



From sewers to water mains, much of our underground infrastructure needs to be upgraded or replaced. Southern California Partnership For Jobs advocates for construction work across many industries, including water. SCPFJ and California Consulting are working together to bring grant money to our communities to improve the quality of life. Photos courtesy of California Department of Water Resources



Many municipalities and public agencies lack the funds necessary to complete major infrastructure projects. SCPFJ and California Consulting joined forces to help them find and apply for state and federal grants to set these projects in motion. SCPFJ members include labor unions and contractors who build our essential infrastructure. Above photo courtesy of California Department of Water Resources

Tapping into Available Money for Work in the Region

Southern California Partnership For Jobs Offers Funds for Grant Writing Assistance

By Grace Washburn
Special Sections Writer

In the water industry, infrastructure projects — from maintenance to the construction of new treatment and delivery systems — are essential investments for reliability and resilience. However, a lack of funding often delays or prevents the completion of these big jobs.

“Our mission is to advocate and educate for infrastructure funding in Southern California.”

“We understand that with COVID-19, tax revenues are going to be down and the first things cut are infrastructure projects,” said Southern California Partnership For Jobs (SCPFJ) Board of Trustees member Dave Sorem, who represents the Engineering Contractors Association. “There’s a big need out there. There are a lot of underground utilities and streets above that need to be replaced.”

To address this need, SCPFJ has partnered with California Consulting, Inc. to help municipalities and public agencies tap into available funding for projects through grant writing assistance. The funding covers everything from grant research to final paperwork submission.

“Our mission is to advocate and educate for infrastructure funding in Southern California. Our region really doesn’t get its fair share of state and federal money,” said Marci Stange, SCPFJ Director of Water and Environmental Relations. “Just writing a grant can cost upwards of \$10,000 to \$12,000, so we’re offering to pay that cost as a public service especially in disadvantaged communities.”

SCPFJ is a nonprofit partnership between organized labor and construction management to advocate for responsible investment projects to help fix our aging infrastructure, while creating jobs and economic growth.



Marci Stange

California Consulting is the largest grant writing firm in the state with three offices and more than 90 clients for whom they’ve secured more than \$1.5 billion in funding over the past 16 years.

“We are honored to work with the Southern California Partnership for Jobs. They bring a unique collaborative of organized labor, business and contractors to the table,” said Steve Samuelian, owner of California Consulting. “Everyone is at the table for the same reason: To bring dollars to Southern California.”

Samuelian explained that there are many different federal and state grants available for municipalities, agencies, non-profits and schools. His company has experts in the application and qualification processes for many grant types.

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One of the newest grants available is the COVID-19 FEMA grant, which is administered via the California Office of Emergency Services. “Basically, this program will reimburse cities, counties, school districts, colleges, special districts, and other public agencies for their COVID-19 related expenses,” said Samuelian. “For example, if a public agency spent money to purchase gloves, hand sanitizing stations, and masks all of those items are eligible for reimbursement. One of the unique items of this grant is that staff overtime for COVID-19 is eligible for funding. Our grant writing team is very busy writing these applications.”

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Owner,
California Consulting

Other popular grants in the public sector include: ATP (Active Transportation Program) grants, which do not have matching requirement and can fund up to \$8 million-plus for major infrastructure and public works projects; HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) project; State Proposition 68 grants for parks and recreation; and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation: WaterSMART Grants for water and energy efficiency.

By working with California Consulting, SCPFJ is able to help municipalities and public agencies identify applicable grants and navigate the application process.



Steve Samuelian

In turn, important quality-of-life projects will be built for these communities and union and contractor jobs will be secured, Stange said.

“For every dollar in construction, it’s always a \$2 boost in the economic impact of the area,” said Sorem, who is manager and partner at Mike Bubalo Construction Co., Inc. “We understand the need for infrastructure. We can provide the funding, the work will happen, so it’s a win-win for everybody.”

SCPFJ’s valued partners include the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 12 (IUOE), The Southern California District Council of Laborers (LiUNA), and the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters (SWRCC), Associated General Contractors (AGC) of California, AGC of San Diego, Engineering Contractors Association (ECA), Southern California Contractors Association (SCCA), United Contractors (UCON), and the Building Industry Association of Southern California (BIA).



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