



**San Joaquin Valley**  
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



## 2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Vegetative Barriers

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking proposals for Vegetative Barrier projects to mitigate air quality impacts in the South Central Fresno AB 617 Community Boundary.

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Background .....	2
Funding Available.....	3
Contract Period .....	3
Schedule .....	4
Applicant Eligibility.....	5
Project Eligibility Criteria.....	5
Location.....	7
Community Requested Locations for Vegetative Barriers .....	8
Written Proposal Contents and Application Process .....	8
Proposal Submittal .....	10
Emission Reductions.....	10
Qualitative Benefits .....	11
Written Proposal Evaluation .....	11
Administration .....	12
Insurance .....	13
Contact Person .....	13

## Attachments

Exhibit A	USEPA-Recommendations for Constructing Roadside Vegetation Barriers to Improve Near-Road Air Quality
Exhibit B	Vegetative Barriers/Urban Greening Application
Exhibit C	Vegetative Barrier/Urban Greening Tools – User Guides
Exhibit D	Helpful Resources

# Request for Proposals

## Vegetative Barriers – South Central Fresno

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District) is soliciting proposals for the implementation of Vegetative Barrier projects to mitigate air quality impacts in South Central Fresno. This Request for Proposal (RFP) is a Community Identified Project included and prioritized in the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and District adopted Community Emission Reduction Program (CERP).

The District is looking for applicants with experience implementing vegetative barrier projects who can efficiently and effectively utilize the available grant amount of one million dollars to install new vegetative barriers in the community and if its possible leverage existing Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) projects already in place or in progress in South Central Fresno. Applicants will submit a completed application packet, including but not limited to, a demonstration of anticipated emission reductions and a budget proposal, according to the timeline provided in this RFP.

### Introduction

Assembly Bill 617 (AB 617) requires CARB and air districts to develop and implement additional emissions reporting, monitoring, reduction plans and emission reduction measures in an effort to reduce air pollution exposure in disadvantaged communities. In 2018, South Central Fresno was one of the first San Joaquin Valley (Valley) communities selected by CARB for investment of additional resources under AB 617.

AB 617 provides mechanisms and resources to invest substantial funding in the community through voluntary incentive funding measures. Importantly, these measures are guided by advice and knowledge of local community members, through their input and involvement on Steering Committees for each AB 617-selected community.

This measure received support from the South Central Fresno Community Steering Committee (CSC) and was included in the adopted CERP. This RFP was developed and modeled after existing plans and resources for similar projects within the state of California and includes feedback received from the CSC to create a plan to address the unique needs of the community.

### Background

The Vegetative Barriers Emission Reduction Program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities. Vegetative Barriers projects use natural solutions to mitigate air quality impacts. Projects may include planting trees or vegetative barriers in the community in order to reduce emissions and provide several key co-benefits.

Vegetative Barriers projects can reduce criteria air pollutant (CAP) emissions. Particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions are expected to decrease as a result of Vegetative Barriers.

Vegetative barriers, also known as windbreaks, are composed of one or more rows of trees or shrubs that may be planted in specific areas of concern in order to improve air quality in the immediate area by intercepting airborne particles, dust, chemicals, and odors. Pollutants directly emitted from cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles are found in higher concentrations near major roads. In addition, stationary sources such as industrial facilities, factories, and agricultural operations can also contribute air pollutants to their surrounding areas. While various emission control techniques and programs exist to reduce these pollutants from mobile and stationary sources, vegetative barriers have been shown to be an additional measure to potentially reduce a population's exposure to air pollution through the interception of airborne particles and the uptake of gaseous pollutants. Examples of vegetative barriers include trees, bushes, shrubs, or a mix of these.

Generally, a higher and thicker vegetative barriers with full coverage will result in greater reductions in downwind pollutant concentrations. In addition to air quality benefits, vegetative barriers can improve aesthetics, increase property values, reduce heat, control surface water runoff, and reduce noise pollution. Factors to be considered when designing Vegetative Barriers include, but are not limited to, vegetation height, thickness, porosity, seasonal effects, vegetation air emissions (e.g. biogenic VOCs), pollution and stress resistance. Additional considerations include: soil characteristics, availability of water, control of water runoff, maintenance of the vegetative barrier, use of native and non-invasive species, and roadway safety. A full list of design considerations can be found in **Exhibit A - EPA's Recommendations for Constructing Roadside Vegetation Barriers to Improve Near-Road Air Quality**, it is also available at [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/recommendations\\_for\\_constructing\\_roadside\\_vegetation\\_barriers\\_to\\_improve\\_near-road\\_air\\_quality.pdf](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-08/documents/recommendations_for_constructing_roadside_vegetation_barriers_to_improve_near-road_air_quality.pdf)

### Funding Available

The funding available for the Vegetative Barrier measure is \$1,000,000 for projects within the South Central Fresno Community. The District anticipates one funding cycle; however, funding cycles are contingent upon the number of competitive applications. There are no maximum or minimum grant amounts.

