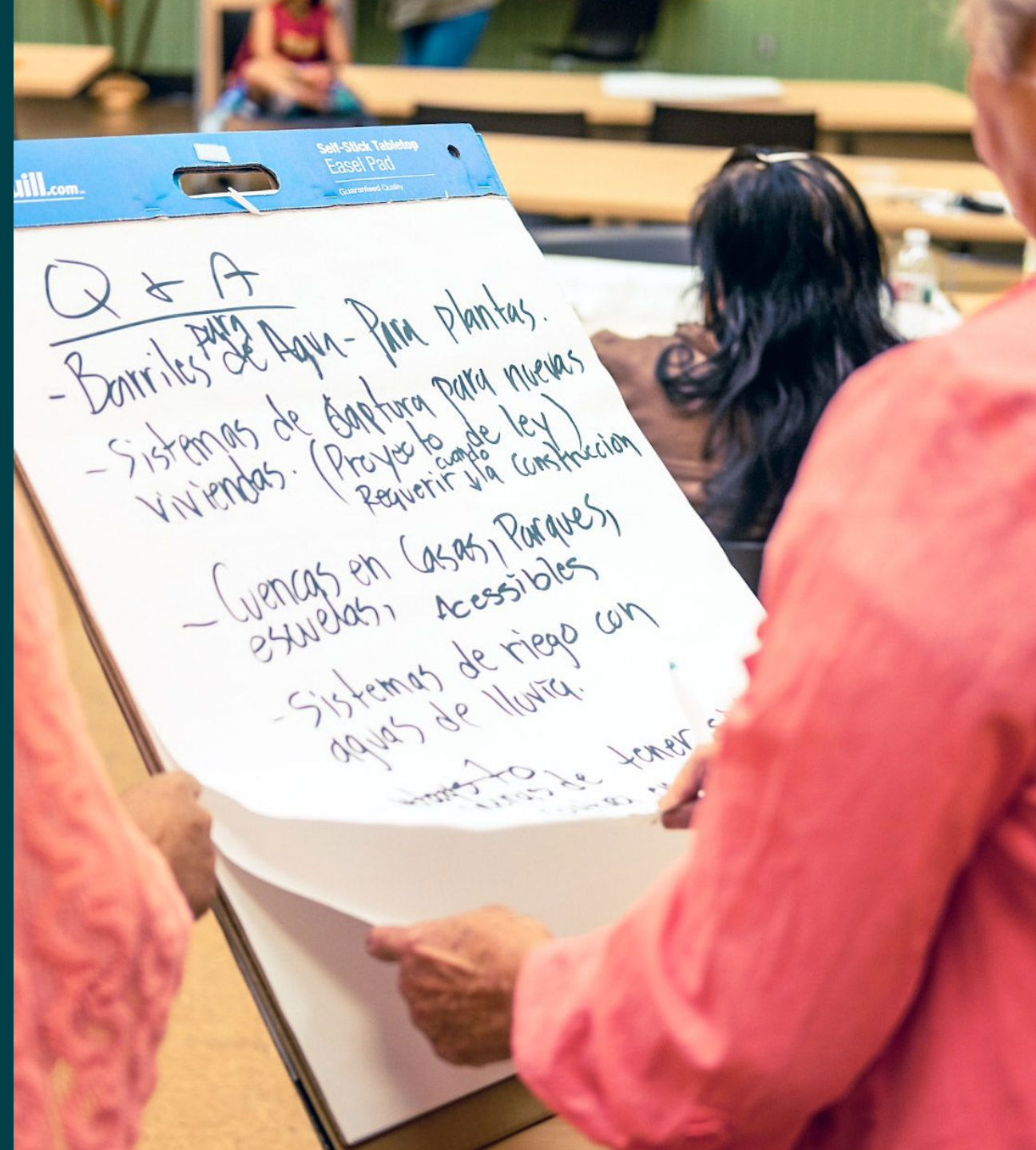


SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

February 19, 2026

Assessing Disadvantaged Community Benefits and Community Support for FY 26-27 Project Applications

Santa Clara River WASC



Purpose

- Inform WASC decision-making regarding direct benefits to disadvantaged communities
- Describe the community outreach and engagement conducted by applicants
- Review community strengths and needs assessment and documented community support relevant to project proposals



Program Definitions

“Disadvantaged Community” means a census block group that has an annual median household income of < 80% of the Statewide annual median household income.

