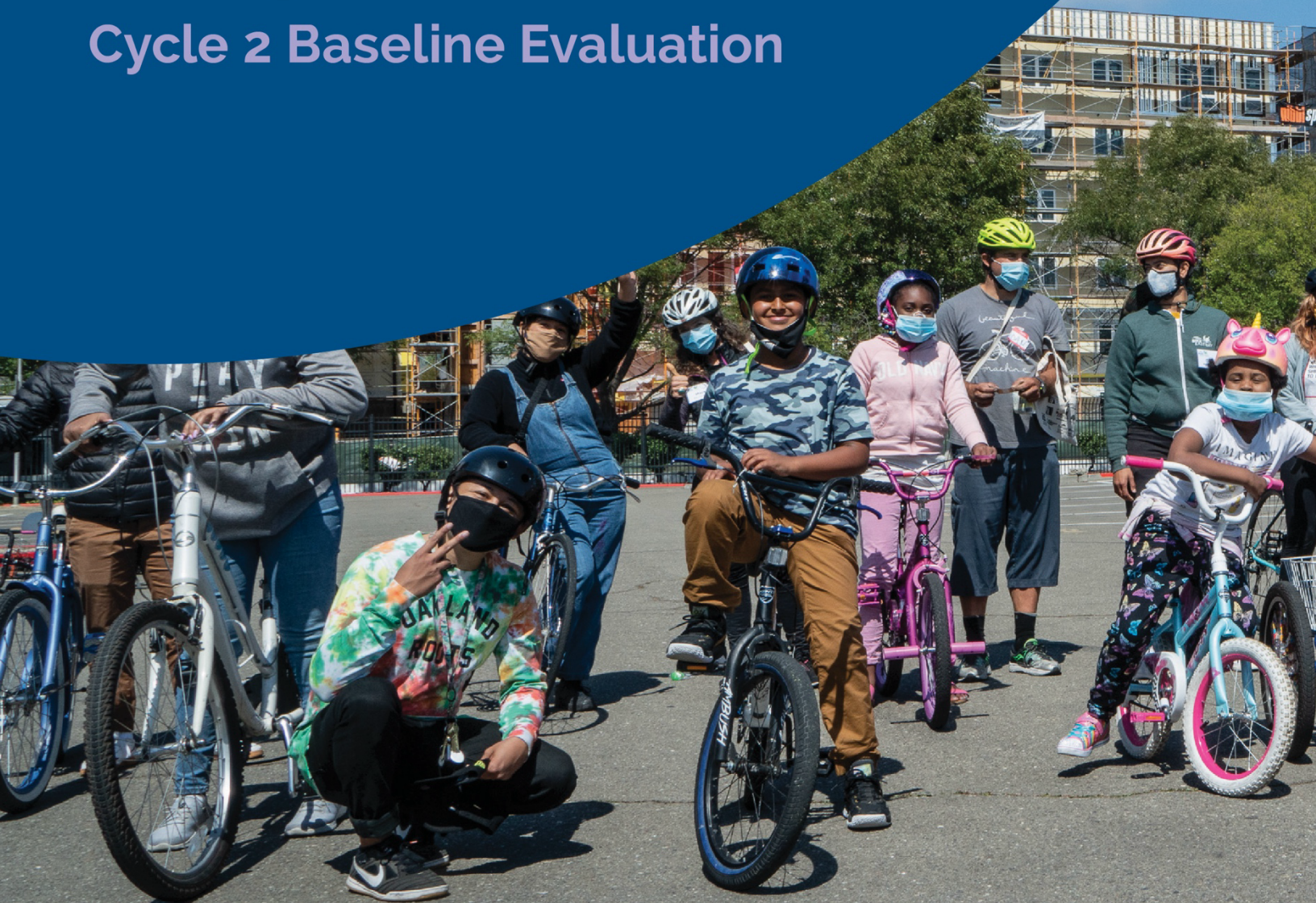Bay Area Air District

Fall 2025

James Cary Smith Community Grant Program

Cycle 2 Baseline Evaluation

Bay Area Air District
James Cary Smith Community Grant Program Cycle 2 Baseline Evaluation

Cycle 2 of the James Cary Smith Community Grant Program awarded nearly $3.5 million to twelve organizations implementing three-year projects in Environmental Justice communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Cycle 2 builds on the Cycle 1 program realignment and evaluation findings by continuing to focus on application accessibility, offering multi-year funding, providing grantee support structures, and maintaining clear onboarding processes. This baseline report provides a first look at Cycle 2 grantee experiences and serves as the starting point for a multi-stage evaluation that will assess implementation, outcomes, and the overall grantee experience within the James Cary Smith Community Grant Program.