### Contract Period

Applicants that receive grants are required to commit to their projects for a minimum of 10 years. During this time, applicants must maintain the project, comply with other requirements described in this RFP, and make the project available for inspection if requested by District and/or CARB staff during the contract period. Additionally, the applicant must complete the project implementation phase within three years of the contract execution date and maintain the project for the remaining years.

## Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
November 15, 2021	Release Request for Proposal
December 15, 2021	Proposal submission deadline
January 15, 2021	Proposal review by District staff
February 15, 2022	Final selection announced
March 15, 2022	Proposed contract start date
March 15, 2025	Contract end date

## Application Requirements & Ranking Criteria

Applicants must submit a completed application (Exhibit B) and requested supplemental documents listed in this RFP to the District prior to the RFP deadline. In addition to the program application, applicants must identify their experience and how projects funded through existing initiatives within the community such as the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) may be leveraged to expand the progress already being made in the South Central Fresno AB 617 community.

Applications received by the District will be reviewed by and distributed to District staff and the South Central Fresno CSC. Projects will be scored by District Staff with the assistance of the CSC in accordance to the criteria described below. These scores are meant to inform the decision-making process but will not be the determining factor for project selection. Several of these criteria were based off of the California Climate Investments (CCI) Urban Greening Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. Additional scoring criteria was added at the request of the sub-committee to make sure vegetative barriers projects are evaluated and installed at the locations on page seven of this RFP

Scoring Criteria	Points Available
Cost-Effectiveness - \$/ton GHG reduced	0-40
Exposure Benefits - Proximity to sensitive populations - Proximity to buildings to reduce energy costs - Proximity to sidewalks to shade well-traveled areas - Proximity to areas requested by the CSC (page 7-8 of the RFP)	0-25
Co-benefits - Criteria air pollutant emission reductions	0-20

- Water and energy savings	
Project Readiness - Timeliness of project implementation - Leveraging existing efforts in the community - Availability of external funding	0-15

### Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Applicant must be a city, county, special district, individual, non-profit, tribal government, or public agency or entity for projects to be implemented within the selected AB 617 community with this measure adopted within the CERP.
2. Applicant must be the property owner, have documented authority from the property owner, or have a demonstrated plan to obtain the authority from the owner of the land on which the project will be implemented;
3. Applicant must commit to implementing the project within three years of contract execution date and maintaining trees planted as part of the project for the remaining portion of the contract period. The contract will be ten (10) years from the date of execution. This includes having a commitment to irrigate trees, and tree maintenance, up to and including removal and replacement of dead trees;
4. Applicant must commit to making the project available for inspection if requested by the District or CARB staff during the entire contract period, which will be ten (10) years;
5. Applicant must contact the local County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office before obtaining any plant material originating from outside the respective county to ensure all the requirements for movement of plant material into the respective county are met;
6. Applicant must ensure that trees are purchased, planted, and maintained to the specifications provided in Appendix H *Tree Selection, Planting, and Care Specifications* of the CAL Fire Urban and Community Forestry Grant Guidelines.<sup>ii</sup>
7. Applicant shall, provide public access to the project where feasible;
8. Applicant shall obtain any required permits necessary for successful project completion;
9. Applicant and project partner(s) must have financial capacity to complete, operate, and maintain the project;
10. All property taxes where the Vegetative Barrier project will be located must be current at the time of application;
11. Applicant must ensure that any funds required from other sources are reasonably expected to be available in the time frame needed to carry out the project.

### Project Eligibility Criteria

Applicants are encouraged to review the resources provided in Exhibit D as they prepare their proposals.

