



Community Benefits Program Overview

Large infrastructure projects such as the Delta Conveyance Project inevitably create adverse effects on the communities and the local environment in which they are built.

A community benefits program is a set of commitments made by project proponents to address these local effects, particularly when project benefits are not local. These commitments can include a wide range of possible approaches, including economic and social benefits from job training programs and local hiring targets or funding for local improvement projects such as infrastructure or recreational facilities.

Creating a Community Benefits Program for the Delta Conveyance Project is an acknowledgment that:

- 1 The direct project benefits related to SWP water supply reliability do not directly benefit the communities of the Delta;
- 2 The project could have potential adverse effects that Delta communities experience through the term of construction; and
- 3 The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other required environmental mitigation typically do not address all adverse effects on the local communities.

Community Benefits Program - Four Elements

The program includes the following four elements:

1. Delta Community Fund

- Grant funding for a broad array of community-prioritized projects in the Delta.
- Early input from community members identified examples of project categories, including recreation, water and air quality, public safety and emergency response, habitat conservation, culture and history, economy, infrastructure, education and workforce development, and levee maintenance and improvement.
- Qualified projects will be funded on a first-come, first-served basis with technical assistance provided to applicants.

2. Economic Development

- These are targeted benefits that would be realized through construction of the project facilities, including targeted hiring, job training and business participation programs.
- The Community Benefits Program budget for the economic development element would include expenses (i.e. staffing) that would be required to administer the program and monitor progress toward the identified targets.

3. Integrated Benefits

- These benefits would be commitments to modify and convert temporary infrastructure or other construction-related features as a "leave behind" for continued public use and benefit.
- Quantification of the integrated benefit would only include the incremental expenses that would be required to make the infrastructure suitable to leave behind for continued community use. The incremental cost would be determined by subtracting the estimated cost to design, construct, and potentially staff/operate a component of infrastructure (i.e. emergency response facilities) as originally designed from the cost to design, construct, and potentially staff/operate the same component as designed for the integrated benefit.

4. Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs)

- Agreements with specific communities identifying benefits unique to that community that could be achieved through any combination of the three program elements defined above or similar components.
- These CBAs may be developed with a single entity representing a single geographic location or town, or with an entity representing a larger region, or in combination.
- CBAs can provide an opportunity for more targeted collaboration with communities.
- Communities interested in pursuing the program in their own local areas (and possible community-specific CBAs) are encouraged to reach out to DWR to collaborate on possible next steps.