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Key Findings

This report presents baseline findings from Cycle 2 of the James Cary Smith Community Grant Program evaluation, drawing on pre-application webinar participation, submitted applications, awarded grantee workplans, and a baseline survey completed by the twelve funded Cycle 2 grantees. Collectively, these inputs provide an initial picture of how Cycle 2 grantees entered the grant cycle and the conditions that will shape their early project implementation.

Cycle 2 began with strengthened administrative processes. Organizations described both the application and contracting stages as clear, manageable, and well supported. These early experiences reflect the improvements made during Cycle 1 and refinements between cycles that continue to provide clarity, structure, and staff responsiveness for community-based organizations (CBOs) applying to and implementing projects within the program.

The twelve funded projects span air quality education, community and youth leadership development, Promotoras models, community science, low-carbon transportation access, and faith- or place-based Environmental Justice organizing. Projects are located in communities with documented pollution burdens, including AB617 eligible areas and higher-scoring CalEnviroScreen census tracts, and are supported through three-year agreements that give grantees greater predictability for planning and implementation.

Cycle 2 grantees bring expertise in air quality education, community health, youth leadership, climate resilience, community organizing, community science, and multilingual outreach. To strengthen their project implementation, grantees identified several supports to deepen their project reach or impact. These include plain-language explanations of air quality and health topics, practical tools they can use in workshops and outreach to describe air quality and monitoring, opportunities for peer learning, and guidance on public processes where their community members can participate.

In Cycle 1, grantees most often requested administrative help with reporting, documentation, and data tracking. In Cycle 2, early support requests focus on implementation that helps advance community engagement and project delivery. This shift suggests that the strengthened administrative structure has lowered early barriers, giving grantees more capacity to focus on delivering project outcomes.

Background: Evaluating The Refocused James Cary Smith Community Grant Program

The Bay Area Air District's ("Air District") James Cary Smith (JCS) Community Grant Program has invested in people and organizations rooted in communities most affected by air pollution for over a decade, with grant funding that supports local, community-based solutions to air pollution. In 2021, the JCS Community Grant Program underwent a major realignment, including expanding outreach, providing multi-year grants, and creating new support structures such as technical assistance and coalition-building spaces. That realignment addressed access barriers and repositioned the Air District to better serve a more diverse pool of grantees that represent Environmental Justice communities.

Cycle 1 of the refocused grant program launched in 2022 and closed in 2025. Cycle 2 of the JCS Community Grant (2025 – 2028) builds on the success of the realignment. The evaluation will examine how the JCS Community Grant is delivering on its goals, where improvements are still needed, and how its reach and impact compare to past cycles.

Evaluation of the JCS Community Grant Program contributes to the Air District's Strategic Plan goals by elevating grantee feedback as a tool for continuous improvement, informing local investment decisions, and tracking the long-term outcomes of Environmental Justice-centered program design. Additionally, this evaluation supports Strategic Plan goals to advance Environmental Justice, build community capacity, strengthen feedback systems, and ensure more effective and accountable agency practices.

InterEthnica is the lead grant evaluator to examine what's working, identify barriers, and collaboratively shape the future of the JCS Community Grant Program.

The evaluation is guided by three thematic pillars:

1. **Reach** — How well is the Air District reaching Environmental Justice communities with this grant?
2. **Empowerment** — In what ways does the grant program help organizations build capacity and foster authentic participation in planning activities and efforts to address air pollution?
3. **Effectiveness** — How is the support provided to grantees impacting their ability to deliver their projects and achieve their goals?

These pillars are anchored in the four core evaluation domains for the JCS Community Grant Program. These evaluation domains were developed and evaluated during Cycle 1 of the grant.

Table 1: The four domains and focus areas of the JCS Cycle 2 grant evaluation process.

Domain	Focus
1. Application	Experience with outreach, application design, and accessibility
2. Award	What types of work were funded, where, and at what level
3. Management & Reporting	Contracting, progress reports, check-ins
4. Program Support	Technical assistance, convenings, training, and collaboration

While the pillars and domains will guide the framing of the grant evaluation, the grant objectives provide more specific direction as to what the evaluation strives to understand, including:

- The extent to which the JCS Community Grant Program reaches Environmental Justice communities
- How the grant supports grantees to foster capacity-building and authentic community participation in planning activities and in addressing air pollution
- How the support provided to grantees impacts their ability to deliver their projects

Baseline Report

This report presents baseline findings from Cycle 2 of the JCS Community Grant Program evaluation, summarizing findings across four evaluation domains: application, award, management and reporting, and program support. Findings are drawn from pre-application webinar attendance (November 2024), grant applications (January 2025), grantee workplans (Spring of 2025), and a grantee Baseline Survey (Fall 2025). Together, these sources show how grantees experienced the application and onboarding process, their early grant-cycle experiences, the support they need to be successful, and the outcomes they hope to achieve for their communities.