- **'Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Benefit'** means a Water Quality Benefit, Water Supply Benefit, and/or Community Investment Benefit located in a DAC or providing benefits directly to a DAC population.”
(Section 16.03(I))
- **SCWP Disadvantaged Community Benefit Policy:** Provide Disadvantaged Community Benefits that are $\geq 110\%$ of the ratio of the disadvantaged community population to the total population in the Watershed Area. (Section 18.04 (J))
 - To date, the SCR SIPs have met and exceeded required investment in disadvantaged communities.

Direct Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities

Whether a Project provides a “direct benefit” to disadvantaged communities will be a **decision made by WASCs on a project-by-project basis**, considering:

- The priorities and concerns of the community
- The goals of the SCW Program
- The benefits provided to the community by each project
- The area within which those benefits will be felt

Projects provide a Disadvantaged Community Benefit if:

Any part of the project is located within a census block group designated as a disadvantaged community.

OR

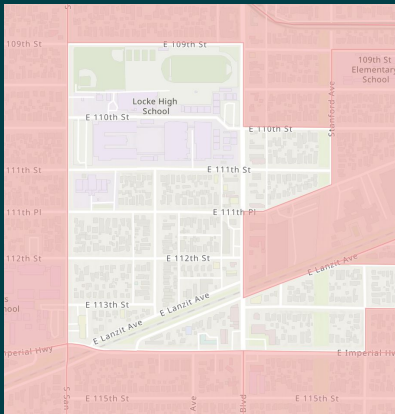
The project is **not located** within a census block group designated as a disadvantaged community **BUT it provides a “direct benefit”** to a census block group designated as a disadvantaged community.

How can you as a WASC validate direct benefits?

Hearing from community members is the best way to validate a direct benefit.

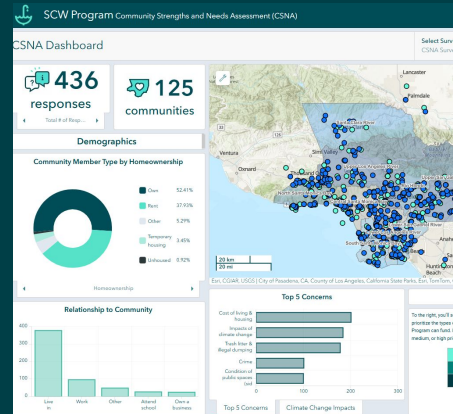
Other Possible Considerations:

Adjacency:

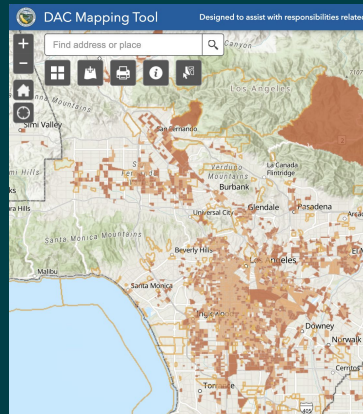


Some projects are near disadvantaged block groups.

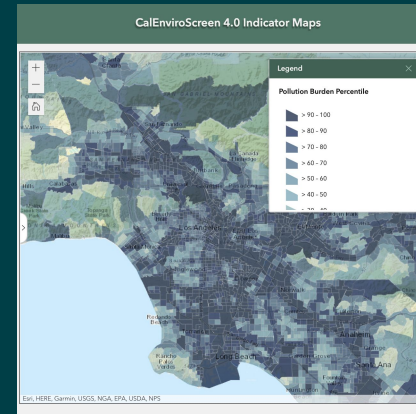
External Datasets:



Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) (Dashboard)



Other Census data (DWR DAC Mapping Tool)



CalEnviroScreen 4.0



LA County RPOSD Park Needs Assessment

How can the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) be used by WASCs?