1. Species selection – required
  - a. Non-Invasive

- b. Non-Poisonous
  - c. Roadway safety conformity (where applicable)
  - d. Maximize GHG reductions
  - e. Low-biogenic volatile organic compound (BVOC) emitting
  - f. Minimize allergenic pollen
2. Species selection - to be considered in selection
    - a. Native Species
    - b. Perennial, annual or mix
    - c. Drought resistance
    - d. Adaptive to local site conditions (i.e., soil and climate factors)
    - e. Erect growth habit with stiff stems
    - f. Resistance to lodging and strong leaf retention
    - g. Tolerance to soil deposition
  3. Vegetation Characteristics – The following plant characteristics should be considered when making species selection. A full detailed description of vegetation characteristics can be found in **Exhibit A**.
    - a. Seasonal Effects
    - b. Leaf Surface
    - c. Air Emissions
    - d. Pollution and Stress Resistance
  4. The following costs are **eligible** for funding as part of this CERP strategy:
    - a. Supplies and materials
    - b. Labor and construction of the project such as removal of materials and equipment, installation of trees, and other approved items
    - c. Contracted services related to the project
    - d. Signs and interpretive aids communicating information about the project
    - e. On-going project maintenance for the continued health of the project trees
    - f. Up to 25% of the grant request may be budgeted for non-construction costs, including but not limited to design, permitting, outreach, direct project administration and management
    - g. Up to 10% may be budgeted for contingency costs
    - h. The grant amount will cover 100% of eligible costs
  5. The following costs are **ineligible** to receive funding as part of this CERP strategy:
    - a. Overhead (i.e., rent, utilities, office equipment/supplies)

Payments will be made on a **reimbursement** basis. The Grantee pays for services, products, and supplies, submits invoices and proof of payment, and is then reimbursed. If the Applicant is unable to carry the financial responsibility of a reimbursement program on their own, they may partner with a local public agency or 501(c)(3) non-profit.





### Community Requested Locations for Vegetative Barriers

Popular locations where community members have requested vegetative barriers include:

- Highway 41 and Jensen Avenue
- Highway 41 and East Kaviland
- Highway 41 and East Ventura Street
- Jensen and South Elm Avenue
- Jensen and just West of Martin Luther King Blvd
- Jensen and Highway 99
- Jensen and Peach Avenues
- Jensen and Chestnut Avenues
- Church Avenue just East of South West Avenue
- South Cedar and Highway 99
- Highway 99 and C Street (Near the Lincoln Elementary School)
- Highway 99 and East Amador Street
- Highway 99 at the Fink-White Park
- Highway 99 and South Modoc Street
- Highway 99 and West Dunn Avenue
- Highway 99 and West Nielson Avenue (Near Teilman School)
- Highway 99 and Olive Avenue
- Central and Highway 99
- Cherry and Central Avenues
- Cherry and North Avenues (Near Orange Center School)
- Jensen and South Cedar Avenue
- North and Highway 99

The Applicant must evaluate all of the locations the community has identified to see if it is a viable option to plant trees at these locations. The community-identified locations can be found at the web link below: <https://valleyair.mysocialpinpoint.com/ab167-scfresno/map#/>

### Written Proposal Contents and Application Process

The program application is available as Exhibit B to this RFP. Incomplete proposals or proposals arriving after the deadline will be automatically disqualified from consideration.

Applicants will submit applications that include the required information as described in this RFP. A certification section is included in the application and details applicant requirements. Participation occurs in several phases:

1. Applicants must submit the following in response to this RFP:
  - a. A completed application packet must include:
    - i. Completed Application, no fields left blank;
      1. Applicants may submit answers to Section 3, questions 1-14, of the application on a separate document so long as the

- proposal answers each question in the order presented in the application and the responses are numbered accordingly.
2. Applicants must include **on a separate document** a Project Implementation Plan with a supporting Project Budget and Project Schedule that provides dates and details for key deliverables as anticipated by the Applicant.
    - ii. Completed Certifications Form section, signed by applicant;
    - iii. First page of IRS Form W-9;
    - iv. Completed California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Draft Urban Greening Benefits Calculator Tool and provide copies of the “GHG summary” tab and “Co-benefit Summary” tab;
    - v. Dated and itemized quote(s) for the project costs;
    - vi. Photographs of the project site, an aerial photo of the project from an online source, and a representation of the project plan area (i.e., site plan); and
  - b. Answers to the following supplemental questions on a separate document:
    - i. What is your experience with implementing vegetative barrier projects?
    - ii. If possible, how will you leverage existing projects funded through existing initiatives within the community such as the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) projects already in place or in progress in South Central Fresno?
    - iii. What step will you take to evaluate the viability of the community suggested locations for vegetative barriers?
2. Once the RFP period has ended, the District will review applications received and contact Applicants as necessary to gather additional information. The District will aim to respond to prospective Applicants within 60 days following the end of the RFP period to alert them if their projects have been selected to receive funding. However, this timeline may be extended at the discretion of the District (e.g. to reach consensus from the CSC).
  3. Upon CSC consensus, applications selected for funding will be processed by District Staff and a contract will be offered to the participant. Once both parties have agreed to sign the contract, the applicant will be notified of the contract execution, at which point applicants may then commence work on the project. Project expenses cannot be incurred prior to contract execution.
  4. Claim for Payments may be submitted for partial/progress payments for reimbursement throughout the project implementation period and up to 90-days following the completion of the project implementation period. A complete Claim for Payment packet is required as part of the reimbursement process and must include, but is not limited to, the invoice(s) and receipts for the services performed and materials purchased, and proof of payment for all expenses. During this time, District inspectors will inspect and take photos of the project

