

The 2022-23 Budget:

Office of Planning and Research Budget Proposals

FEBRUARY 2022

Summary. This budget post describes the Governor’s 2022-23 budget proposals for the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and provides comments and recommendations to the Legislature.

BACKGROUND

The OPR has responsibilities pertaining to state planning, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) assistance, and environmental and federal project review procedures. Additionally, the Strategic Growth Council, California Volunteers, and the California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine (CIAPM) have been assigned to OPR for oversight purposes. The budget for OPR includes 18 budget change proposals. We assess these proposals and provide comments and recommendations in this post.

CREATE AN OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Background

Public Outreach to Some Communities More Difficult Than Others. Some groups and communities are more difficult to reach than others when raising public awareness about public health issues, educational resources, or other important matters such as the decennial Census. In some cases, hard to reach groups have linguistic or cultural barriers that require customized communications approaches. Other groups may have a distrust for public agencies and could be more receptive to a message that they receive from a community leader or another trusted messenger.

State Has Launched a Number of Outreach Campaigns in Recent Years. To facilitate the spread of important information across the state’s

diverse population, the state carries out a number of outreach campaigns. Most of these programs competitively award grants to community-based organizations (CBOs) and other trusted messengers to communicate state messages locally or regionally using various media and, often, in various languages. Examples include:

- **2020 Census.** To raise awareness of the importance of participating in the 2020 Census, the state appropriated \$187.2 million for **outreach activities** targeting hard-to-count households. The California Complete Count Census Office coordinated the communications effort. The Census Office’s activities included strategic communications in each of the target audiences’ languages and building partnerships with local governments and CBOs who could conduct or manage outreach in collaboration with the state. California’s final self-response rate was 69.6 percent, which was an improvement over the state’s 68.2 percent self-response rate for the 2010 Census and the national average of 67 percent. An **independent evaluation** of the outreach program concluded that Census partnerships expanded and strengthened community collaboration and helped to increase the organizational capacity of its partners.
- **Pandemic-Related Public Health.** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is administering many public awareness campaigns on testing and vaccination topics. CDPH outreach includes regular surveys; focus groups; social media campaigns; and communications toolkits about a wide range of COVID-19-related issues, such as farmworker safety and holiday gatherings.

- **Human Services Programs.** The Department of Social Services (DSS) conducts public outreach activities to increase participation in some human services programs, such as CalFresh. For example, when the state expanded CalFresh eligibility, DSS administered a multilingual marketing campaign. DSS also provides public outreach materials for use by counties to increase CalFresh enrollment and to encourage healthy behaviors, such as shopping at farmer’s markets.
- **Economic Relief Programs.** To raise awareness of the Golden State Stimulus (GSS) and the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) programs, the Franchise Tax Board, in partnership with the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD), award grants to CBOs for education and outreach activities. These include spending on advertising and media campaigns, distribution of printed materials, and neighborhood canvassing. An [evaluation of the CalEITC public outreach efforts](#) found that none of the outreach efforts had a measurable effect on the number of households filing taxes and claiming the CalEITC.

Governor’s Proposal

Governor Proposes to Create New Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC). The Governor’s budget includes \$65 million General Fund in 2022-23 and ongoing to create and implement the new OCPSC. The purpose of OCPSC would be to manage the state’s highest-priority public awareness and community outreach campaigns. The intent of the proposal is to formalize the outreach and communications activities that were developed during the 2020 Census and the COVID-19 pandemic.

LAO Assessment

The Administration Identifies a Legitimate Need... The state has a number of disparate efforts to raise awareness of critical issues across state government, as described above. There is no single entity that coordinates or standardizes

these activities. For this reason, there could be benefits from designating a single entity to focus on maintaining a statewide network of CBOs and other trusted messengers, managing communications grant programs, and coordinating interagency expertise and resources. For example, the designated entity could develop a statewide portal to advertise funding opportunities and accept grant applications. Further, the entity could merge and continue to develop the data, marketing materials, and local relationships with CBOs that have been assembled by the agencies conducting outreach activities to date.