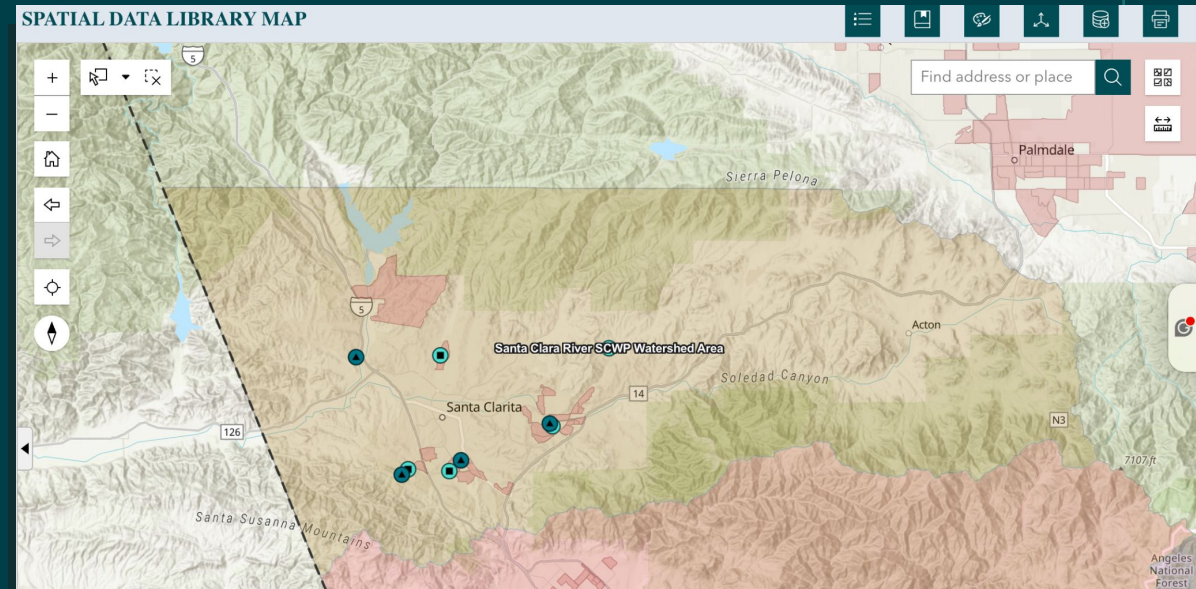
- Assess whether project **benefits** claimed by Project Applicants **align** with needs and priorities presented in CSNA responses
- Suggest **improvements** for future community outreach efforts based on existing efforts and CSNA responses

