

Program Application: 82336083

Linked Pre-Application Form - DO NOT DELETE

Alviso In Action Community Garden Expands at Home Gardening Initiatives

Grant Amount Requested

\$38,000.00

Organization Name

Alviso In Action

Urban Grant Program Application Questions

Overview

Type of project (check all that apply)

Grant category (check all that apply)

Environmental Education, Urban Agriculture / Food Systems

Project Location: Address / Neighborhood

What is the physical location of the project? If there is no physical location, please enter "N/A." If the project will be in multiple locations, please list all. Note: project location(s) must be within the Authority's jurisdiction.

24 Wilson Way, San Jose, CA 95134

Project Location

Open Space Authority District of Project Location(s)(check all that apply)

Authority District 3

Who does the project serve? Please indicate which Open Space Authority Districts are served (where do the people served by the program live) (check all that apply)

Authority District 3

Project Abstract

Alviso in Action (AIA) seeks \$38,000 from the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's Urban Grant Program to expand our community garden initiative that connects residents to nature and builds climate resilience. The two-year program will host quarterly educational workshops led by environmental professionals and the AIA team, support residents with educational home garden visits, and support the Alviso community to foster climate resilience. Through sustainable gardening education, climate-focused training, and collaborative community engagement, AIA will empower Alviso residents to strengthen food security, biodiversity, and local resilience to flooding.

Project Planning

Describe the proposed project.

The Alviso Community Garden Expansion and Climate Resilience Education Program will expand AIA’s existing community garden program to better serve Alviso residents—a small, unincorporated community located at the northern edge of San José within the Open Space Authority’s jurisdiction.

Alviso is surrounded by tidal wetlands, levees, and industrial infrastructure, making it both ecologically unique and socially vulnerable. The neighborhood is over 60% Latino, with a median household income far below the county average. Many residents experience limited mobility, food insecurity, and restricted access to fresh produce. The area is identified in CalEnviroScreen and the Healthy Places Index as a disadvantaged, park-poor, and flood-prone community, lacking equitable access to nature-based learning opportunities.

Through this program, AIA will:

- Sponsor five new community garden plots in the Alviso Community Garden for educational purposes.
- Host a total of 12 educational workshops in two years, led by environmental professionals.
- Offer 15 community participants per workshop a \$50 stipend to support equitable access and participation.
- Distribute bilingual educational materials and provide hands-on training in climate-smart gardening.
- Maintain a community communication hub (mailing list and message board) to encourage crop sharing and resource exchange.
- Conduct home garden support visits to residents interested in starting or maintaining their own gardens (without direct funding for materials).

Topics covered will include:

- How to start and maintain a garden.
- Seasonal planting schedules.
- Benefits of native and drought-tolerant plants.
- Flood mitigation through vegetation.
- Irrigation and water conservation techniques.
- Pollinator restoration and soil health.
- Composting and waste reduction.

Each workshop will integrate environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and community-building, key goals of the Measure T Expenditure Plan and the Santa Clara Valley Greenprint.

Alignment with SCVOSA Priorities:

This project fully supports the Open Space Authority’s goals to:

- Enhance access to healthy food through urban farms and gardens.
- Develop environmental education programs that promote stewardship and community connection to nature.
- Invest in underserved, disadvantaged, and park-poor neighborhoods to distribute the benefits of nature more equitably.
- Build climate resilience through local, nature-based solutions that empower community-led action.
- Our program directly addresses the 2025 theme Building a Climate Strong Future for All by teaching adaptive practices that reduce vulnerability to flooding and heat, strengthen ecological health, and promote environmental equity.

Describe key project deliverables and estimated completion dates.

- Workshops (12 total) Led by environmental professionals on sustainable gardening and climate resilience: Q1 2026–Q4 2027
- New Community Garden Plots for events/education: Expansion of AIA’s existing garden presence for public use: Spring 2026
- Home Garden Support Visits (20 per year): Staff educates residents with home garden setup and best practices (no materials provided): 2026–2027
- Bilingual Curriculum Materials: Printed and digital guides for native planting, irrigation, and pollinators: Summer 2026
- Community Communication Hub: Mailing list and message board for 100+ residents to share resources and crops: Summer 2026
- Final Community Celebration & Evaluation Report: Share outcomes, survey participants, and celebrate local leaders: Fall 2027

Does this project require permission, permits, or other approvals? If so, please describe the status of these.