...Unclear Whether Proposal Addresses This Need. The OPR proposal is conceptual and lacks detail, so we cannot assess how effectively it would address this need. Should the Legislature agree that some action in this area is necessary, we suggest it weigh several key considerations discussed below.

Key Considerations

- **Is OPR Best Situated to Administer?** While the Governor has proposed to locate this function in OPR, this choice is not driven by any of its statutory responsibilities. The Legislature could consider an alternative, such as the Government Operations Agency (GovOps). GovOps has experience with public outreach, having overseen the 2020 Census outreach effort. Further, as GovOps mission is not necessarily focused on a particular public policy area, it may be more neutral about which topics to focus on.
- **What Amount of Ongoing Staff and Funding Would Be Necessary?** The \$65 million request lacks a clear and detailed justification and it does not discuss staffing needs. A mature proposal would include a detailed justification for all ongoing funding and position authority. While the proposal generally describes the various activities that might be funded, it does not provide a specific justification for the need of each activity and why ongoing funding would be appropriate. We are skeptical that ongoing funding in this amount would be necessary. Rather, we would suggest only providing administrative funding

on an ongoing basis and providing one-time funding for other specific initiatives, such as marketing campaigns and outreach grants, so that the amounts of funding and allocation priorities could change with the state's needs over time.

- **How Would the Legislature Oversee the New Office?** Increased communications spending may not have a significant incremental benefit. We suggest planning how best to evaluate the effectiveness of the community partnership and communications activities while developing the proposal to ensure that appropriate resources are provided and the necessary data will be collected and evaluated. The plan should include (1) transparent accounting of which organization are receiving funding and the populations reached, and (2) assessments of the effectiveness of the outreach activities.
- **How Would Communications Priorities Be Set?** The proposal would focus on the state's highest-priority public awareness and community outreach campaigns. While the proposal specifically identifies outreach efforts related to the Census and the COVID-19 pandemic, how the new entity would determine the state's highest-priority communications needs in any given year is unclear.
- **How Would Proposed Entity Coordinate With Other State Agencies?** How the new entity would coordinate its activities with those state agencies that currently house the relevant policy expertise is unclear. For example, how would the new entity coordinate with CDPH public health experts if it assumed responsibility for COVID-19-related public awareness campaigns? Several other state agencies, such as CSD and DSS contract with many of the same organizations that also participate with the state's 2020 Census outreach and COVID-19-related public awareness campaigns. Would the scope of the proposed new entity include the other ongoing public outreach activities, such as those for CalEITC and CalFresh? If so, what would be the role of the department that

oversees the program—and therefore current outreach activities—now? If not, how would the new entity coordinate its activities with the similar activities of these other agencies to share information and avoid duplication of effort?

CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

Background

AmeriCorps Is A National Service Program.

AmeriCorps is an independent federal agency that coordinates and provides federal funding for a network of local, state, and national service programs to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, health, and emergency response. AmeriCorps members serve in full- or part-time positions with nonprofits or public agencies over a period of up to one year. Some members receive a modest hourly stipend or annual living allowance (depending on the terms of their program) and other benefits, such as health insurance during their service and funds to help pay for college. There are about 64,000 AmeriCorps members nationally. California has the largest state program, with about 4,500 members.

AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent (FG) and Senior Companion (SC) Provide Service Opportunities for Older Adults.

FG engages volunteers age 55 and over to serve in communities as role models, mentors, and friends to children. In 2020, AmeriCorps provided more than \$8.2 million in federal funds to 16 FG projects in the state involving about 1,500 volunteers. SC engages volunteers to assist and provide companionship for people who have difficulty with daily living tasks. In 2020, AmeriCorps provided more than \$2.3 million in federal funds to 14 SC projects in the state involving 760 volunteers.

California Volunteers Administers the California AmeriCorps Programs.