These insights may help refine grant administration, technical assistance, communication practices, and other program supports at a stage when adjustments can still strengthen outcomes for grantees and the communities they serve. Quotes in this report are paraphrased to provide context for the reader and protect respondent anonymity.

Findings

Domain 1: Application

Cycle 2 followed a clear sequence of application and award milestones and included two optional webinars to support prospective applications as summarized in the timeline below.

CYCLE 2 TIMELINE

→ October 7, 2024: Application period opened

→ October 22, 2024: Optional Informational Webinar (40 prospective applicants attended)

→ November 7, 2024: Optional Tips and Tricks Webinar (42 prospective applicants attended)

→ January 7, 2025: Applications due (69 proposals submitted)

→ Winter 2025: Application evaluation and review

→ March 2025: Notices of award sent to 12 grantees

→ Spring-Summer 2025: Grant agreements drafted and finalized

→ Summer 2025 to Summer 2028: Grantee project period

The Air District received 69 proposals for Cycle 2. Across all applicants, organizations requested over $18.5 million dollars in Cycle 2 funding, far exceeding the amount available. Requests varied depending on whether applicants proposed single-year or multi-year projects, though most sought support across the full three-year period. Of these, 59 met the minimum qualifications, representing 86% of all submissions. Proposed projects reflected wide geographic interest across the region. Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and San Francisco counties saw the highest number of proposed projects, with many applicants proposing work across multiple communities. Smaller

numbers of proposals focused on San Mateo, Solano, and Marin counties, while no proposals were submitted for Napa or Sonoma counties. Two proposals described projects intended to serve the entire Bay Area. Together, these patterns show strong regional demand for Environmental Justice and air quality funding, with particular concentration in communities with longstanding pollution burdens.

Table 2: Number of Cycle 2 applicant projects proposed and awarded in each county. Many proposed and awarded projects span multiple counties.

County	Number of Applicant Projects Proposed By County	Number of Projects Awarded By County
Alameda	17	1
Contra Costa	16	3
Marin	4	1
Napa	0	0
San Francisco	13	3
San Mateo	9	3
Santa Clara	19	4
Solano	7	3
Sonoma	0	0
Entire Bay Area	2	0

Survey responses indicate that awarded grantees learned about the Cycle 2 opportunity through existing relationships with the Air District, local city staff, consultants, and informal word-of-mouth. No grantees cited learning about the opportunity via public-facing outreach channels. This reflects strong existing relationships between the Air District and organizations working in Bay Area Environmental Justice communities and aligns with the grant's goals, while also suggesting an opportunity to broaden reach in future cycles so that organizations newer to the Air District's programs become aware of and feel prepared to apply for this funding.

Application Experience

Survey responses show that most organizations found *the Cycle 2 application process clear, manageable, and accessible*. Eleven out of twelve respondents reported that they were able to complete the application without difficulty, noting that the instructions, templates, and examples

made expectations easy to understand. Several grantees shared that the application felt "straightforward" and "clear."

Several specific challenges with the application process were noted. These included

- the level of detail required in the budget
- initial confusion about allowable advocacy activities
- wording restrictions tied to administrative changes
- the time needed to get oriented to the online portal
- application window overlapping with holidays

While some of the challenges raised reflect broader capacity constraints common among Environmental Justice-serving organizations, the Air District can consider application timing. In addition, offering optional walkthroughs of required attachments or budget expectations could help further strengthen the accessibility of the process.

No respondents reported language-related barriers, although several organizations work primarily with communities who are limited-English proficient. This suggests that while the current process is accessible to organizations with reach into communities that may be limited-English proficient, staff completing the applications did not require translated application materials.