AIA currently holds three community garden plots through the City of San José’s Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department. There are extra plots available for sponsorship in the community garden. AIA has secured permission to expand within the existing garden footprint as long as the fee is paid and AIA is in compliance with the community garden guidelines defined by the City of San Jose.

What is the lifetime of this project? If applicable, describe plans for operating and maintaining the project in the future.

We will use the full two years to complete our project goals for this project. After the grant period ends, AIA will sustain programming through volunteer support, community partnerships, and future city and foundation grants. The digital message board, bilingual materials, and garden plots will remain as long-term community assets and educational tools, promoting continued engagement beyond the two-year grant. The board members of AIA are all lifelong Alviso residents and will contain maintaining the project with the help of interested community members.

Describe the project's readiness for implementation.

The project currently has the three plots being used for educational events and ongoing harvest by board members and community members. AIA is ready for implementation as soon as the funds become available to carry out the project goals stated. The board members have a plan in place to carry out the project by the estimated timeline. Due to the fact this project is related to urban agriculture, AIA timeline must be in line with the seasons in order to plant seasonal crops and native plants.

Project Budget

Budget Summary - Grant Request & Budget Summary - Matching Funds

Grant request: Personnel

\$12,000.00

Grant request: Contracted Services

\$3,000.00

Grant request: Supplies / Materials

\$5,000.00

Grant request: Other Direct Costs

\$15,000.00

Grant request: Indirect Costs

\$3,000.00

Total Matching Funds

\$11,000.00

Total Budget

\$38,000.00

Please upload a detailed version of your budget by accessing the link below:

UGP_Project_Budget_AIA final.xlsx - Budget Form.pdf

Materials and Budget Template (item #9) found here: <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/programs/grant.html#Materials>

Provide a brief budget narrative to explain the expenses listed in each of the budget categories (e.g. Personnel).

Personnel (\$20,000 total; \$12,000 grant, \$8,000 match): The majority of the project budget is allocated to personnel time contributed by the organization's board and volunteers. This includes leadership and coordination from the President, Vice President/Secretary, Treasurer, and several board members who will oversee project management, outreach, and implementation. Volunteer time from community members will further support site preparation, planting, and education. The matching funds represent in-kind contributions of time and expertise, demonstrating strong community commitment to the project's success.

Contracted Services (\$3,000) : A smaller portion of the budget is reserved for contracted services to ensure high-quality project delivery. These funds will support contracting local environmental professionals to lead the discussion in AIA's workshops. The workshops discussions will include native plants, pollinators, environmental justice, flooding, disaster preparedness, etc.

Other costs include the supplies needed for the events/workshops such as seeds, plants, tools, signage, etc. AIA asked for \$15,000 in other direct costs such as participants stipend to provide financial support for the community, food for events since in latino culture food is at the basis of everything and is used as a pivotal tool to bring people together to have meaningful discussions, and travel costs for board members to attend local conferences and seminars on sustainable agriculture.

Overall, this budget reflects a thoughtful balance between paid coordination and volunteer-driven work. The combination of grant and matching funds maximizes project impact by leveraging local expertise, community involvement, and sustainable practices to create a long-term asset for the Alviso neighborhood.

Award Amount: The Board reserves the right to award partial funding on projects. If your project were to receive partial funding, what would this mean for your project?

Since AIA is a small grassroots nonprofit that is operated by lifelong Alviso residents who have other full time positions in different job sectors, AIA has extremely limited funding. Almost all the hours donated by AIA board members are solely volunteer based. While AIA project needs the funding stated in this application, AIA would graciously accept any partial funding the board can offer. AIA would collaborate with the board to decide what aspects of the project are considered top priority and best meet the goals of this grant program. AIA would optimize the funding provided to conduct as much work as possible with the funds received in order to serve the Alviso community and their environment.

Project Goals

Describe the specific problems, issues, or unserved needs the project will address.

Alviso is one of the most marginalized communities in Santa Clara County, facing overlapping challenges of environmental risk, limited access to green space, and food insecurity. The neighborhood sits at sea level right by the bay and regularly experiences flooding and poor air quality. At the same time, residents live in a food desert, with the nearest grocery store selling affordable organic produce over five miles away.