Each state is required under federal law to create and appoint a commission to administer the AmeriCorps programs. California Volunteers serves this purpose in the state, coordinating state funds and private donations to match federal funds for the state's AmeriCorps programs.

Disaster Response and Recovery.

California Volunteers also is tasked with coordinating volunteer activities related to disaster response and recovery. Following the catastrophic 2018 wildfires, the Legislature appropriated \$30 million to California Volunteers to bolster statewide disaster resilience in coordination with the California Office of Emergency Services. California Volunteers responded very broadly to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021-22 budget package included \$127.5 million federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds and \$18.8 million General Fund for a new college service program and \$15 million federal ARP Act funds for a new youth workforce development program. These programs engage AmeriCorps members in pandemic response activities, such as staffing food banks and vaccination clinics, and pandemic recovery activities that widely vary based on local community needs.

Climate Action Corps Established to Respond to Climate Change. The California Climate Action Corps was established through executive action in 2020. The Climate Action Corps provides AmeriCorps service opportunities to respond to climate change, such as urban greening and wildfire prevention home hardening. The 2021-22 budget package included \$4.7 million one-time General Fund to expand the Climate Action Corps program and fund stipends and administrative costs through 2023-24. This provided 236 service opportunities in the summer of 2021 and 50 full-time service opportunities for the 2021-22 year. Climate Action Corps received 562 applicants for the summer program and 285 applicants for the full-time program.

California Volunteers Also Operates Other Volunteerism Initiatives. California Volunteers also operates programs directly to increase awareness of volunteer opportunities in the state that are not associated with AmeriCorps programs. For example, California Volunteers expanded the scope of the Californians For All campaign to respond to needs identified during the COVID-19 pandemic, including direct outreach to recruit volunteers for food banks and vaccinations sites. One of these new initiatives was [Neighbor-to-Neighbor](#), in which California Volunteers partnered with the Nextdoor social media platform to directly engage people who wanted to check-in on and offer aid to their neighbors during the pandemic.

Governor's Proposals

Proposes \$10 Million Ongoing General Fund to Expand Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program.

This proposal would significantly expand the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program that was established during the pandemic. Funding would be allocated as follows:

- ***\$1.5 Million for Program Staffing.*** Eight new permanent California Volunteers staff, including three at the deputy director level, would administer the expanded Neighbor-to-Neighbor program. These individuals would coordinate program recruitment, training and technical assistance, marketing, data collection, monthly progress reporting, and the local assistance grant program. Three regional coordinators would support the local community volunteer organizers and their projects and volunteer activities.
- ***\$1 Million for Training.*** California Volunteers staff would provide virtual, recorded, and in-person trainings for the neighborhood leaders. Neighborhood leaders are volunteers who would organize and engage around 10 to 20 other volunteers in their community. Initially, the training would focus on specific activities regarding COVID-19 recovery and disaster preparedness. California Volunteers also would provide instructions on how to set up volunteer networks and organize neighborhood projects and activities.
- ***\$5 Million for Outreach Marketing.*** California Volunteers proposes to increase the number of neighborhood leaders to 1,000 from the current 50. To increase awareness about the program and to recruit volunteers, California Volunteers would develop a robust marketing campaign using social media platforms, such as Facebook and Ring Neighborhoods, and provide communications support to neighborhood leaders.
- ***\$1.5 Million for Digital Infrastructure.*** California Volunteers would develop a digital platform to distribute training materials and to facilitate communication and information sharing between California Volunteers, neighborhood leaders, and other volunteers.

- **\$1 Million for Local Assistance Grants.** California volunteers would award four \$250,000 grants to CBOs to support neighborhood leaders in recruiting participants and promoting local activity.

Proposes \$10 Million One Time to Expand FG and SC Programs. The requested funding would be used to expand the capacity of Area Agencies on Aging—a public or nonprofit agency designated by the state to address the needs and concerns of all older persons at the regional and local levels—to increase the number of AmeriCorps FG and SC projects. California Volunteers would competitively award one or more grants to Area Agencies on Aging that apply for funding to administer FG and SC projects.