All twelve grantees agreed that the Cycle 2 application process was simple, and eleven agreed that the application requirements were reasonable. Most also found the optional informational webinars and Frequently Asked Questions helpful in completing the application. When asked to compare this application to others they have completed, nine grantees agreed that the JCS process was easier for their organization. Taken together, these findings indicate that the application and onboarding structure continue to be accessible and clear for grantees entering the program.
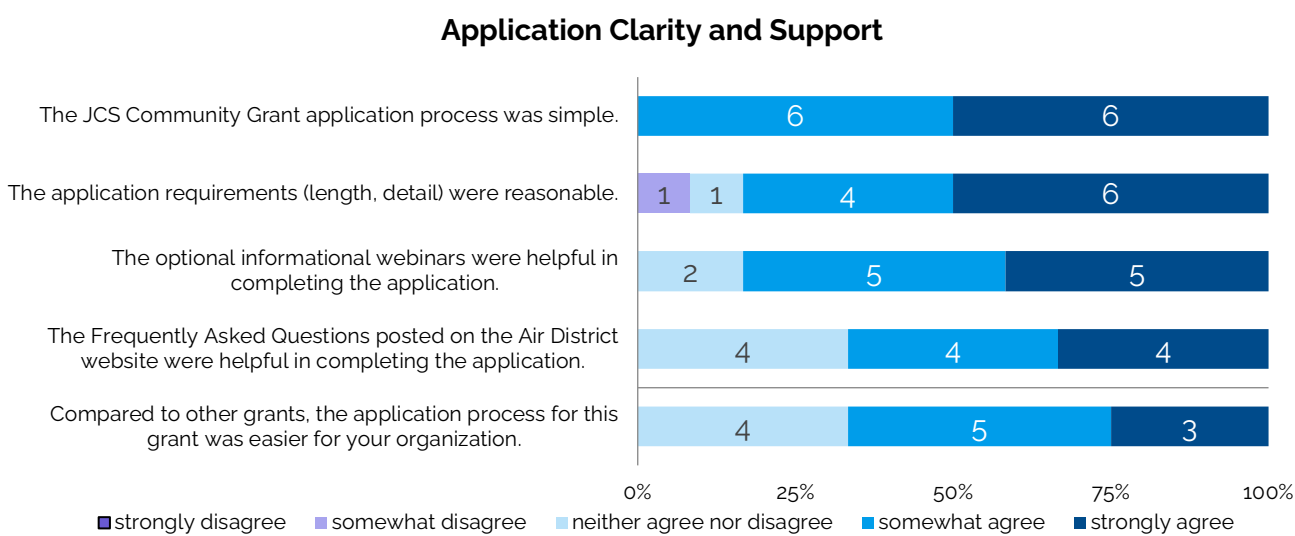
Application Clarity and Support

Figure 1: Application Clarity and Support. A horizontal stacked bar chart showing baseline survey ratings across five application components. The chart displays how many Cycle 2 grantees strongly disagreed, somewhat disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, somewhat agreed, or strongly agreed with statements about the application process.

All Cycle 2 grantees reported that the application was simple, and 92% agreed that the requirements were reasonable.

Overall, the application experience section of the survey demonstrates that the Air District's improvements to the grant application process before Cycle 1 and between Cycles 1 and 2 provide clarity, structure, and staff responsiveness that continue to support organizations in applying to the program.

Domain 2: Award

Cycle 2 of the JCS Community Grant Program funds twelve projects representing a wide range of community-based air quality and Environmental Justice efforts across Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Solano counties. *The program became significantly more competitive in Cycle 2.* While Cycle 1 funded 33 of 45 applicants with a 73% acceptance rate, Cycle 2 saw a much larger number of proposals and far fewer available awards; 12 of 69 applicants were awarded, resulting in a lower acceptance rate of 17%. This shift reflects increased interest in the program and a smaller cohort size, rather than a change in award level or project quality.

The funding structure for Cycle 2 differed from that of Cycle 1. In Cycle 1, multi-year funding was not guaranteed. Cycle 2 introduced a different structure, allowing grant agreements of up to three years. Among the twelve awarded grantees, each requested funding for a three-year project, and the requested amounts were generally consistent. *Cycle 2 of the grant period will award up to $3.5 million to 12 grantees during a three-year period.*

Shifting to three-year grant agreements represents a meaningful improvement in predictability and planning capacity for grantees, allowing Cycle 2 organizations to design multi-year projects with more stability.

Characteristics of Funded Organizations

The Cycle 2 cohort includes twelve funded organizations that represent a mix of community-based nonprofits, social service providers, youth development organizations, Environmental Justice groups, community science organizations, and faith-based networks. Review of work plans, contracts, and the baseline survey responses show that these organizations vary in size, structure, and areas of expertise, yet share a strong focus on Environmental Justice communities.

Across the cohort, five organizations indicated in the baseline survey that they operate as a single-site or standalone organization, while seven reported having multiple sites or being part of a larger network.

The grantee work plans and contract materials show that funded organizations bring expertise in areas such as air quality education, community health, youth leadership, climate resilience, community organizing, community science, and multilingual outreach. Many grantees have longstanding relationships in the communities they serve, including Spanish-speaking, immigrant, low-income, and racially diverse neighborhoods.

The characteristics of funded organizations indicate that Cycle 2 continues to support a diverse set of grantees who are well-positioned to engage communities disproportionately affected by air

quality issues. Their existing networks, lived experience, and organizational missions align closely with the purpose of the JCS Community Grant Program and the first evaluation objective on reach.

Environmental Justice Community Reach

The Cycle 2 cohort is firmly rooted in Environmental Justice communities. Funded work includes air quality education, leadership development, youth climate action, Promotoras models, community science, low-carbon transportation access, and faith- or place-based Environmental Justice organizing. Projects are concentrated in communities facing documented air-quality burdens, including AB 617-eligible areas, and census tracts scoring between 70 and 100 on CalEnviroScreen.