Awarded Projects to Date in SCR

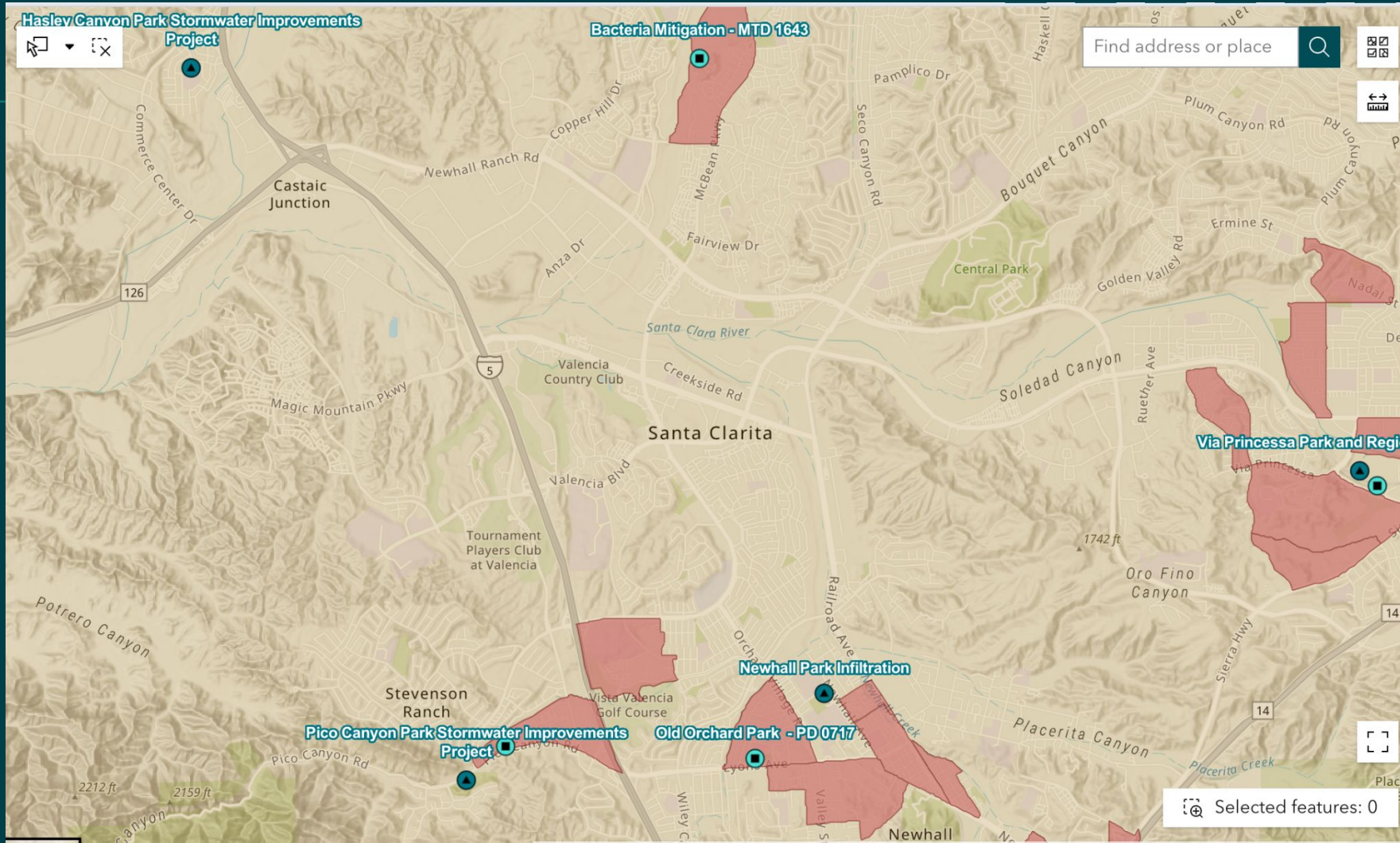
Disadvantaged community designations for funded projects are included on the [SIP tool](#).

110% disadvantaged community investment requirement (met and exceeded).

	Within a disadvantaged community block group	Not within block group and no benefit	Not within block group but does benefit
IP	2	1	0
TRP	4	0	0



Disadvantaged community census block groups (2020)



FY 26-27 Projects Under Consideration

	Within a disadvantaged community block group	Not within block group and no benefit	Not within block group but does benefit
1 IP	Jake K Park	N/A	N/A
0 TRP	N/A	N/A	N/A

