



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

for

Community Action Planning Grants to Increase Supports and Opportunities for Youth in the California Capital Region

Sierra Health Foundation
1321 Garden Highway
Sacramento, CA 95833
reach@sierrahealth.org
(916) 922-4755

Intent to Apply:

Coalitions intending to apply for a REACH Planning Grant are strongly encouraged to e-mail a notification of Intent to Apply as soon as possible. After the foundation receives your e-mailed notification, you will be added to the list to receive timely information regarding the Request for Applications. Written notification does not bind the coalition to submitting an application. See instructions.

REACH Community Action Planning Grants

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

This Application Instructions package includes:

- I. Introduction
- II. REACH Program Background and Guiding Principles
- III. Description of the REACH Community Action Strategy
- IV. The Application Process
- V. Grant Application General Instructions
- VI. REACH Funding Region

See Section V for a full list of required application documents.

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE ELECTRONIC

Review all sections carefully and follow all specific instructions. Submit REACH Community Action Planning Grant Applications, including all supporting documentation, **electronically** in accordance with instructions, **NO LATER THAN 5:00 P.M. ON FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2006.**

PROPOSERS' CONFERENCE

A proposers' conference will be held March 15, 2006, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, at KVIE in Sacramento. For more information and to download a registration form, visit www.sierrahealth.org.

KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | March 6, 2006 | Registration deadline for proposers' conference in Sacramento on REACH Community Action Planning Grant Opportunity.
<i>Download a registration form at www.sierrahealth.org</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | March 15, 2006 | Proposers' conference in Sacramento on REACH Community Action Planning Grant Opportunity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | April 21, 2006 | Application deadline for REACH Planning grants (5 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | May 1-16, 2006 | Site visits with selected finalist communities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | May 31, 2006 | Selection of REACH Planning grantees by the foundation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | June 1 – Sept 1, 2006 | Grant start dates for REACH Planning grants. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early 2007 | Tentative date for issuance of Implementation Proposal Guidelines. |

REACH Community Action Planning Grants

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Sierra Health Foundation is a private foundation located in Sacramento that has provided grants to promote health in Northern California for more than 20 years. Through its latest grant program, REACH, Sierra Health supports the healthy development of youth in the California Capital Region. Over the next five years, the foundation will focus the majority of its grant investments to creating positive supports and opportunities for youth (age 10 to 15) so that more youth will successfully transition to adulthood. For more information about the goals and principles of the REACH program, and other grant opportunities, visit www.sierrahealth.org.

This Request for Applications is for the REACH Community Action nine-month planning grant. Successful planning grantees will be invited to apply for three-year implementation grants in 2007. This application package includes all the information necessary to prepare your planning grant request.

II. REACH PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

REACH: Connecting Communities and Youth for a Healthy Future is Sierra Health Foundation's newest grant program. This program focuses on that critical time in a young person's life—early adolescence, primarily age 10 to 15—when youth begin experiencing growing independence, and when decisions can have a profound effect on healthy development and successful progression to adulthood. It is also a time when, provided with sufficient skills and support, youth can make decisions to avoid risky behaviors such as drug use and early sexual activity. Research shows that youth are more likely to succeed if engaged in positive activities—both in school and out—that develop their skills and connect them to caring relationships and their community.

Through three initial funding strategies, the REACH program targets youth, organizations and communities within a one-hour driving radius of the State Capitol. This region includes Sacramento County and parts of the eight surrounding counties of Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, Sutter, Amador, Nevada and Solano. See a funding region map in Section VI.

The first two strategies are under way and the third strategy is the focus of this Request for Applications. These strategies are described below. More information about these REACH strategies may be obtained on the foundation website at www.sierrahealth.org.

