

Competition, Recognition, and Innovation: What Really Motivates Participation? ✨

What compels busy public agencies to to participate in energy programs? Some agencies have staff dedicated to support energy and climate goals, programs, and initiatives, but for many others, energy doesn't rise to the top of their list - and these are the agencies that may need the most support.

For the past four years, the Southern California Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN) has been collaborating with locally-based organizations (Regional Partners) to boost public agency participation in energy programs. SoCalREN is actively working to alleviate barriers for rural and hard to reach communities through innovative funding opportunities and Regional Partner services. These partners have long standing relationships with their communities and understand their unique needs. As a result of this collaborative effort between SoCalREN and Regional Partners, public agencies have saved energy and accessed resources for future energy planning. This poster provides an overview of this partnership, highlighting innovative approaches to make energy efficiency programs and services successful in local communities.



About the Regional Partners



The Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) is a voluntary association of 27 cities in Southeast Los Angeles County and South Bay, California.



The High Sierra Energy Foundations (HSEF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the culture of energy efficiency and sustainability in the Eastern Sierra.



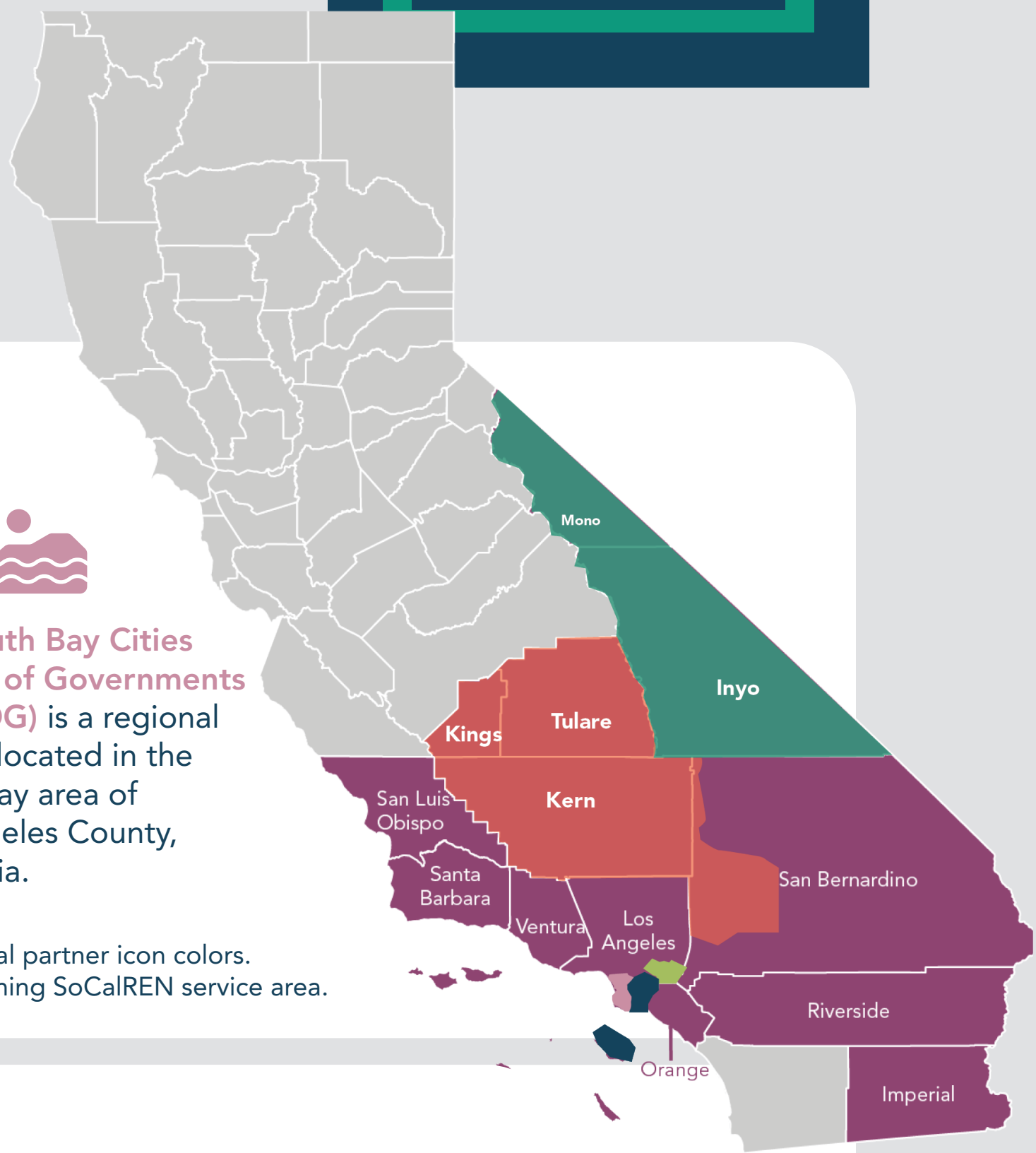
The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) is a regional organization located in the San Gabriel Valley region of SoCal. It comprises of 31 cities and three unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County.