Project Overview

Lead: LA County Public Works

Funding Requested: \$1,250,000

Timeline/Current Phase: Design-only

Community Engagement and Support

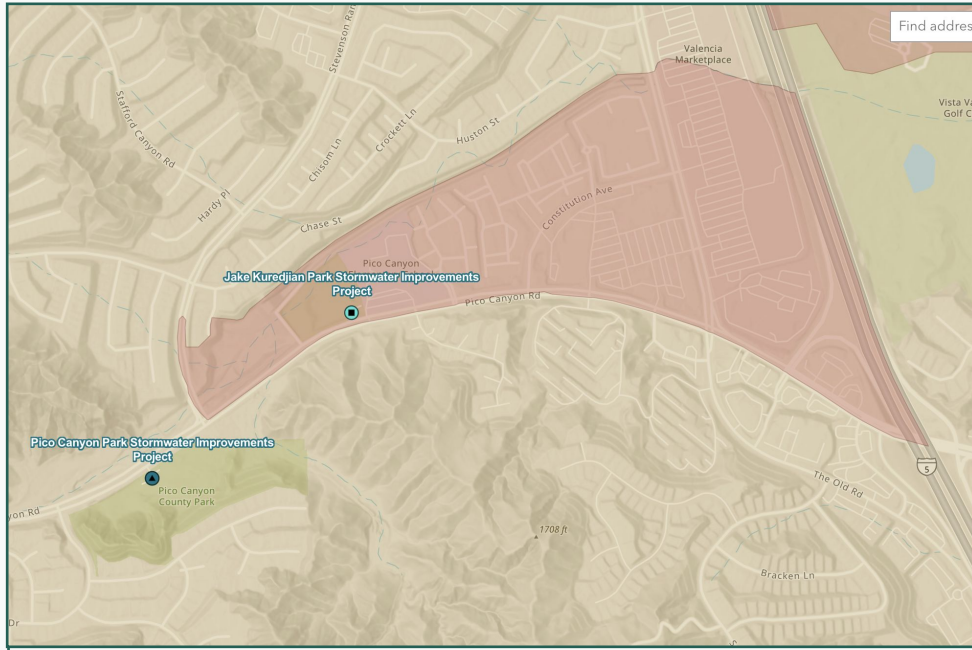
- 2022 Parks Needs Assessment +
- Stevenson Ranch HOA meetings in 2021 & 2025.


Engagement Levels

Good: Inform - Project presentations & fact sheets (HOA meetings)

Best: Involve - Ensure community input, needs, and assets are integrated into processes, receive demonstrable consideration and appropriate responses, and inform planning (SCR WASC tour + feedback)

Disadvantaged Community Benefit Validation



 Disadvantaged community census block groups (2020)

Does application claim benefits to disadvantaged communities?	No
Located within 2020 disadvantaged community Census Block Group?	Yes
Distance to nearest disadvantaged community	0 miles
CalEnviroScreen Score	40 - 50 percentile
Park Need	Low

No direct benefit to a disadvantaged community claimed by applicant.

Community Priorities and Concerns

CSNA Dashboard | Select Survey: CSNA Survey (2024-present) | Select Community: Click to select | Select Watershed Area: Santa Clara River | Select Response Date: Click to select

38 responses

8 communities

Demographics

Community Member Type by Homeownership

Own	73.68%
Rent	21.05%
Temporary housing	2.63%
Other	2.63%

Relationship to Community

Live in	38
Work	8
Attend school	2
Own a business	2
Other	2

Map showing survey points across the Santa Clara River watershed area, including locations like Castaic, Santa Clarita, and Stevenson Ranch.

Survey Participation

- WaterTalks Needs Assessment (2018-2023)
- SCW Program Watershed Coordinator Surveys (2020-2024)
- CSNA Survey (2024-present)

Community-Identified Opportunities

- Community-Identified Opportunities

List one thing you enjoy about your community.

Click on a response to view its corresponding

Search...

- community.
- Open space
- Open spaces
- Proximity to open space
- Proximity to open spaces and national forests.

Strengths

Top 5 Concerns

Impacts of climate change	28
Cost of living & housing	15
Air quality	5
Drinking water	5
Trash litter & illegal dumping	5

Top 5 Concerns | Climate Change Impacts

Community Priorities for SCW Program Benefits

To the right, you'll see how community members prioritize the types of benefits the Safe, Clean Water Program can fund. The graphic uses a color gradient to represent different priority levels, with colors transitioning from low priority (light teal) to high priority (dark teal).

