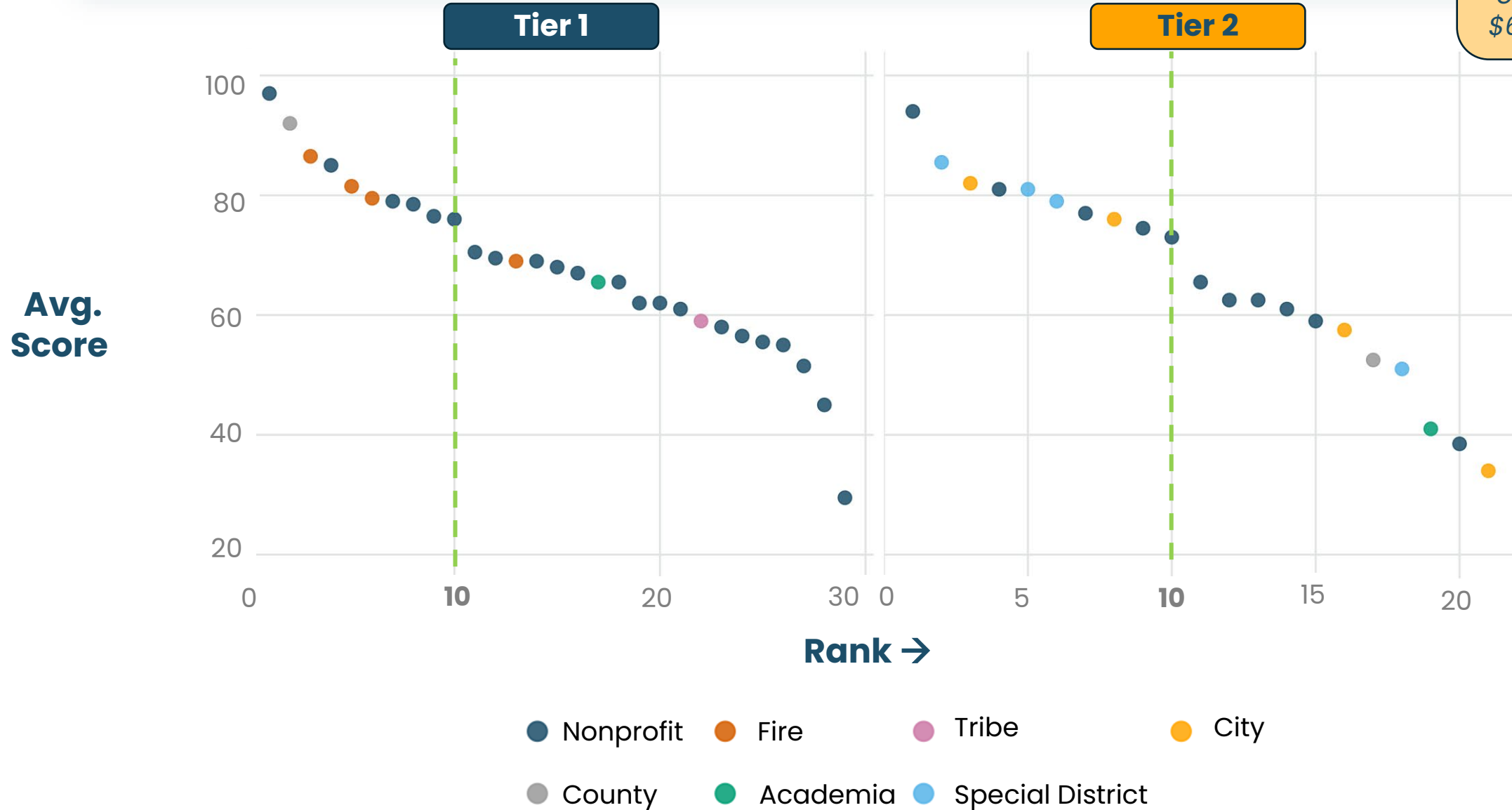


Abs. Score Variance by Tier



Evaluation Results Overview

Not scored – SVR set-aside (3 applications exactly equal to \$600k minimum)