Grantee survey data and work plans indicate project locations in at least one county with documented Environmental Justice communities, and most selected multiple counties. Across the twelve organizations, Cycle 2 grantees are implementing multiple projects in the following counties: Santa Clara (4), Contra Costa (3), San Mateo (3), San Francisco (3), and Solano (3).

Priority Populations

Survey data confirms that *projects are designed to reach communities most affected by air quality issues,* consistent with the purpose of the JCS Community Grant Program, while also supporting participation from diverse Bay Area communities. Grantees plan to engage priority populations that reflect these conditions, particularly low-income, multilingual, and racially diverse households that have historically faced barriers to participating in planning processes.
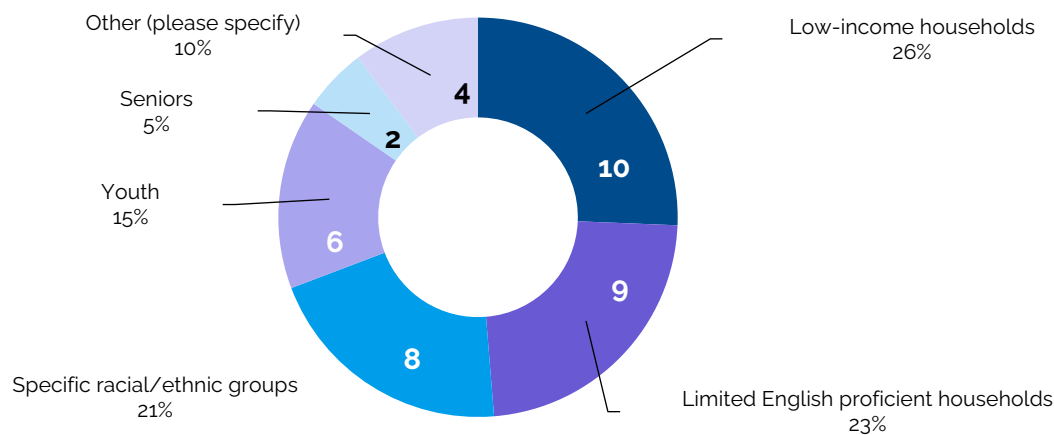
Intended Populations for Engagement

Figure 2: Intended Populations for Engagement. A donut chart showing the populations Cycle 2 grantees intend to engage during their projects, based on multi-select survey responses from twelve grantees.

How Grantees Plan to Engage Communities

Across the baseline survey and the workplans, grantees described engagement approaches that reflect strong alignment with Environmental Justice community needs. When asked how they would address language, cultural, or logistical barriers, organizations provided detailed strategies

rather than generic statements, indicating that these considerations are embedded in project design, not added on.

Open-ended responses yielded five primary engagement approaches:

1. **Multilingual education and outreach**. Almost all grantees described plans to offer workshops, trainings, or informational materials in Spanish, with some also referencing Chinese or other languages, depending on their communities. Several noted that their curricula were developed in-language from the start, not translated after the fact.
2. **Leadership pathways through ambassadors, Promotoras, or youth leaders**. Most grantees plan to train residents or youth to serve as connectors, educators, or advocates. These models rely on peer-to-peer communication and building longer-term leadership capacity within communities.
3. **Community-based research and listening methods**. Grantees intend to use listening sessions, community surveys, or participatory data collection to ground their projects in resident priorities. These activities reflect a shift from outreach to shared ownership of project direction.
4. **Partnerships with trusted institutions**. Grantees described partnerships with schools, faith-based institutions, and CBOs as central to their engagement plans. These relationships shape who participates and under what conditions.
5. **Accessibility support**. Nearly all grantees cited logistical support to improve accessibility, including evening scheduling, childcare, meals, and familiar meeting locations.

These approaches show that empowerment in Cycle 2 is not limited to increasing awareness; it is tied to designing activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic, and logistical realities of community life and best practices.

Domain 3: Management & Reporting

Survey responses show that the majority of grantees found the Cycle 2 contracting process to be clear and straightforward.