Catch Rainwater	Green Spaces & Schools	Clean Rivers & Ocean
Access to Parks	Wildlife Habitat	Shade Trees
Reduce Flooding	Education & Stewardship	Jobs & Training

Moving Forward

Remember...

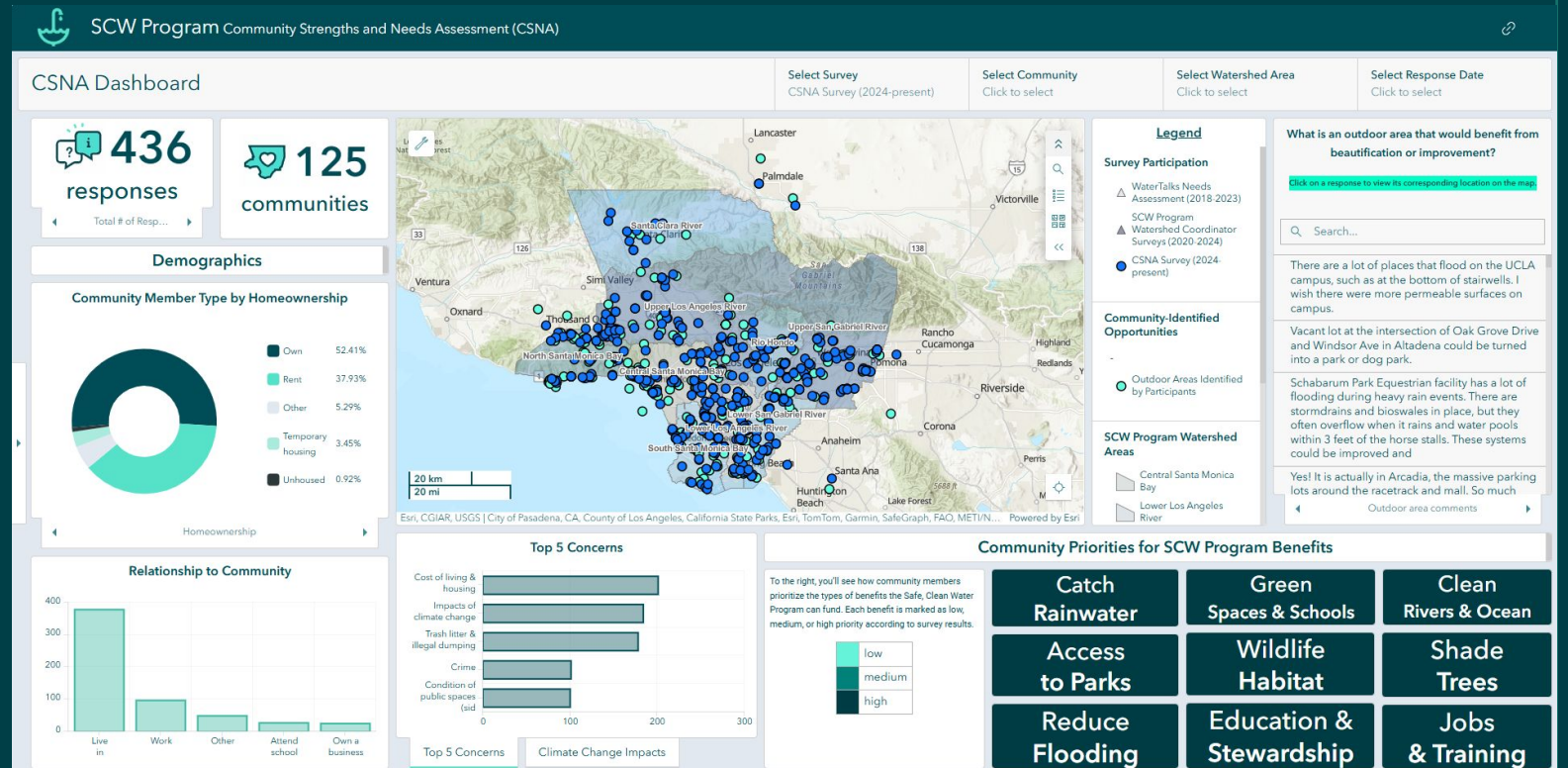
WASCs are tasked with validating whether a Project provides a “**direct benefit**” to a disadvantaged community. This is done on a project-by-project basis and is part of your recommended SIP.

