



## **Shine Award Program 2025 – 2026 Guidelines**

### **Purpose of the program**

The goal of the Shine award program (“Shine program”) is to create opportunities to build inclusive community collaborations, provide equitable support to encourage economic development in the Sacramento region and support our community-based nonprofit organizations. An overarching focus will be on achieving our 2030 Clean Energy Vision with a commitment to ensuring all cultural and social identities share in the benefits of the Vision and with deliberate attention to the historically underserved. Together, we’ll improve our local air quality, develop our local workforce and create a cleaner and healthier region for all.

Shine program applications open June 1 and close July 31 at 5 p.m. Awardees must deliver their project during the 2026 Calendar Year.

### **Eligible applicants**

While the Shine program harnesses the ingenuity and leadership of forward-thinking individuals within our communities, only incorporated nonprofit organizations providing services within SMUD’s service territory can apply. These include but are not necessarily limited to community-based non-profits, chambers of commerce, property-based improvement districts, neighborhood associations and homeowner associations.

Individuals interested in proposing a project for inclusion in the Shine program must collaborate with, and ensure the application is submitted by and through an incorporated nonprofit organization. We will not review applications submitted directly by individuals.

Municipal organizations (cities, counties, special districts, school districts, etc.) may apply as co-applicants in collaboration with an incorporated nonprofit organization. For projects in which a municipal organization is applying as a co-applicant, the application must identify an eligible nonprofit as the fiscal agent for the project. Awarded project funds will be disbursed only to a project’s identified fiscal agent.

### **Eligible projects**

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must demonstrate that the proposed project has a direct connection to SMUD’s public purpose, Strategic Directives and the 2030 Clean Energy Vision and Zero Carbon Plan. Proposals should also align with the Sustainable Communities pillars of service, such as zero carbon workforce, inclusive economic development, clean energy and STEM education, and environmental justice and equity, to ensure the award has a greater collective community impact.

## **Community impact**

The proposed project must also create critical mass for change in the community it's intended to serve, and/or have a tangible and quantifiable impact on the community. This may include, but not necessarily be limited to, revitalization of business areas to increase customer and community engagement, improving air quality and tree canopy (environmental justice and equity), STEM education and career exploration, regional zero carbon workforce development trainings and opportunities, environmental justice, equity with education, inclusive economic development and equitable access and support for facility improvements that increase energy efficiency. Service-based projects aligned with SMUD and the Sustainable Communities pillars of service for under-resourced communities will be eligible for funding. (See "Types of award funding available").

These awards are not intended to fund events. For event sponsorship and applications, visit [smud.org/Sponsorships](https://smud.org/Sponsorships).

## **Organizations and projects that are not eligible to apply**

Based upon SMUD policy and regulatory requirements, there are a number of organizations and activities for which the Shine program cannot provide funding. Examples of these are as follows:

- Political or individual lobbying activities
- Religious activities, in whole or in part, for the purpose of furthering religious doctrine. Projects by faith-based organizations will be considered in regard to services provided to all clients regardless of denomination.
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex or national origin.
- General operating support, including labor or travel expenses.
- School-affiliated field trips, fundraisers, sports teams, graduations or performing arts events.
- Organizations that do not provide services in SMUD's service territory.

## **SMUD's mission and key values**

We're proud to give back to our community by supporting efforts that improve quality of life in our region. Through the financial support of programs such as Shine, we eagerly seek collaborations with eligible applicants that support projects that make a difference and align with our 4 key values:

1. Leadership
  - a. Inclusive economic development
  - b. Civic leadership
2. Integrity
  - a. Environmental justice and equity
3. Ingenuity
  - a. Education (focused on science, technology, engineering and math)
4. Community vitality
  - a. Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and culture
  - b. Healthy, sustainable communities

## **Funding priorities**

From all eligible projects, SMUD will prioritize funding for those that include one or more of the following impact areas:

- Promotes 2030 Clean Energy Vision by practicing clean energy behaviors and solutions, particularly in diverse and under-resourced communities
- Promotes energy efficiency, electrification, energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction, particularly in diverse and under-resourced communities
- Involves clean energy education related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, or related science, technology, engineering and math (“STEM”) fields
- Offers inclusive economic development practices for small businesses and opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Advances inclusive zero carbon workforce development with our underrepresented and/or under-resourced communities

## **Types of award funding available**

Applicants can apply for 3 different types of award funding opportunities:

1. **Spark Award** – awards of \$10,000 or less
2. **Amplifier Award** – awards of \$10,001 to \$50,000
3. **Transformer Award** – awards of \$50,001 to \$100,000

**Spark Award:** The Spark Award is for smaller, short-term projects ready in 3-6 months that can spark immediate positive change for the community. Projects may include seasonal, time-limited STEM education and/or career exploration, energy efficiency upgrades or outdoor shade structure materials.