Scoring Results – Themes

- **Higher between-evaluator score variance for Tier 1** – greater diversity of project types (environmental education, wayfinding, restoration)
- **Supplemental calibration guidance** supported reviewers in maintaining consistency across applications for large point total categories (0-40)
- **Public agencies** represented strongly in the Top 10 – often strategically well-positioned to implement projects aligned with the VP, but also highlights need for transparent applicant resources and guidance
- **AI-generated narrative content** can easily recycle Vision Plan language; emphasizes need to focus on impact metrics and objective scoring criteria
- **High concentration of South County** projects within the top 10 – priority geography / equity benefits mapped well against grant scoring criteria.
- **Return to COAB** in August with a comprehensive After-Action Review and recommendations to improve FY26-27 grant guidelines

Evaluation Results – Top 10 Scoring Projects

Tier 1

Project Title / Themes	Organization	Amount \$	Avg. Score	Rank
River Stewards 💧 🌳 🦅	Coastal Watershed Council	\$50,000	97	1
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms 💧 🦅	Santa Cruz County Parks	\$48,000	92	2
Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative 🔥	Santa Cruz County Fire	\$6,000	86.5	3
Kids2Parks 🌳 🦅	Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	\$14,915	85	4
Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness 🔥	Santa Cruz County Fire	\$43,982	81.5	5
Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas – Pilot 💧 🔥	Santa Cruz County Fire	\$29,158	79.5	6
Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired 🌳	Vista Center	\$50,000	79	7
Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County 🌳 🌊	Black Surf Santa Cruz	\$50,000	78.5	8
Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth 🌳	Boys & Girls Club of SC	\$50,000	76.5	9
Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project 🔥	South Skyline FSC	\$10,000	76	10

Evaluation Results – Top 10 Scoring Projects

Tier 2

Project Title / Themes	Organization	Amount \$	Avg. Score	Rank
Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project 💧 🌳 🦋	Watsonville Wetlands Watch	\$350,000	94	1
Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot 💧 🔥 🦋 🌱	Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	\$342,140	85.5	2
Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project 🌳	City of Watsonville	\$600,000	82	3
PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project 🌳	PVUSD	\$500,000	81	5
Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play 🌳 🦋	Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks	\$279,500	81	4
Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study 💧 🦋	Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency	\$390,000	79	6
Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews 🌳 🦋	Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County	\$509,000	77	7
San Lorenzo Flood Control System – Debris Boom Project 💧 🦋 🌊	City of Santa Cruz	\$300,000	76	8
Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative 🔥 🌳	Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	\$398,266	74.5	9
Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County 🔥 🦋	Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association	\$399,360	73	10

SECTION 4

FUNDING SCENARIOS

Funding Scenario Frameworks

Tier 2 totals exclude 3 SVR Set-Aside projects which were excluded from competitive scoring framework and are funded in all scenarios. All 3 scenarios meet or exceed PV Set-Aside requirement of >\$600k.

Scenario A

Scores Only

Fund top 6-7 scoring projects in each category until budget is allocated.

Tier 1: [7 awards / \$192,055] | Tier 2: [6 awards / \$1,939,500]

✓ Straightforward, defensible alignment with grant scoring guidelines

⚠ Geographic concentration in South County (75% of Tier 2 dollars)

⚠ Public agencies dominate top-scoring projects

Scenario B

Geographic Balance

Redistributes award among top 10 scoring projects in each category to achieve greater geographic balance across the county.

Tier 1: [7 awards / \$272,915] | Tier 2: [7 awards / \$1,869,626]

✓ Highest Tier 1 total; most funded projects

✓ Greatest county-wide geographic balance

⚠ Deviation from rank order; removal of South County Projects which are highly aligned with Vision Plan

Scenario C

Scale of Impact

Selects projects from top 10 with greater focus on objective impact metrics (i.e., # of people served, acres treated)

Tier 1: [7 awards / \$198,055] | Tier 2: [7 awards / \$1,939,766]

✓ Objective rationale, maximizes 2 year impact and community visibility of grant program

⚠ Less tethered to competitive grant application guidelines made available to applicants