A. REACH Program Strategies:

1. Program Improvement Strategy—Grants up to \$10,000 per agency in capacity building funds are available to increase youth participation in quality programs in the California Capital Region. A number of youth programs exist in Capital Region communities, but not enough youth know about or have access to the programs, or the quality of the programming could be strengthened to attract more young people and have greater effect.
2. Youth Engagement Strategy—One aspect of this strategy is a partnership with the Sacramento Region Community Foundation to support the Grant Advisory Board for Youth and to fund youth-led service projects in the region. This strategy supports the development of important life and leadership skills by directly creating opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities.
3. Community Action Strategy—Through this grant opportunity, selected broad community coalitions will be funded to mobilize around strengthening systems of formal and informal supports and creating positive opportunities for youth. Initially, the foundation will fund up to six coalitions for a planning grant – this opportunity is described in this Request for Applications. Implementation grant opportunities will follow.

B. Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide the foundation’s work and the selection of partners in this grant program:

- Youth are an asset in a community to be nurtured and developed.
- Healthy adolescent development includes developing intellectual, social, physical, psychological, emotional, vocational and civic competencies of youth.
- Children are more likely to cope successfully with challenges and adversity when supported by a nurturing adult; good role models; a safe, supportive environment; and opportunities to learn and contribute to family and community.
- All young people need to develop skills to become self-sufficient, participate fully in the workplace, assume family responsibilities and become engaged citizens.
- The most successful approaches to youth development will be created and developed in partnership with young people, their families, providers and the community.
- Youth are resources and active partners in their community.

For more information on youth development practices and principles, visit www.sierrahealth.org and see [Youth Development Resources](#).

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE REACH COMMUNITY ACTION STRATEGY

A. Purpose

The purpose of the REACH Program Community Action strategy is to change community conditions that will promote youth development for the long term, specifically:

- To change the formal and informal systems that impact youth development—peers, family, institutions and community; and
- To increase the quality and quantity of supports and opportunities for youth in the selected communities.

In doing so, the foundation hopes to strengthen the capacity of adults, youth workers and families to support youth, to reform and coordinate public institutions and services to support youth development, and to create policies and realign resources in public and private sectors to support youth development approaches.

Community coalitions (see definitions below) in the California Capital Region are invited to seek planning grants through a competitive process. These coalitions will conduct an assessment and develop an implementation plan for a comprehensive, community-driven system of supports and opportunities for pre- and early adolescents aged 10-15.

Grantee coalitions are expected to learn about and use youth development and strength-based best practices throughout the planning process.

Up to six coalitions from varied communities (e.g., urban/suburban, new/established) will be selected and funded to participate in a nine-month planning process. Successful planning grantees will be invited to apply for a three-year implementation grant.

B. Key Definitions

Definition of “Capacity”

A community’s capacity refers to the ability of community members to make a difference over time and across different issues.

Definition of “Coalition”

In simplest terms, a coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal. That goal could be as narrow as obtaining funding for a specific intervention, or as broad as trying to improve the overall quality of life for most people in the community.

Definition of “Collaboration”

To collaborate is to work jointly with others. Collaborations are alliances that are used to improve the health of a community. They encourage people to get together and make a difference.

Definition of “Community”

For purposes of this grant opportunity, a community is a **geographic area** with a population of no less than 20,000 residents. The area will include, at a minimum, a middle school and its “feeder” elementary schools and related high school.

Definition of “Community assessment”

This refers to the process of identifying the assets and needs within a community, and a prioritization of key issues and resources available to address these issues.

Definition of “Community development”

This is the process of identifying and mobilizing resources in the community to affect change. These resources include people, local associations, institutions, and the physical and economic assets within the community.

Definition of “Secondary data”

Secondary data is information already collected, and in many cases compiled, by someone else. Some examples include government statistics, school data, previous community assessments and surveys.

Definition of “Social marketing”

This is an approach to the planning and implementation of health behavior change in a community. It is the use of commercial marketing techniques to analyze, plan, implement and evaluate programs designed to influence voluntary behavior of specific populations in order to improve personal health and well-being.

Definition of “Stakeholders”

These are people who represent key organizations, community groups and populations who have a stake in the outcome of a community planning and development process. For example, youth are a key stakeholder in any effort to improve outcomes for youth.