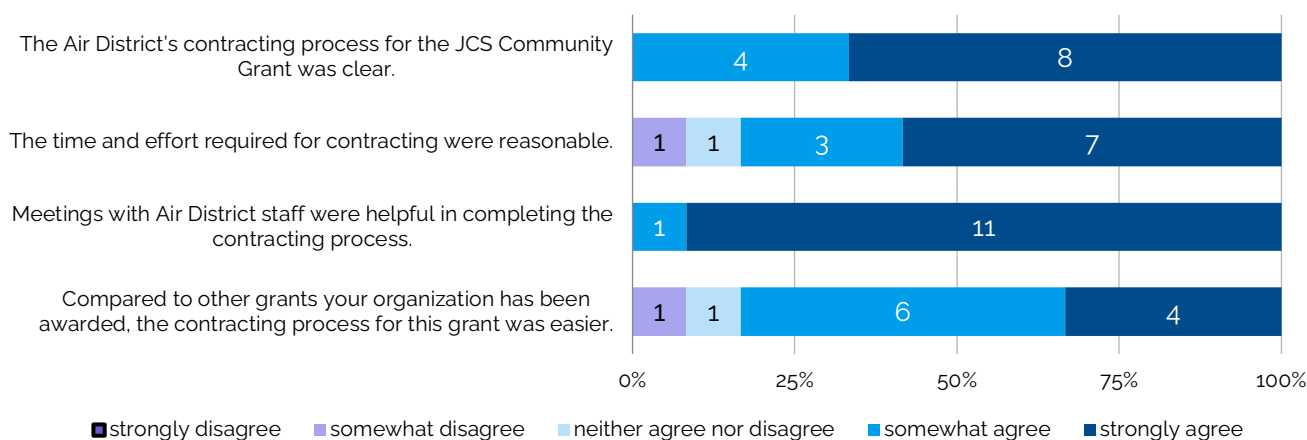## Grantee Experience with the Contracting Process

Figure 3: Grantee Experience with the Contracting Process. A horizontal stacked bar chart displaying grantee ratings of the Cycle 2 contracting process.

The Cycle 2 Baseline Survey shows 100% of grantees find the contracting process clear, and 92% felt it was reasonable. In response to the survey question about application and onboarding experience, most grantees described these early processes as clear and manageable. Several noted that communication from the Air District was timely and that the materials provided were easy to understand. Open-ended responses also showed that a few organizations experienced challenges related to their own internal capacity, describing the need to balance contracting requirements with other responsibilities. These differences are consistent with survey responses about organizational structure, where roughly half the cohort identified as single-site organizations with smaller teams and the other half as multi-site or networked organizations with more administrative support.

Clarity and Expectations of Reporting Requirements

Because the baseline survey was intentionally fielded before any reporting deadlines, grantees did not yet have experience completing progress reports. In response to the survey question about early understanding of reporting expectations, most organizations indicated that the reporting structure felt clear at this stage of the grant cycle. Open-ended comments showed that a few grantees were unsure how detailed their documentation would need to be once project activities expanded.

Several respondents noted that additional guidance, sample templates, or reminders would be helpful as reporting begins, especially for organizations planning community workshops, leadership cohorts, or community-based research activities that will require structured documentation. *These early observations do not reflect challenges with reporting itself, but rather the need for proactive support as organizations prepared for their first reporting period.*

While grantee report data is not included in this baseline report, survey responses help identify how grantees define success for their communities:

1. Most grantees expect community members to gain information about local air quality, health risks, and the broader environmental context.

2. Community member capacity growth to participate in city meetings, agency workshops, or planning processes is a desired outcome
3. Community members to gain new or strengthened relationships between residents, youth leaders, faith groups, or neighborhood organizations.

Domain 4: Program Support

Grantees anticipate several structural challenges that shape how consistently residents can participate. These challenges and the strategies grantees plan to use to address them were articulated in survey responses and align with the conditions described in their project scopes.

"As an organization we primarily serve monolingual Spanish speakers, so we make sure all meetings are in Spanish, and when meetings take place during dinner time we are also providing dinner to participants."

"By focusing on local issues like air quality, flood risk, and heat exposure, the project makes climate action more personal and impactful for participants, which can help bridge cultural gaps by rooting the work in shared local concerns."

Figure 4: Quotes from 2025 baseline survey responses on how Cycle 2 grantees plan to address anticipated challenges.

Table 3: Common barriers that Cycle 2 grantees anticipate for community participation and the corresponding strategies they plan to use.

Barriers Grantees Anticipate	Strategies Grantees Plan to Use
Language accessibility needs	Provide materials, outreach, and workshops in Spanish and other needed languages; use bilingual staff or interpreters
Transportation limitations	Hold events in familiar, local community spaces; partner with local organizations already embedded in neighborhoods
Competing schedules, multiple jobs, caregiving	Offer evening and weekend activities; mix of in-person and virtual options
Limited trust in government systems	Use trusted messengers, community leaders, schools, and faith networks to invite residents and build credibility
Digital access barriers	Provide in-person options; use simple tools and platforms; share printed materials when needed

Support and Technical Assistance

Grantees shared ideas that could support the delivery of their projects. Their requests focused on *clearer technical guidance or tools about air quality monitoring and data, opportunities to learn from peers, and practical tools to help community members participate meaningfully in environmental decision-making.*

Several organizations expect to reach out to Air District experts for explanations of air quality monitoring and health topics in accessible terms. As one grantee shared, staff need information that "helps us explain air quality in a way our community can understand." Others described a need for straightforward tools or protocols they can integrate into workshops and outreach.