**Amplifier Award:** The Amplifier Award will help launch projects that will begin and finish within 6-12 months and will have a measurable impact on the community. Projects of this type may include energy efficient upgrades, STEM education and greenhouse gas reduction. They may also include service-based programs that encourage inclusive economic development, including equitable access for under-resourced and underrepresented communities to promote zero carbon workforce development, STEM education and environmental stewardship projects.

**Transformer Award:** Transformer Award funding is for projects that meet the program funding priorities in a way that address systemic community issues and generally occur over a longer-term timeline. In most cases, these projects will involve significant transformation of the community’s infrastructure or other aspects of its built environment. Transformer funds are for projects that will be ready to launch and finish within 12 months. Service-based programs may use funding for energy efficient equipment and other related physical infrastructure. Projects of this type may include an HVAC upgrade to an electrical HVAC system, water heat pump or induction stove upgrades.

## **Budget and matching requirements**

Shine awards are publicly funded.

***Note: no portion of Shine funding may be expended for any wages, salary or labor related costs for the proposed project.***

The Shine program is a matching funding program. Matching funds may be provided as cash, in-kind or a combination of cash and in-kind. Matching requirements for each award type are as follows:

- Spark Award = 25% match required (e.g., \$1,250 match for a \$5,000 award)
- Amplifier Award = 50% match required (e.g., \$10,000 match for a \$20,000 award)
- Transformer Award = 100% match required (e.g., \$75,000 match for a \$75,000 award)
- The in-kind portion of the match may not exceed 50% of the match requirement.

In-kind contributions are defined as materials or labor that an organization commits to a project in lieu of cash. In the case of donated labor, the value of that time must be calculated at that person's hourly rate of compensation based on their specialty or field, multiplied by the number of hours that will be contributed over the term of the project's implementation (e.g., a carpenter at a rate of \$60/hour x 20 hours of labor).

For materials, we request that applicants use the retail value of the goods or materials provided.

## **Insurance requirements:**

To execute a funding agreement in the Shine award program, applicants will need to provide a Certificate of Insurance (COI) from their Insurance Broker with coverage that meets our minimum coverage limits for Commercial General Liability at \$2 Million for Occurrence and Aggregate. There's also a requirement for additional insured severability of interest and waivers of subrogation statements on the COI.

## **Funding disbursement**

There will be 2 funding disbursements based on project milestones for all award levels. Disbursements will be 50% at the beginning of the project and 50% at the end of the project.

## **Quarterly program and fiscal reports**

All Shine program awardees will be required to submit quarterly performance reports that document progress toward accomplishing project milestones and achieving identified performance metrics, as well as fiscal expenditure of award funds, cash match and in-kind match. Sustainable Communities staff will email a link to the quarterly reporting platform to the Shine award contact when reports are due.

### **Quarterly reports will reflect the deliverables of the previous 3 months:**

- Q1: Jan. to March 2026 - report due in April 2026
- Q2: April to June 2026 - report due in July 2026
- Q3: July to Sept. 2026 - report due in Oct. 2026.
- Q4: Oct. to Dec. 2026 - report due in Jan. 2027.
  - The Q4 report will be a comprehensive end of year report on all deliverables from January to Dec. 2026 due in Jan. 2027.
  - The project is expected to be finished before the end of the 2026 calendar year.

### **How to apply**

To apply for a Shine award, visit **smud.org/Shine** during the application window of June 1 – July 31.

**Please note:** SMUD is using the SurveyMonkey Apply platform to manage the online submission form and application process. Applicants must create a user account prior to accessing the online application form. This will allow applicants to save application progress prior to submitting. Paper copies of the Shine application will be available by request.

Application submission is not a guarantee of a funding award. Applications submitted, but not funded in a given funding cycle, may be considered for a Shine award in a future cycle. However, to be considered, the application will need to be resubmitted in accordance with the Shine program's most recently published program guidelines.