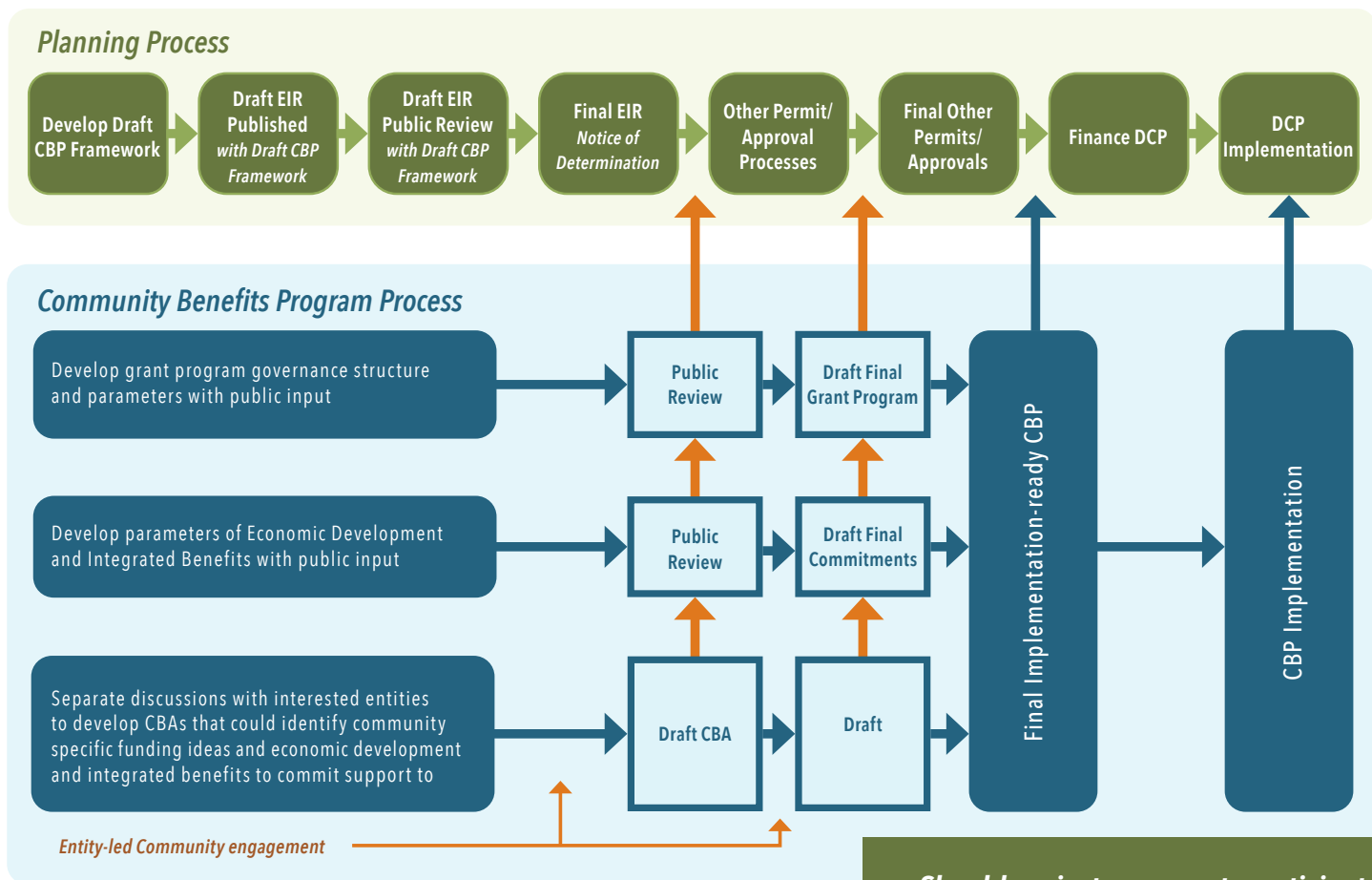
Implementing the Community Benefits Program, as described in the Draft Community Benefits Program Framework included in the Final Environmental Impact Report, would be part of Delta Conveyance Project implementation, and could not move forward until a decision is made on whether to proceed with the project after receipt of all remaining essential permits and approvals. Now that the CEQA review is completed and DWR has approved the project, CBA activities can move forward including finalization of agreements and commitment terms.

Next Steps

Community Benefits Programs are unique to both the project and the community they are supporting. DWR recently released a [Discussion Draft Implementation Plan and Guidelines](#) that provides more detail about how the CBP could be implemented and is available for review through March 1, 2025. DWR welcomes feedback on this document, which was developed as a starting point to initiate the process of determining how the Community Benefits Program should be implemented. The community input received on the Discussion Draft Implementation Plan and Guidelines will be used to develop an updated version of the document.



General Process for Development of Community Benefits Program



The Community Benefits Program for the Delta Conveyance Project would be one of three distinct, but complementary, processes intended to address effects within local communities.

The other two processes are the more traditional concepts of a) mitigation, used to address environmental impacts related to compliance with specific regulatory requirements; and b) an ombudsman program, which would serve as a clearing house for construction information and support and facilitate the process for obtaining just compensation for direct construction impacts.

Should project opponents participate in creating community benefits?

Yes! Delta community members have an opportunity to harness this major capital works project to create lasting, tangible and potentially significant economic and social benefit. Participation is not seen by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as a sign of support for the project and in no way prevents continued ability to oppose the project.

Three Distinct but Complementary Processes

Regulatory Mitigation	Community Benefits Program	Ombudsman Program
Purpose: Address project impacts related to specific regulatory requirements (e.g. CEQA/NEPA)	Purpose: Provide resources to direct benefits toward communities most impacted by implementation, based on community collaboration	Purpose: Clearinghouse single point of contact to streamline information, support and claims. Includes facilitating the process for obtaining just compensation for direct construction impacts