Organizations also asked for support in identifying when and where residents can participate in public processes. They expressed interest in knowing which meetings, hearings, or advisory discussions matter for their communities. Several also requested guidance on tracking project outcomes in simple, manageable ways. Key areas of technical assistance include:

- Clear explanations of air quality concepts and health impacts
- Practical tools or protocols to support workshops and outreach
- Opportunities for collaboration with other grantees
- Guidance on public processes that allow grantee project participants to participate
- Support with metrics and documentation that fits organizational capacity

Together, these needs show that technical assistance around understanding and communicating air quality data and monitoring can play a key role in helping grantees strengthen community leadership and deliver outcomes that matter to their project's implementation.

Grantees appreciate the clarity of the application, the optional webinars, and the support offered. Their feedback shows that these elements made the application process easier for their organizations to navigate.
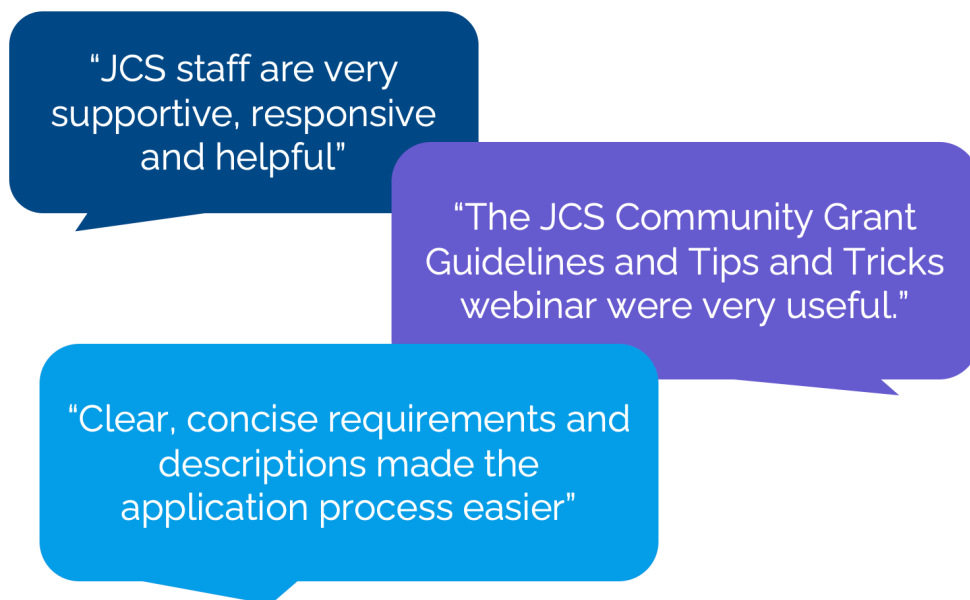
"JCS staff are very supportive, responsive and helpful"

"The JCS Community Grant Guidelines and Tips and Tricks webinar were very useful."

"Clear, concise requirements and descriptions made the application process easier"

Figure 5: Paraphrased quotes from Cycle 2 grantees describing positive experiences with the application and onboarding process.

Baseline findings show that the Cycle 2 cohort is well-positioned to support authentic community participation. Grantees are building multilingual, culturally- grounded engagement models; addressing predictable barriers through practical supports; and embedding leadership pathways in their projects. Their definitions of success emphasize awareness and resident participation in environmental health and planning decisions.

The baseline survey also asked grantees which areas of organizational capacity they hope to strengthen during the grant cycle. Their responses highlight the broader infrastructure that supports community engagement and participation.

Capacity Areas Grantees Intend to Strengthen

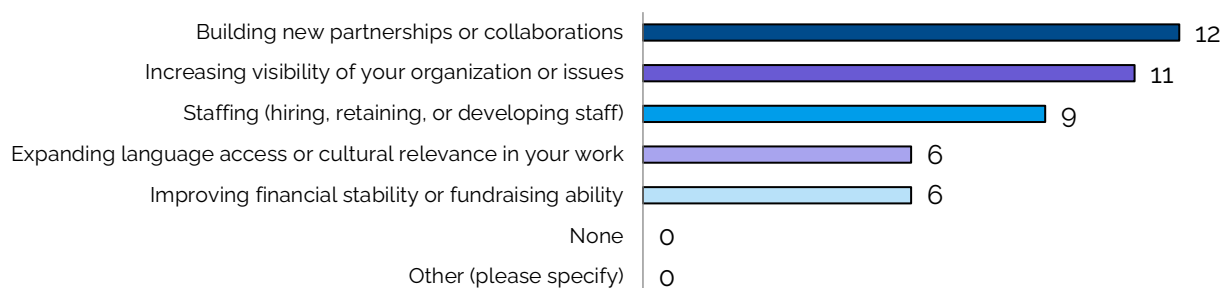| Category	Value
Building new partnerships or collaborations	12
Increasing visibility of your organization or issues	11
Staffing (hiring, retaining, or developing staff)	9
Expanding language access or cultural relevance in your work	6
Improving financial stability or fundraising ability	6
None	0
Other (please specify)	0

Figure 6: Capacity Areas Grantees Intend to Strengthen. A horizontal bar chart showing the organizational capacity areas that Cycle 2 grantees hope to strengthen during the grant cycle.