Scenario A – Ordinal Rank

Tier 1 Total \$192,055 **Tier 2 Total \$2,539,500**



TIER 1

Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
River Stewards Coastal Watershed Council	\$50,000
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms Santa Cruz County Parks	\$48,000
Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative Santa Cruz County Fire	\$6,000
Kids2Parks Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	\$14,915
Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness Santa Cruz County Fire	\$43,982
Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas – Pilot Santa Cruz County Fire	\$29,158
Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired Vista Center	—
Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County Black Surf Santa Cruz	—
Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth Boys & Girls Club of SC	—
Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project South Skyline FSC	—

TIER 2

TIER 2 Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project Watsonville Wetlands Watch	\$350,000 PV
Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	\$300,000*
Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project City of Watsonville	\$400,000* PV
Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks	\$279,500
PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project PVUSD	\$500,000 PV
Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency	\$110,000*
Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County	—
San Lorenzo Flood Control System – Debris Boom Project City of Santa Cruz	—
Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	—
Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association	—
San Vicente Set-Aside (Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs, Botanical Resource Management, Public Access Improvement) Peninsula Open Space Trust	\$600,000

Scenario B – Geo. Balance

Tier 1 Total \$272,915 Tier 2 Total \$2,469,626



TIER 1

Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
River Stewards Coastal Watershed Council	\$50,000
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms Santa Cruz County Parks	\$48,000
Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative Santa Cruz County Fire	—
Kids2Parks Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	\$14,915
Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness Santa Cruz County Fire	—
Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas – Pilot Santa Cruz County Fire	—
Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired Vista Center	\$50,000
Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County Black Surf Santa Cruz	\$50,000
Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth Boys & Girls Club of SC	\$50,000
Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project South Skyline FSC	\$10,000

TIER 2
















TIER 2 Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project Watsonville Wetlands Watch	\$350,000 PV
Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	\$282,000*
Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project City of Watsonville	—
Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks	\$230,000* PV
PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project PVUSD	—
Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency	\$110,000* PV
Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County	—
San Lorenzo Flood Control System – Debris Boom Project City of Santa Cruz	\$100,000*
Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	\$398,266
Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association	\$399,360
San Vicente Set-Aside (Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs, Botanical Resource Management, Public Access Improvement) Peninsula Open Space Trust	\$600,000

Scenario C – Scale of Impact



























Tier 1 Total \$248,055 Tier 2 Total \$2,539,766



TIER 1

Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
River Stewards   Coastal Watershed Council	\$50,000
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms   Santa Cruz County Parks	—
Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative  Santa Cruz County Fire	—
Kids2Parks   Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	\$14,915
Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness  Santa Cruz County Fire	\$43,982
Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas – Pilot   Santa Cruz County Fire	\$29,158
Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired  Vista Center	\$50,000
Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County   Black Surf Santa Cruz	\$50,000
Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth  Boys & Girls Club of SC	—
Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project  South Skyline FSC	\$10,000

TIER 2

TIER 2 Project Title / Themes	Award Amount
Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project    Watsonville Wetlands Watch	\$350,000 PV
Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot     Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	\$282,000*
Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project  City of Watsonville	\$400,000* PV
Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play   Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks	\$279,500
PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project  PVUSD	—
Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study   Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency	\$110,000*
Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews   Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County	—
San Lorenzo Flood Control System – Debris Boom Project    City of Santa Cruz	\$120,000*
Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative   Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	\$398,266
Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County   Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association	—
San Vicente Set-Aside (Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs, Botanical Resource Management, Public Access Improvement)     Peninsula Open Space Trust	\$350,000 PV

Why Scenarios?

Why scenarios instead of a single recommendation:

- Applicants submitted proposals in good faith based on published guidelines; award decisions ultimately should trace back to guidelines and the Vision Plan as opposed to individual project preferences
- Public discussion regarding tradeoffs, values, and limitations of scoring & evaluation framework can be captured to improve the grant process over time

What COAB IS being asked to do:

- ✓ Choose which program-level value(s) should inform final award recommendations out of the top 10 scoring projects

What COAB is NOT being asked to do:

- × Pick or pass on individual projects
- × Override scores

Grant Award Timeline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Status</u>
January 26 – March 13	Application period	Complete
March 16 – April 15	Evaluation period	Complete
April 22	Grant evaluation results published	Complete
May 6	COAB Meeting #1 – Preliminary funding recommendations (scenarios)	Today
May 27	COAB Meeting #2 – Final funding recommendation	Pending
June 9	Final grant funding selections presented to Board of Supervisors	Pending

Questions?

Thank You