site. District staff will review submitted claim packets and reimburse for eligible costs, up to the approved contract amount.

### Proposal Submittal

All proposals must be submitted according to specifications set forth in this RFP. Failure to adhere to these specifications may be cause for rejection of proposal.

Signature – all proposals should be signed by an authorized representative of the Applicant.

Due Date – All proposals are due no later than 5:00 PM, **December 15, 2021**, and should be directed to:

David Lopez  
Supervising Air quality Specialist  
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District  
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave  
Fresno, CA 93726-0244  
Email: [David.Lopez@valleyair.org](mailto:David.Lopez@valleyair.org)

Late Proposals – Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Grounds for Rejection – A proposal may be immediately rejected if:

- It is not prepared in the required format, or
- It is signed by an individual not authorized to represent the firm, or
- It is not signed.

Modification or Withdrawal – Once submitted, proposals cannot be altered without the prior written consent of the District. All proposals shall constitute firm offers and may not be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days following the last day to accept proposals.

### Emission Reductions

Various California state and institutional bodies have developed tools to help estimate the GHG reductions and co-benefits associated with Vegetative Barrier projects. The methodology and referenced tools below are consistent with the Quantification Methodology developed for the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Urban Greening Grant Program under the California Climate Investments Program.

All Vegetative Barrier project calculations can be performed in the Benefits Calculator Tool, a workbook, which has been developed by CARB for the CNRA.<sup>iii</sup> Project Applicants need to fill out data within two tabs in this workbook in order to quantify emissions and co-benefits. Applicants must fill out tabs “Project Info,” and “Tree Planting – ITP.” The tab “Tree Planting – ITS” should not be filled out (The “Tree Planting – ITS” tab is designed for an alternative input tab for use with alternative

software that is no longer supported). Tab “New Bike-Ped Infrastructure” should not be completed, as new bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure is not included in the Vegetative Barrier Program Plan.

In order to fill out all the information as prompted in the spreadsheet, project Applicants will also need to use three external tools, as follows:

- University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS IV) tool<sup>7iv</sup>
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Water Budget Workbook<sup>8v</sup>
- i-Tree Planting Tool<sup>9vi</sup>

A guide detailing how to use each of these tools can be found in Exhibit C.

### Qualitative Benefits

In addition to reducing GHG and CAP emissions, Vegetative Barriers projects will qualitatively benefit the surrounding communities. Vegetative Barriers can shade buildings and reduce energy consumption by lessening the load on air conditioning systems. When native and/or drought-resistant vegetation is planted and maintained using water efficient irrigation methods, Vegetative Barriers can reduce water usage. In addition, planting more trees in certain areas, such as near freeways, may also help reduce noise pollution.

### Written Proposal Evaluation

Applications received by the District will be reviewed by and distributed to District staff and the CSC. Projects will be scored by the District with the assistance of CSC in accordance with the criteria presented in this RFP. The scores are meant to inform the decision-making process but will not be the determining factor for project selection. A meeting with the CSC will be scheduled after the conclusion of the RFP period to present and rank the submitted proposals.

During the selection process the District may wish to interview some Applicants for clarification purposes only. No new material will be permitted at this time. Additional information provided during the bid review process is limited to clarification by the Applicant of information presented in the proposal upon request by the District.

The Executive Officer or Governing Board may award the contract to an Applicant other than the Applicant receiving the highest rating in the event the Governing Board determines that another Applicant from among those technically qualified would provide the best value considering cost and technical factors. The determination shall be based solely on the Evaluation Criteria contained in the RFP, on evidence provided in the proposal and on any other evidence provided during the bid review process.