Survey responses show that grantees see the JCS Community Grant Program as an opportunity to strengthen core aspects of their organizational capacity. All twelve grantees reported that building new partnerships or collaborations is a priority for their project. *Grantees also emphasized the importance of continued peer learning.* They want opportunities to connect with others in the cohort, noting that shared experience helps them refine engagement strategies. One respondent explained that collaboration *"helps us learn what is working for others and adjust our own approach."*

Nine grantees identified staffing needs as an important area of capacity building. Half of the respondents selected improving financial stability or expanding language access, indicating that many grantees are using this grant cycle to build the infrastructure required to sustain Environmental Justice work beyond the grant period.

Across cycles, the data shows changes in the kinds of support grantees request and how the program is meeting those needs.

- In Cycle 1, grantees primarily requested administrative support, including help tracking participant data, completing reports and invoices, accessing emissions data, and identifying new funding opportunities.
- The need for relationship building identified in Cycle 1 also led directly to the creation of the Grantee Network, which now provides a structured space for collaboration and shared learning in Cycle 2.
- In Cycle 2, the most common requests shifted toward technical and engagement-related needs, such as clear explanations of air quality topics, practical tools for workshops, guidance on public processes, and opportunities for peer learning. This shift suggests the program has matured. *Grantees are identifying less administrative support needed and more support requested related to project implementation.*

Taken together, these patterns show that Cycle 2 projects are not only focused on project-specific activities but are also using the grant to strengthen the organizational capacities that make long-term, community-led environmental health and planning work possible.

Recommendations

The baseline findings suggest that the changes made to the JCS Community Grant Program during Cycle 1 and the refinements implemented for Cycle 2 have positioned both the Air District and grantees for early success. The strengthened application process, clearer contracting structure, expanded technical assistance, and creation of the Grantee Network reflect direct responses to Cycle 1 evaluation findings and have contributed to a smoother and more accessible start to the current cycle. The Air District has already invested in the structure, management, and support for a successful grantee cycle. The recommendations below focus on targeted adjustments that can build on this progress and further support strong community impact as projects move forward.

Domain 1: Application

- Prior to the next grant cycle, identify organizations in priority communities that may not yet be connected to the Air District to further expand and improve outreach efforts for future grant cycles.
- Consider additional enhancements to the grant application process to reduce potential barriers, such as the scheduling of application windows, and additional content within technical assistance webinars for prospective applicants.

Domain 2: Award

- Continue sharing information about relevant funding opportunities within the Air District and through other funding sources with applicants who were not awarded JCS grants. Maintain the [Grant Funding and Resources for Community-Based Organizations webpage](#), and share the recording and materials provided through the Air District's [2024 Public Funding Workshop](#) with CBOs.

Domain 3: Management & Reporting

- Align the application project summary and contracting scope language more closely to reduce administrative rework.
- Provide clear, upfront guidance each grant cycle on allowable advocacy and engagement activities to reduce confusion and ensure applicants understand program boundaries before contracting begins.

Domain 4: Program Support

- Disseminate existing plain-language materials on air quality, emissions sources, and health impacts that grantees can use directly in outreach, workshops, or leadership development programs early and often.
- Provide grantees with existing Air District resources early and often. Spend time at the beginning of each grant cycle explaining options to [sign up for Air District news and events](#), including public meeting notices, air quality incident notifications, Spare the Air alerts, and more.

- Continue providing simple, optional outreach logs and other data collection tools to support consistent reporting and reduce administrative pressure on small CBOs.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

Baseline findings from Cycle 2 show that the strengthened program structure is supporting a clear and accessible start for grantees. These early experiences, along with the availability of multi-year funding, have positioned grantees to begin their projects with clarity, financial stability, and confidence. The baseline highlights areas where additional support or small adjustments could further strengthen the program, particularly for organizations with limited administrative capacity. These findings reflect the realities of working in Environmental Justice communities and offer opportunities for the Air District to further refine its approach as it continues to listen to grantee feedback and imbue equity in project implementation.

It is the evaluation team's assessment that, for a grant of this size and scale, the structural *changes made during Cycle 1, refinements for Cycle 2, and ongoing support to grantees have meaningfully improved the accessibility and equity of the JCS Community Grant Program.* The program has adapted in ways that broaden its reach and create more equitable entry points for organizations rooted in diverse Environmental Justice communities. Grantees consistently described the initial stages of Cycle 2 as clear, supportive, and aligned with the needs and capacities of community-based organizations.