This program directly addresses these needs by:

Providing equitable access to nature-based education and urban agriculture.

Increasing food resilience through sustainable gardening practices.

Building community connection across Alviso's diverse, majority-Latino population.

Teaching adaptive strategies to reduce the impacts of climate change, such as planting flood-tolerant and pollinator-supporting species.

How does this project serve the community?

Number of people served

225

Number of youth served

75

Number of programs provided

25

Other Grantee Goal #1 (optional)

Other Grantee Goal #2 (optional)

Impact

Describe the lasting impact of the project. Please include whether the program is open to the public and whether any materials developed will be available to the public.

The Alviso Community Garden Expansion and Climate Resilience Education Program will have enduring social, environmental, and educational impacts. The program is fully open to all Alviso residents.

Social Impact: Strengthens community identity and connection by bringing neighbors together in shared, outdoor educational spaces. Provides equitable stipends and bilingual resources to ensure inclusion of low-income and Spanish-speaking residents. There have been many studies that prove the benefits of sustainable gardening for people's mental health, physical health, and how it can bring communities closer together in the face of adversity.

Environmental Impact: Expands the local native plant network, improves pollinator habitats, decreases flooding by planting flood resistant plants, and reduces urban heat island effects.

Educational Impact: Builds capacity among residents to maintain sustainable community and home gardens. The project will allow for intergenerational knowledge sharing in Alviso. The environmental professionals that are brought for the quarterly events will educate the community not only on the sustainable gardening practice mentioned, but they will provide scientific background for residents to understand the root of the issue and how climate resilience can be fostered through nature based solutions. AIA hopes that these quarterly events will inspire the youth to learn more about local environmental issues and build their scientific curiosity of the natural world.

All curriculum materials and community guides will be made publicly accessible through the AIA website, digital board, and future workshops, promoting knowledge sharing and continuity.

Climate Resilience

How does this project enhance and/or raise awareness about climate resilience? Please include any metrics that can be used to help quantity or understand the climate benefits of the project.

This project directly advances the climate resilience goals outlined in the Santa Clara Valley Greenprint and the Measure T Expenditure Plan by empowering residents to adapt, respond, and prepare for climate impacts through community-driven action. Alviso sits at the lowest elevation point in San José, some areas are even below sea level. Alviso is surrounded by tidal wetlands, levees, and sloughs that connect to the San Francisco Bay. Because of this, the community experiences: seasonal flooding from heavy rainfall or creek overflow (especially from Coyote Creek), tidal flooding risks due to sea-level rise, and poor drainage and saline soils left behind by historic salt pond operations.

Key contributions to climate resilience include:

Flood Adaptation: Teaching residents to use native and flood-tolerant plants to absorb stormwater and prevent erosion.

Heat Mitigation: Expanding vegetation coverage that lowers surface temperatures in densely developed areas.

Water Conservation: Demonstrating drip irrigation and other efficient watering methods to help with water conservation.

Carbon Reduction: Encouraging hyper-local food production to reduce transportation emissions. An increase in planting will help produce more oxygen in the area as well.

Biodiversity Restoration: Supporting pollinator populations essential to local ecosystems and providing habitat for migratory birds from the nearby Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. Alviso's community garden has seen a resurgence in pollinators returning back to the area because of the increase in planting over the past couple of years.

By integrating climate education into every workshop, AIA fosters a culture of preparedness and stewardship that builds long-term resilience for Alviso's families.

Community Engagement / Stakeholder Support / Community Building

Describe the community support and/or community engagement process. Please upload any community support letters in the Documents Upload section below.

AIA's approach is grounded in community participation and co-design. Program ideas were developed through surveys and discussions with residents during previous garden days and local cleanup events. AIA has board members part of the Climate Change Community Team (CCCT). The team focuses on conducting outreach to Alviso residents that do not know about AIA yet. The team focuses on communicating AIA's climate resilience goals and marketing our educational events to the community. AIA has seen a growth in event attendance since the implementation of the CCCT.

Community engagement activities include:

Outreach through bilingual flyers, school bulletins, and social media.

Collaboration with the City of San José Parks and Recreation Department, local schools, and community partners.

A community message board and mailing list to sustain dialogue and collective learning.

Inclusion of youth volunteers and elders as mentors in each event.