The District will report program information in accordance with Community Air Protection program guidelines found at:

[https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/cap/docs/cap\\_incentives\\_2019\\_guidelines.pdf](https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/cap/docs/cap_incentives_2019_guidelines.pdf).

## Administration

1. **Cost of Developing Application**

The Applicant is responsible for the cost of developing an Application, and this cost cannot be charged to the District. In addition, the District is not liable for any costs incurred during environmental review or as a result of withdrawing a proposed award or canceling the solicitation.
2. **Errors**

If an Applicant discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in the solicitation, the Applicant shall immediately notify the District of such error in writing and request modification or clarification of the document. The District shall not be responsible for failure to correct errors.
3. **Immaterial Defect**

The District may waive any immaterial defect or deviation contained in an Applicant's application. The District's waiver shall in no way modify the Application or excuse the successful Applicant from full compliance.
4. **Disposition of Applicant's Documents**

Pursuant to the District's Procurement Policy and Procedure, the District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. On the date that the Agreement is signed, all applications and related material submitted in response to this solicitation become a part of the property of the District and public record.
5. **Applicant's Admonishment**

This solicitation contains the instructions governing the requirements for funding projects submitted by interested Applicants, including the format in which the information is to be submitted, the material to be included, the requirements that must be met to be eligible for consideration, and Applicant responsibilities. Applicants must take the responsibility to carefully read the entire solicitation, ask appropriate questions in a timely manner, submit the application with all required responses in a complete manner by the required date and time, and make sure that all procedures and requirements of the solicitation are followed and appropriately addressed.
6. **Agreement Requirements**

The content of this solicitation and each grant Recipient's application shall be incorporated by reference into a final grant agreement. The District reserves the right to negotiate with Applicants to modify the project scope, the level of funding, or both. If the District is unable to successfully negotiate and execute a funding agreement with an Applicant, the District, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to withdraw the pending award and fund the next highest ranked eligible project. This does not limit the District's ability to withdraw a proposed award for other reasons, including for no cause.
7. **No Agreement Until Signed**

No agreement between the District and the successful Applicant is in effect until the agreement is signed by the Recipient and signed by the authorized District representative. Costs are only subject to reimbursement by the District after execution; no costs incurred prior to execution of the agreement are reimbursable.

8. No Modifications to the General Provisions  
Because time is of the essence, if an Applicant at any time, including after Preliminary Grantee Selection, attempts to negotiate, or otherwise seeks modification of, the application or proposed award, the District may reject an application or withdraw a proposed award.
9. Payment of Prevailing Wages  
If applicable, all Applicants must read and pay particular attention to prevailing wages and labor compliance. Prevailing wage rates can be significantly higher than non-prevailing wage rates. Failure to pay legally-required prevailing wage rates can result in substantial damages and financial penalties, termination of the grant agreement, disruption of projects, and other complications.
10. Solicitation Cancellation and Amendments  
The District reserves the right to cancel this solicitation, revise the amount of funds available under this solicitation, amend this solicitation as needed, and reject any or all applications received in response to this solicitation.

## Insurance

The Applicant is required to maintain sufficient insurance, licenses, or other required certifications for the type of work being performed. The District may require specific insurance coverage be established and maintained during the course of the work and as a condition of award or continuation of contract.

## Contact Person

All questions concerning this RFP and application submittals should be directed to:

David Lopez  
Supervising Air quality Specialist  
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District  
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave  
Fresno, CA 93726-0244  
Phone (559) 230-5961  
Email: [David.Lopez@valleyair.org](mailto:David.Lopez@valleyair.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> Urban Greening Program Final Guidelines. Available at: <https://resources.ca.gov/grants/urban-greening/>  
Accessed: February 2021.

- ii Appendix H, CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Grant Guidelines. Available at: [https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/9653/cal-fire-ucf-cci-2019-20\\_grant-guidelines\\_final.pdf#page=54](https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/9653/cal-fire-ucf-cci-2019-20_grant-guidelines_final.pdf#page=54)  
Accessed: March 2021.
- iii CARB Urban Greening Calculator Tool (Version 3). Available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/cciquantification-benefits-and-reporting-materials?corr>  
Accessed: February 2021.
- iv WUCOLS IV Database. Available at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/> Accessed: February 2021.
- v DWR Water Budget Workbook. Available at: <https://cadwr.app.box.com/s/5k39tv10u42rp5bn2uebd7fodkxzgve7>  
Accessed: February 2021.
- vi i-Tree Planting Calculator v2.1.2. Available at: <https://planting.itreetools.org/> Accessed: February 2021.

DRAFT