Proposes \$3.86 Million to Establish Climate Action Corps Permanently. The Governor proposes to establish the California Climate Action Corps permanently. This proposal is for \$3.86 million General Fund for 2024-25 and ongoing.

LAO Assessment

Legislature Lacks Information About Newer Programs. As the state agency providing oversight of the AmeriCorps programs, California Volunteers collects data on the Climate Action Corps program. The participation in and outcomes of the Climate Action Corps program will be evaluated following the end of its initial three-year period. The Neighbor-to-Neighbor program is not an AmeriCorps program but California Volunteers has developed a plan to collect extensive data to support the programs’ objectives, provide monthly progress reports, and other program evaluations. However, at this time, California Volunteers has only provided anecdotal information about the initial outcomes of these newer programs. We recommend that California Volunteers; the Board of Commissioners; and its independent nonprofit organization, the California Volunteers Fund (which receives private sector donations), should be required to prepare an annual report that provides an accounting of all its activities, volunteer membership, and financial statements. This report should be provided to the fiscal committees of both houses of the Legislature and made readily available on its website.

Scope of Neighbor-to-Neighbor Proposal Outside California Volunteer’s Statutory Responsibilities. The role of California Volunteers in statute is to administer the state AmeriCorps programs and coordinate disaster response and recovery efforts with other state agencies. California Volunteers traditionally has served these roles by making grants to those nonprofits and CBOs that apply for funding for their AmeriCorps service programs. Local governments, nonprofits, and other CBOs traditionally have been responsible for advertising all of their other service needs, recruiting volunteers, and managing service projects. As described above, the current Neighbor-to-Neighbor program somewhat expanded the scope of California Volunteers to include direct outreach, recruitment, and training of volunteers. While, this expansion could possibly be consistent with California Volunteer’s disaster response and recovery responsibilities, this budget proposal would significantly expand the program, on an ongoing basis, beyond disaster response and recovery.

Increased State Role Directly Managing Volunteerism Is Not Justified. California’s local governments, nonprofits, and CBOs have a great deal of experience in developing service opportunities and recruiting, training, and managing volunteers. The longstanding model of California Volunteers supporting—and not duplicating—these organizations’ efforts is reasonable and appropriate. The administration has not articulated a clear and compelling need for the state to provide the various new coordination, outreach marketing, and training services proposed by the Neighbor-to-Neighbor proposal. The Legislature should ask California Volunteers to explain what aspects of volunteerism in the state are not working well and how this proposal would specifically address those needs.

Benefits of FG and SC Programs Well Documented. The AmeriCorps FG and SC programs were established in 1973 and are evaluated on a three-year cycle. Recent studies show that these programs expand service opportunities to diverse groups of participants. Participants reported fewer symptoms of depression and feeling less socially isolated.

Further, expanding the number of FG and SC service opportunities likely would be consistent with the state's [Master Plan for Aging](#) by increasing the number of opportunities to volunteer.

California Climate Action Corps Funding for AmeriCorps Grant Cycle. California Volunteers requests funding for the Climate Action Corps program in 2024-25 in this budget cycle so that it can demonstrate the state's funding commitment to this program when it applies for continued federal AmeriCorps funding in spring 2023. While ongoing funding for this program likely would strengthen the application, it seems premature. Should the Legislature support the efforts of California Volunteers to enhance its AmeriCorps application for this program with a firm funding commitment, we would recommend instead providing another round of temporary funding (through 2026-27). The Legislature should plan to review the outcomes and effectiveness of the Climate Action Corps program in several years, when more information is available.

CALIFORNIA INITIATIVE TO ADVANCE PRECISION MEDICINE

Background

"Precision medicine" is a developing approach in the health sector that takes into account an individual's genes, environment, and lifestyle for disease diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

Federal Precision Medicine Initiative and All of Us Research Program. In 2015, the federal government established the [Precision Medicine Initiative](#), which combines efforts of various federal agencies to further precision medicine and allocated \$215 million for precision medicine research. A precision medicine advisory committee subsequently advised the director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on the collection and use of genomic data. Their recommendations led to the [All of Us Research Program](#), which is building a diverse database of genomic and health data to help advance precision medicine biomedical research. All of Us intends to gather health data from more than one million people across all backgrounds.