Definition of “Strategies”

Strategies are approaches and activities designed and implemented to reach a goal. Strategies usually are developed based on best-available research, local assessments and resources.

Definition of “Supports and opportunities”

Supports and opportunities contribute to youth being able to develop into self-sufficient, caring and contributing adults. Supports are the relationships (with people, information and systems) that allow a young person to take full advantage of existing services and opportunities. Opportunities are the chances young people have to learn how to act in the world around them, to test out ideas and behaviors, and to experiment with different roles. The five key supports and opportunities are:

- Caring adult relationships
- Emotional and physical safety
- Opportunities to participate
- A connection with the community
- Opportunities to develop meaningful skills

Definition of “Technical assistance”

This is support provided to coalitions to increase the likelihood of success. The support may be provided through trainings and site visits, or by phone, internet and web-based methods. In addition, learning may happen through peer meetings and from local consultation and outside experts in the field.

“Definition of “Youth development”

This is an ongoing process by which all young people seek to meet their basic needs (physical/social) and to build competencies (knowledge/skills). It also can be an approach to working with young people that defines goals (outcomes) based on capacities, strengths and developmental needs of youth.

“Definition of “Youth engagement”

This is working with youth to help them contribute to or make decisions that impact them. Engaging youth gives them “voice and choice.”

C. Eligibility to Apply

Applications will be accepted from new community coalitions that come together for the purposes of this grant opportunity, or from existing coalitions that may be modified if needed. All coalitions must be from within the California Capital Region, approximately a one-hour driving radius of the State Capitol. This region includes Sacramento County and parts of the eight surrounding counties of Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, Sutter, Amador, Nevada and Solano. See Section VI for a map of the foundation’s REACH funding region.

Although a community coalition may include any number of individuals, agencies, organizations, businesses, churches or other entities, all coalitions will need to select an applicant organization to be responsible for all fiscal and reporting responsibilities to the foundation. This organization must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or a public agency.

The applicant organization will serve as the primary contact with the foundation and will be signing the grant agreement on behalf of the coalition. The applicant organization will be expected to handle all financial and personnel matters directly related to funding support from the foundation. All program and financial reports due to the foundation will be the responsibility of the applicant organization.

D. Budget Information

The budget limit for a Community Action planning grant is a maximum of \$75,000 for the nine-month project. The start date will be no earlier than June 1, 2006, and no later than September 1, 2006, depending on the needs of the coalition. Successful planning grantees will be invited to apply for implementation grants of up to \$200,000 per year for up to three years beginning in 2007.

E. Expectations of REACH Community Action Planning Grant Coalitions

Sierra Health Foundation expects the REACH Coalitions to:

1. Build and/or expand the coalition to: (a) assess current supports and opportunities for youth that lend to their development; and (b) develop a plan to improve these systems of formal and informal supports and to create more positive, quality opportunities for youth. Coalitions need to represent a diverse range of community associations and institutions committed to and critical to the success of youth in the community (especially schools, youth and parent groups) and reflect the demographics of the targeted community.
2. Increase their understanding of and promote the principles of youth development within the selected communities. The planning process and implementation plan should reflect these principles.
3. Attend orientation, technical assistance, training and evaluation activities provided by the foundation.
4. Build local capacity for community mobilization, youth engagement, youth development, community development, community assessment, policy advocacy, program quality, coordinated systems and more aligned resources, and social marketing.
5. Conduct a local assessment that includes the collection of primary data and the use of secondary data regarding youth behaviors, status, successes, challenges and opportunities. Analyze data, identify gaps and priorities, develop conclusions and document findings in a written report. Guidance regarding available research and best practices for strength-based, youth-focused community assessments will be provided to the coalitions.
6. Report findings to the community through written documents, newspaper articles and other communication modes. Use local data for community action and continued youth engagement.
7. Develop an implementation plan based on results of a comprehensive assessment process that incorporates principles of youth development and strength-based community development. At a minimum, the plan will include community or coalition vision around positive youth development, proposed outcomes, goals and objectives, key strategies and activities, resources available, evaluation activities, responsible parties (staff, coalition members, etc.) and implementation timeframe. This plan will form the basis of the implementation proposal.
8. Support the development of the REACH Program identity based on guidelines provided by Sierra Health Foundation.