The San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization (SJVCEO) is an organization dedicated to promoting clean energy and sustainability in California's San Joaquin Valley region.



The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) is a regional agency located in the South Bay area of Los Angeles County, California.



Map territories correspond with regional partner icon colors. Purple territories encompass the remaining SoCalREN service area.

Barriers to Participation

Unique Needs of Hard-to-Reach and Rural Communities

CalEnviroScreen is used in the industry to identify disadvantaged communities (DAC) that are most burdened by environmental pollutants. Some rural and hard-to-reach communities lack such a designation but also have unique needs and barriers to participating in energy efficiency programs. These communities need expanded program accessibility and services, often in a customizable way.

Capacity for Engagement

Extremely large regions make it difficult to provide high engagement to all agencies. Agencies typically have priorities that compete with energy and sustainability initiatives. Limited staff capacity plays a role in limited resources as well. All of these things combined make engagement difficult for Regional Partners of all program area sizes.

Limited Resources

Implementing energy initiatives requires access to technical expertise. Public agency staff often juggle multiple responsibilities simultaneously, which can pose challenges initiating new projects, staying informed about energy needs, and capitalizing on developing opportunities. This can hinder their ability to plan and execute effective strategies to garner the benefits of public programs.

Innovations to Alleviate Barriers

Recognition and Competitive Models

These models focus on understanding and improving the experience of participants throughout their journey with programs. They help identify barriers, pain points, and opportunities for engagement, ultimately enhancing program participation

Activities within competitive models include:

- Attending working group meetings
- Host community events to promote energy efficiency programs
- Complete energy efficiency actions
- Share best practices with other agencies in the network
- Apply for awards to highlight success

The Gateway Cities and San Gabriel Valley Councils of Governments have both developed their own regional competitive model. Both partners have found increased engagement with public agencies since their launch.



Region-Specific Initiatives

eSGV is a program that provides San Gabriel Valley residents with FREE home energy efficiency assessments, helping them identify opportunities that may reduce household energy usage and costs.

Benefits:

- Cost savings
- Energy conservation
- Comfort and health

Facility Equipment Inventory (FEI) catalogs energy-using equipment such as lighting, HVAC, water systems, etc. to analyze retrofit opportunities and anticipate replacement timelines.

Benefits:

- Efficient resource management
- Cost savings
- Improved operational efficiency
- Code compliance and safety

The **Energy Resilience Action Plan (ERAP)** initiative's goal is to support agencies in developing a roadmap for near- to long-term energy resilience strategies.

Benefits:

- "Shovel ready" project recommendations
- GHG inventory & reduction targets
- Agency & community stakeholder input
- Risk mitigation
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing

Dedicated Meetings

Recurring meetings dedicated to energy planning and identifying support needs within specific regions. These meetings encourage peer-to-peer collaboration among staff with varying levels of experience when it comes energy management.

Regular one-on-one meetings with agency staff. These meetings create expanded lines of communication, build and maintain relationships, and provide direct assistance for challenges unique to that agency.

What does successful implementation look like?

- Open feedback loops
- Models that can be used in the long term
- Services can be replicated and tailored to fit the needs of a region

What are the benefits?

- Removing hurdles to program participation
- Greater awareness of services and opportunities
- Opportunities for agency recognition

41%

of SoCalREN enrolled agencies are supported by a Regional Partner

25%

growth in enrollment with the support of Regional Partners