State Funding for Precision Medicine. The *2014-15 Budget Act* made a one-time appropriation of \$3 million to OPR to fund precision medicine

biomedical research. OPR, in collaboration with the University of California (UC) San Francisco, issued a call for proposals to UC campuses. Two demonstration projects—California Kids Cancer Comparison at UC Santa Cruz and Precision Diagnosis of Acute Infectious Disease at UC San Francisco—were awarded funding. OPR also developed an inventory of data, research, experts, and other resources related to precision medicine to facilitate cooperation in precision medicine research. The Legislature provided \$10 million in one-time funding for precision medicine research again in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The 2018-19 budget provided an additional \$30 million in one-time funding for precision medicine research. In 2020, at the onset of the pandemic, \$18.2 million of this amount was redirected to other budgetary needs. The 2021-22 budget restored \$12.4 million in funding to OPR for precision medicine research to specifically address Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Governor's Proposals

Proposes \$10 Million One-Time General Fund for Depression Research. This funding would provide grants to precision medicine research projects focusing on depression. These precision medicine research projects would be located in California. Funded institutions would need to provide in-kind contributions to cover indirect costs. CIAPM would require the research teams to partner with a nonprofit community organization, patient organization, or county institution that provides support to people with depression. Funding would prioritize research projects that support progress in providing solutions for disproportionately underserved areas. The intended outcome of this funding would be new tools for preventing, diagnosing, measuring, and treating depression, using precision medicine methods, that are appropriate and effective across the state's diverse communities.

Proposes \$9.25 Million One-Time General Fund to Increase Diverse Participation in Biomedical Research Projects. This proposal would create a network of ten state agencies and eight nongovernmental agencies to raise awareness of and participation in research among groups

that are underrepresented in biomedical research studies. The goal is to sustainably increase the number of participants from underrepresented backgrounds who are recruited, enrolled, and retained in biomedical research studies. Diverse participation in these studies could improve the quality of both that research and the information available to nationwide precision medicine databases. The funding would support the costs of meetings for the various partners, to produce promotional products, and to hold promotional events. Promotional products would be translated into at least one other language.

LAO Assessment

State Spending Is Modest Compared to Other Sources of Biomedical Research Spending.

California's academic and research institutions conduct a wide variety of research with the potential to improve Californians' health and wellbeing. Most of the state's research institutions, including UC, receive a majority of their direct funding for research from federal, private, and other nonstate sources. The administration has never clearly demonstrated that the available federal resources for precision medicine research are inadequate.

Administration Has Provided More Details Than Previous Requests for Funding...

Previous precision medicine proposals often lacked important details. We credit the administration for submitting precision medicine proposals that provide significantly more information about the goals and objectives of the research and how grants would be awarded.

...However, Unclear How Administration Determines Funding Priorities. Despite additional detail provided by the administration, we find it challenging to evaluate the proposals because the state does not have a framework for prioritizing the allocation of General Fund monies across various research topics. There is no framework to justify why the state should now direct research towards another new topic area (depression) over any of the several prior focus areas of CIAPM, such as developing a better understanding of disparities in cancer risk, or other important biomedical research questions, such as developing tools to better diagnose autism, preventing and

treating inflammatory diseases, or improving our understanding of the effects of wildfire smoke on health. Justifying the allocation of state funding for specific precision medicine research topics over other research areas or general funding for academic research is difficult absent an overarching framework.

CIAPM Claims Its Research Influences National Research Funding Priorities.