F. Criteria for Selection

Strong applicants will be able to demonstrate:

- Understanding of and commitment to youth development principles;
- Community leaders' commitment to improving supports and opportunities for youth between 10 and 15 years of age;
- Commitment to youth engagement throughout the planning and implementation phases;
- History of successful collaboration, including cross-cultural collaboration;
- Commitment by key stakeholders (especially youth, school leadership and parent groups) in the community to participate;
- Shared leadership and ownership of the effort;
- A feasible plan to assess the current support system for youth in the community and the capacity to plan and implement change at the community, system or program level to improve supports and opportunities for youth; and
- Ability to mobilize and leverage resources in the community.

G. Supportive Activities available to REACH Coalitions

1. Technical Assistance

As an integral part of this program, the foundation will offer a predetermined number of hours of specialized training and technical assistance support to the funded coalitions. The following is a sample list of the types of technical assistance, skills building, and informational resources that may be provided:

- Community development
- Youth engagement
- Youth development
- Dynamics of coalition development
- Group facilitation
- Community assessment and strategic action plans
- Data sources, data analysis and interpretation of findings
- Reporting of findings to the community
- Policy and advocacy
- Communication and social marketing
- Grant writing and fund development

This technical assistance will be provided in the form of regional and sub-regional training workshops offered every other month, some on-site training, and telephone and electronic consultation.

Early in the planning grant, the foundation will work collaboratively with the selected coalitions to determine secondary data that all communities will need. The foundation will assist the coalitions in the collection of this secondary data.

2. Communications

Communications are important to the success of coalition building and community planning. The foundation will coordinate its region-wide communication efforts with the coalitions and provide some direct communications support to the coalitions for sharing assessment findings with the community and in the region. Coalitions are expected to include communication activities to support their own planning efforts.

3. Evaluation

The foundation will monitor and assess the outcomes of the planning phase. Successful planning grant applicants will be expected to evaluate their progress and participate in evaluation efforts, such as meeting with foundation representatives.

IV. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

A coalition may apply for funding for a planning grant by submitting to the foundation:

- A Notification of Intent to Apply via e-mail, and
- A completed planning grant application via e-mail by April 21, 2006.

A. Notification of Intent to Apply

Coalitions intending to apply for a REACH Planning Grant are strongly encouraged to e-mail a notification of Intent to Apply to the foundation as soon as possible. On the subject line, type “REACH Planning Grant – Intent to Apply” and e-mail to reach@sierrahealth.org.

Please include the following information:

- Coalition name
- Key contact for the coalition—name, title, organization and contact information (address, phone and e-mail).
- Geographic area of the coalition

Once the notification of Intent to Apply is received by the foundation, the contact person will receive important information regarding the planning grant application process, application technical support opportunities and timely responses to questions submitted by all applicants.

The Intent to Apply notification is not mandatory and does not commit the coalition to applying; failure to submit will not disqualify an applicant. However, Intent to Apply notifications will assist the foundation in the process of review and selection.

B. The Application Review and Selection Process

All planning grant applications submitted to the foundation will be reviewed according to the criteria described in these instructions. In addition, representatives of the foundation will conduct site visits in selected finalist communities to assess the commitment and activities of the coalition.

All applicants will receive notification of the final decision of the foundation by May 31, 2006. Grants may begin as early as June 1, 2006, but no later than September 1, 2006. Grant funds will be distributed to each successful applicant upon completion and execution of the grant agreement with the foundation.