Take into consideration:

- What have you heard from the community themselves?
- What benefits will the project provide and how are these quantified?
- What areas will experience those benefits?
- Do project benefits meet community-identified priorities and concerns?
- What other project-specific considerations should be considered? (e.g., community access, workforce agreements, etc.).

Resources

- Safe, Clean Water Program Spatial Data Library
- Interim Disadvantaged Community Programming Guidelines
- CSNA Dashboard
- Initial Watershed Plans



Thank you

QUESTIONS?

Contact the program team at:

www.SafeCleanWaterLA.org

SafeCleanWaterLA@pw.lacounty.gov

1-833-ASK-SCWP (1-833-275-7297)

Expectations for Community Engagement by Project Phase

Design Funding Applicants

For projects in the design phase (< 60%)

- Identify and connect with interested parties
- Targeted outreach based on project details (e.g., location, surrounding characteristics, project goals, etc.)
- Solicit, address, and incorporate input on community needs/ concerns/ objectives and potential solutions to challenges
- Efforts to mitigate issues related to displacement and gentrification
- Continued communication of progress
- Additional funding for outreach and engagement efforts related to project planning phase activities is encouraged

Construction/O&M Funding Applicants

For projects that have advanced to 60%+ design, construction, and O&M

- Realize and maintain effective partnerships
- Sustain ongoing public education
- Communicate/recognize project progress and project benefits

Interim Guidance available [here](#).

Expectations for Community Engagement by Project Phase

For all applicants

- Documentation of community engagement efforts prior to application submittal
- Description of plans for engagement during project implementation
- Plans to solicit, address, and incorporate interested party input through outreach and engagement
- Discussion of engagement related to Native American Indian tribes
- Consideration of contextual variables in distinguishing individual communities
- Demonstration of strong community support and/or project development in partnership with local NGOs and CBOs
- “Best”-level community outreach and engagement (from good, better, best spectrum)
- Integration of CSNA input, to the maximum extent feasible

Outreach/Engagement Practice	Good	Better	Best
Engagement Levels	<p>Inform - Provide the community with relevant information</p> <p>Consult - Gather input from the Community</p>	<p>Involve - Ensure community input, needs, and assets are integrated into processes, receive demonstrable consideration and appropriate responses, and inform planning</p> <p>Educate – Grow community understanding of the existing infrastructure systems, purposes, perceived outstanding needs, pertinent history and regulations, SCW Program opportunities (including WCs) to establish</p> <p>Learn – Grow own understanding of existing community, perceived needs, pertinent history, key concerns, and other potentially interested parties.</p>	<p>Collaborate - Leverage and grow community capacity to play a leadership role in both planning and implementation</p> <p>Incorporate - Foster democratic participation and equity by including the community in decision-making, bridge divide between community and governance</p> <p>Partner – Establish certain project concepts based on community-driven and identified needs, solidify formal partnerships, and build in sustained paths forward to joint implementation and management with well-defined roles per agreement, including appropriate compensation for community partners</p>
Example Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Sheets with translation as needed • Open Houses • Presentations • Videos • Online Media • Social Media • Local Media • Listening Sessions • Public Comment • Focus Groups • Surveys • Polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open house Meetings • Interactive Workshops & Tours • Community Forums • Canvassing • Transparent responses to community comments • Document expanded understanding and commitment to ongoing relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOUs / support letters from CBOs or Elected Officials • MOUs / support letters from impacted Tribes • Community Organizing • Citizen Advocacy Committees • Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling • Community-Driven Planning • Consensus Building • Participatory Action Research • Participatory Budgeting • Cooperatives • Volunteerism activities • Workforce Development activities • Compensate community partners for their time and expertise

Interim Guidance available [here](#).