The administration justifies continued state funding for biomedical research despite the concerns we raise above because they believe that the NIH research funding priorities in precision medicine somehow lag social needs. For example, CIAPM claims that funding for depression research is necessary because of the increased prevalence of depression during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, CIAPM did not provide a clear gap analysis. CIAPM claims that they can demonstrate to the NIH what types of research in this area are possible. While state-directed research might influence federal decision makers, there could be other ways for researchers in California to influence NIH research priorities, such as by participating in advisory bodies.

Proposal to Increase Diverse Participation in Biomedical Research Projects May Have Merit.

The network of state agencies and their partners requesting funding to increase the number of diverse participants in biomedical research previously applied for, but did not receive, funding for this proposal from the NIH All of Us Initiative. CIAPM noted that successful proposals mostly were submitted by national organizations and coalitions, whereas this proposal is specific to California. While this proposal could duplicate national precision medicine data collection efforts in some ways, its focus on California suggests it may have merit. Some groups have been historically underrepresented in biomedical research and this has led to documented health disparities. California has diverse demographics that are different from other parts of the country and this proposal could benefit statewide public health goals by ensuring that the diverse communities in California are well represented in the federal All of Us research database system.

CALIFORNIA EDUCATION LEARNING LAB AND GOLDEN STATE AWARDS

Background

State Has Provided Higher Education Innovation Awards. In every budget cycle from 2014-15 to 2020-21, Governors have proposed one-time grant initiatives to support innovative practices at the state’s public higher education institutions that improve student outcomes. The Legislature approved these initiatives in some years and rejected them in other years. Key characteristics of the approved initiatives have varied. For example, in some years the grant initiatives rewarded higher education institutions for existing programs, while in other years the grants supported new approaches. Some of the initiatives supported programs at all of the higher education segments, while others were targeted at specific segments (such as the community colleges) or specific regions (such as the San Joaquin Valley and Inland Empire). Some grants were allocated through a special committee, whereas others were allocated by state agencies.

California Education Learning Laboratory (CELL) Supports Development of Online Higher Education Courses. Created in 2018-19, the purpose of CELL is to expand lower-division online and hybrid courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the state’s three public higher education segments. The program accomplishes this objective primarily by awarding competitive grants to intersegmental faculty teams, which in turn develop the online content. Beyond awarding grants for new online courses, state law allows CELL to undertake other actions to support instructional best practices, such as supporting faculty professional development and developing a “best of” library of online materials.

State Reduced Funding to CELL During Pandemic. The 2018-19 budget provided \$10 million ongoing General Fund to OPR to support CELL. As part of its package of budget solutions in 2020-21, the state reduced ongoing support for the program to \$8 million. According

the administration, CELL managed this reduction by awarding less money for grants, supporting less professional development, and delaying development of its “best of” library.

Governor’s Proposals

Proposes \$30 Million One-Time General Fund for New Round of Innovation Awards.

The Golden State Awards initiative would support at least 20 awards to individuals or teams at, or associated with, the public higher education segments who have developed or are developing innovative practices. Unlike past innovation award programs, this initiative not only would aim to improve student outcomes but also could cover any activity deemed innovative and high impact, including, but not limited to, programs that improve student outcomes, research on climate change, and research on low-carbon industries. CELL would administer the grant program, with oversight from a 12-member grant selection committee, with 10 members appointed by the Governor, 1 member by the President pro Tempore of the Senate, and 1 member by the Speaker of the Assembly. CELL would have three years to award the funds and would be required to report by January 1, 2026 on how the awards were allocated.

Proposes \$3 Million Ongoing General Fund for CELL. Of this amount, \$2 million would restore CELL’s ongoing base to its pre-pandemic level of \$10 million. According to the administration, this restored base would allow the program to offer more grants, support more professional development, resume efforts to develop its “best of” library, and host intersegmental convenings on effective pedagogical practices. The remaining \$1 million would support the expansion of a free adaptive learning homework system. The existing system, which was developed by faculty at UC Davis, CSU San Bernardino, and Mendocino College for introductory chemistry, was supported by a one-time CELL grant. According to CELL staff, the ongoing funding would enable faculty to expand the system for more chemistry courses and STEM subjects, as well as improve the system’s current functionality.