C. How to Apply

All applicants must complete the **Planning Grant Application Narrative** (see Section V), the **Application Cover Sheet**¹, the **Project Budget Form**¹, a **Project Budget Narrative** and the **requested documents**. The Application Cover Sheet must include all requested information about the applicant agency. The Project Budget Form must include all expenses associated with completing the project described in the Application narrative. The Project Budget Narrative must describe all expenses itemized in the budget. Please refer to Section V below for additional instructions.

Application Submission

All submissions will be via electronic mail. Do not include any attachments other than the documents requested.

Submit all materials listed under “REACH Planning Grant Application Materials” in **Microsoft Word** or **Microsoft Excel** formats as attachments to your e-mail. Do not put the application information in the body of your e-mail message. Do not use PDF files for the Application Narrative. Scanned documents of requested supporting documents are acceptable (e.g. IRS determination letter, etc.). E-mail Planning Grant Application Materials to reach@sierrahealth.org and on the subject line type: REACH Planning Grant Application.

The foundation will respond via e-mail to acknowledge receipt of your application. If you do not receive an e-mailed acknowledgement within two business days, contact the foundation at 916-922-4755.

REACH Program Community Action Planning Grant Applications are due to the foundation via electronic mail by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 21, 2006.

D. Support regarding the Planning Grant Request for Applications

The foundation will offer a proposers’ conference in March regarding this Request for Application. Additionally, the foundation will offer regional technical assistance to assist coalitions in their application process.

Applicants should e-mail any questions regarding the REACH planning grant application instructions and process to reach@sierrahealth.org. Please type “REACH Planning Grant – Questions” on the subject line and include your questions and contact information in the body of the e-mail. Responses to questions will be made available to all applicants via periodic e-mails to all applicants who submit a notification of Intent to Apply. Additionally, responses will be posted periodically on the foundation’s Web site.

¹ Posted on the Community Action page of Sierra Health Foundation’s Web site.

V. GRANT APPLICATION GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Planning Grant Application Materials and Checklist

When developing your Application, include the materials outlined below and answer, at a minimum, the points outlined in the Application Narrative instructions. Please note that the Application Narrative section is limited to 10 pages.

- Application Cover Sheet.²
- Application Narrative (limited to 10 pages).
- Project Budget.²
- Project Budget Narrative (limited to two pages).
- Work Plan (Sample Work Plan Template posted on Sierra Health Web site).²
- List of Coalition Members, including titles and organizations (if applicable).
- Copy of IRS letter certifying tax-exempt status (except for public entities). For electronic submission purposes, a scanned copy is acceptable.
- Roster of applicant organization's governing board.
- Evidence of governing board approval to submit application (e.g. letter, board minutes, etc.).
- Most-recent Statement of Activities (Income Statement) and Statement of Financial position (Balance Sheet). Entire audit report is not required. For electronic submission purposes, a scanned copy is acceptable.
- List of relevant documents (e.g. coalition information, previous assessments done in the community and other documents) that may be helpful to support the application. Please do not electronically attach any of these documents to your application. These documents may be requested by the foundation at a later time in the review process.

² Posted on the Community Action page of Sierra Health Foundation's Web site.

A. Application Cover Sheet

Complete the Application Cover Sheet. Clearly identify the chief executive officer of the applicant organization, or other individual authorized to commit the organization to contract for the proposed project on behalf of the coalition.

B. Application Narrative

The Planning Grant Application Narrative is **limited to 10 pages**. This page limit **does not** include the Application Cover Sheet, the Project Budget Form, the Project Budget Narrative, or other required documents. Application narrative pages may be single spaced, but no smaller than 12-point type, with one-inch margins on all sides.

The Planning Grant Application Narrative should be organized as follows (page length suggestions for each section are advisory, but reflect the foundation's relative interest in knowing about your community). You may wish to refer to the Selection Criteria on page 8 when developing your statements for the Application Narrative.

1. Community Description – one page

Describe the specific target community:

- The geographic and population characteristics of the community;
- Notable assets and resources relevant for the project; and
- Key issues facing the community, especially related to youth development.

2. Proposed REACH Coalition – one to two pages

- Describe your proposed coalition (purpose, membership, history of working together, successes, etc.).
- Will the proposed coalition be a new coalition, an existing coalition or a modification of an existing one? Please describe any modifications necessary. If you propose a new coalition, explain why modifications to an existing coalition would not suffice.
- Describe, in general, the makeup of the proposed coalition and why the various individuals and organizations are represented in your coalition. Describe the extent of youth participation on the coalition. If youth do not currently participate, describe how the coalition will be expanded to include youth.
- Whether your coalition is new, existing or a modification of an existing coalition, include as an attachment, a one- or two-page list of all coalition members, including organizational names, affiliations, names and titles of authorized organizational representatives. Identify the key members who are leading this effort.
- What are the strengths and assets of the coalition that will allow you to develop the plan to mobilize the community to help youth be successful?

3. History of OTHER Community Coalition/Collaboration Efforts – one page
 - Describe the composition and focus of any other community coalitions currently in place that focus on youth, especially ages 10-15, in the geographic area.
 - Describe examples of the work of other collaborative efforts in the community that resulted in successful outcomes, especially that demonstrate a commitment to youth development principles.

4. Commitment to REACH Program goals – one page
 - Describe why the foundation should invest in your coalition with this planning grant for youth development? What are the potential benefits to your community? Why might this be a timely opportunity?
 - Are there related current youth opportunities, initiatives or efforts in your community that this planning grant could build on, and how will you link to them?
 - What trainings and experiences has the coalition had in youth development and strength-based practices?

5. Proposed Approach to Planning Process – two to four pages (including work plan template)²
 - Provide a narrative description of your approach to the planning process. How will decisions be made about what data to collect; what methods will you use to collect the data; what key principles and values will guide the work?
 - Describe how youth will be involved in the planning process.
 - Describe key roles of institutional members, such as schools, government and health providers and key community organizations such as service clubs, youth organizations, community associations, and faith-based groups in the planning process. Describe how you will engage key stakeholders who may not be engaged currently.
 - Describe any other previous community planning efforts that you can build on; what was learned from those planning efforts? What kinds of data now exist from those planning processes? What kinds of data would you like to develop or have access to that you currently do not have available?
 - Describe the steps/tasks in your process including milestones and timeframe. See Sample Work Plan Template.³
 - What kind of technical support do you think you might want to help you with your community planning?

6. Description of Applicant Organization – one-half to one page
 - Describe why the coalition selected this particular applicant organization. What are the qualifications of the applicant organization regarding managing a project of this size and scope, history of working with community partners, etc.?

³ A Sample Work Plan Template is posted on the Community Action page of Sierra Health Foundation's Web site.

- Describe the nature of the relationship between the applicant organization and the coalition. What are the roles of the applicant organization and the coalition? How will decisions be made? Does a Memorandum of Understanding exist?

C. Project Budget Form

The budget limit for a Community Action planning grant is a maximum of \$75,000 for the nine-month project. The project budget should be displayed on the Project Budget form.⁴

Funds may be used for, but not limited to, the items directly related to the planning process, such as:

- Staffing support for project coordination, community organizing and youth engagement;
- Community assessment and data collection;
- Community meetings and facilitation;
- Preparing the plan and the implementation proposal; and
- Customary overhead of the applicant organization.

Budgets should also include travel funds for staff and coalition members to travel every other month to Sacramento to participate in training and technical assistance meetings.