LAO Assessment

Innovation Awards Have Unclear Statewide Benefit. Past innovation award initiatives have had a few basic shortcomings—all of which also apply to the Governor’s new award initiative. One shortcoming is the initiative would provide relatively large sums to a small number of recipients without any clear mechanism for disseminating best practices. A related shortcoming is that the initiative is unclear in how selected activities would be sustained and scaled, in turn potentially creating considerable future cost pressure for the state. A third shortcoming is that the added value of rewarding existing activities potentially begun without state direction, funding, or reporting is questionable.

Proposed Award Initiative Lacks Focus. Though innovation award initiatives by design are problematic, the Governor’s proposal is especially concerning given its broad scope ranging from higher education to climate change to any other area of interest to the administration. This lack of focus almost certainly would undermine the initiative’s ability to meaningfully impact any one area. The broad scope also means the program likely overlaps with other existing state efforts. For example, the state has funded research on climate-related issues through other programs and departments.

Reject Golden State Awards. Given its fundamentally poor design, we recommend the Legislature reject the proposed \$30 million General Fund and redirect the funds toward other high one-time priorities.

Assessment of Ongoing CELL Funds Forthcoming. On January 26, the administration provided our office additional information on the proposed \$3 million ongoing General Fund for CELL. Our office is still reviewing this information and we plan to release our assessment later this budget cycle.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROPOSALS

We do not have comments on or concerns with the following budget change proposals:

- ***Extend and Re-Appropriate Funding for Climate Change Research.*** Proposes to extend and re-appropriate \$4.75 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) appropriated in 2019 for the Climate Research Program.
- ***Extend Funding for Market Development for Woody Biomass.*** \$4 million one-time General Fund over two years: \$2 million in 2022-23 and in 2023-24 to expend pilot program adopted in 2021.
- ***Support California Jobs Plan Act of 2021.*** Proposes \$574,000 GGRF and one position ongoing to support the California Air Resources Board with workload related to the implementation of Chapter 746 of 2021 (AB 680, Burke). The new position would coordinate across agencies and update guidelines, provide technical assistance materials, improve application processes, and provide technical assistance for applicants to meet the new labor standards for the program.
- ***Tribal Affairs: Truth and Healing Council.*** \$450,000 Environmental License Plate Fund for three years to support the California Truth and Healing Council as part of the package to establish the Governor’s Office of Tribal Affairs.
- ***Proposes \$438,000 Ongoing General Fund for Legislative Workload.*** This proposal would fund two new positions to support bill analysis workload across OPR and its programs such as California Volunteers and the Strategic Growth Council. The Governor and the Legislature have continued to expand OPR’s responsibilities. Currently, OPR has only one full-time staff dedicated to legislative workloads. The additional staff would assist in the preparation of bill analyses and in responding to legislative inquiries.

- **CEQA Workload (AB 819).** Proposes \$374,000 General Fund and one position to modernize the CEQA filing process and other responsibilities related to the implementation of Chapter 97 of 2021 (AB 819, Levine). While this legislation initially was not expected to have significant implementation costs, the California Department of Technology subsequently identified additional necessary expenses.
- **Clean Energy Package Implementation (AB 525).** Proposes \$354,000 General Fund one time for technical assistance to support a study of supply chain, economic development strategies, and workforce development assessments to meet the requirements of Chapter 231 of 2021 (AB 525, Chiu).
- **Climate and Wildfire Workload.** Proposes \$219,000 General Fund and one position ongoing to support workload related to several new laws enacted last year.
- **Affordable Rental and Owner-Occupied Housing (AB 1095).** Proposes \$158,000 General Fund and one position ongoing to support new workload related to the implementation of the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program pursuant to Chapter 355 of 2021 (AB 1095, Cooley).

LAO PUBLICATIONS

This post was prepared by Brian Weatherford, and reviewed by Brian Uhler and Carolyn Chu. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) is a nonpartisan office that provides fiscal and policy information and advice to the Legislature.