D. Project Budget Narrative (limit to two pages)

Please describe all expenses itemized on the Project Budget form in a Project Budget Narrative. This budget narrative is a separate document and not included in the Application Narrative. In addition, please describe:

Personnel:

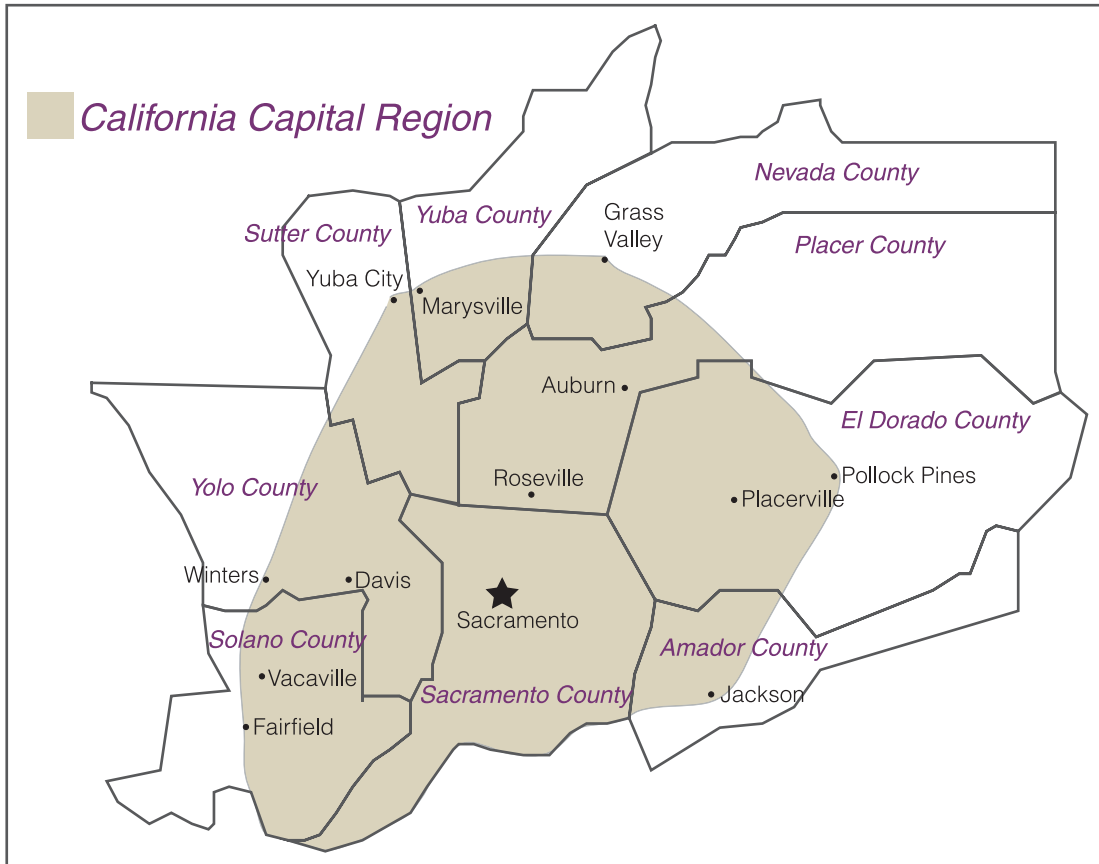
- What staff resources will be needed to do the work?
- Which of these staff resources are available to the project from collaborative members?
- What staff will need to be supported with Sierra Health Foundation grant funds?
- Specify the roles of all staff involved in the project.

In-Kind:

- Identify any in-kind support (staffing, space, etc.) provided to the project by the applicant organization or other coalition members. If you include an estimated value of the in-kind contribution, please describe how the value is determined in this budget narrative.

⁴ Posted on the Community Action page of Sierra Health Foundation's Web site.

VI. REACH Community Action Funding Region Map



The California Capital Region includes an area encompassing all of Sacramento County and parts of the surrounding counties, bounded by:

- The Sacramento County line in the south;
- Jackson (Amador County) in the southeast;
- Pollock Pines (El Dorado County) in the east;
- Grass Valley (Nevada County) in the northeast;
- Marysville/Yuba City (Yuba and Sutter counties) in the north;
- Winters (Yolo County) in the west; and
- Fairfield (Solano County) in the southwest.