Letters of support will be provided from:

Director of Santa Clara Valley Water District Richard P. Santos and Grassroots Ecology Co-Executive Tyler Feld.

Underserved Communities

Describe how the project addresses open space needs for sensitive populations such as residents of park-poor neighborhoods, underserved, or disadvantaged communities, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, or is located within an under-resourced community.

Alviso qualifies as a disadvantaged, under-resourced community under CalEnviroScreen (SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities Map) and the Authority's equity framework. The area is predominantly Latino (60%+), with many Spanish-speaking households and limited transportation options. The neighborhood lacks grocery stores, farmers markets, and green infrastructure investments comparable to wealthier areas of Santa Clara County.

By offering free workshops, stipends, bilingual education, and local access to garden space, this project reduces inequities in environmental access, food security, and health outcomes. As stated, Alviso has the lowest elevation in San Jose. Therefore when floods occur, Alviso gets hit first and the hardest by flooding in San Jose. The underserved communities in Alviso desperately need flood assistance. By providing funding to mitigate the flood impacts in Alviso, the community will grow stronger and be more climate resilience.

This project embodies the Open Space Authority's commitment to "equitable distribution of nature's benefits" and focuses on inclusive, community-led stewardship that recognizes cultural connections to food and land.

Organizational Capacity

Briefly describe the organization and its ability to successfully implement this project. This might include successful past projects, key staff qualifications, financial resources, etc.

Alviso in Action (AIA) is a community-led nonprofit dedicated to protecting Alviso's natural environment and fostering sustainability education. Founded by local residents, AIA has organized numerous cleanups, restoration projects, and educational workshops, developing strong relationships with city agencies and regional environmental organizations.

AIA's leadership includes the following board members with the following positions: Marcos Espinoza (president and Board Member), Jose Villa (Vice President and Secretary), Francisco Villa (Treasurer), John Rivera (Board Member), Uriel Gonzalez (Board Member), Edgar Ballesteros (Board Member), Adrian Alatraste (Board Member).

Andrea Martinez, AIA's grant consultant, brings expertise from the Washington Sea Grant, FEMA, and the Northwest Seaport Alliance in managing sustainability and climate resilience initiatives.

AIA's past success in mobilizing volunteers and implementing community programs demonstrates strong capacity to execute this project and comply with the Open Space Authority's reporting and reimbursement requirements.

Leadership & Innovation

Describe how this project employs innovative approaches or encourages collaboration and partnerships.

This project represents an innovative, community-driven model for climate resilience. By integrating urban agriculture, environmental education, and equitable compensation, it advances multiple objectives of the Measure T Expenditure Plan and the 2025 program theme.

Innovative elements include:

Equitable participation stipends to ensure inclusion of low-income residents.

Bilingual educational curriculum co-developed with local experts.

Integration of climate adaptation education with food systems training.

Collaborative partnerships with local schools, environmental groups, and city agencies.

Through this innovative approach, AIA will establish a replicable grassroots framework for other communities in Santa Clara Valley to engage residents in climate-smart urban gardening at the local level.

Documents Section

Document Uploads (please combine into one file if possible)

Grassroots Ecology Letter of Support.pdf

Additional files (if needed)

Richard P. Santos Letter of Support.pdf

Additional files (if needed)

Submitted Date - Internal

Summary Field:

Name: Average Score (no bonus)

Form: Staff Review

Summary Type: average

Field: Base Score Total

Decimal: 2

Currency: No

Description/Help Text: NONE

Short Name: NONE

Field Purpose: NONE

Filter:

- ALL:
 - isComplete | is | true

Summary Field:

Name: Total Count of Submitted Reviews

Form: Staff Review

Summary Type: count

Field: NONE

Decimal: NONE

Currency: No

Description/Help Text: NONE

Short Name: NONE

Field Purpose: NONE

Filter:

- ALL:
 - isComplete | is | true
 - Folder | is | Submitted

Program Application: File Attachments

Please upload a detailed version of your budget by accessing the link below:

UGP_Project_Budget_AIA final.xlsx - Budget Form.pdf

Document Uploads (please combine into one file if possible)

Grassroots Ecology Letter of Support.pdf

Additional files (if needed)

Richard P. Santos Letter of Support.pdf



October 9, 2025

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
33 Las Colinas Lane
San Jose, CA, 95119

To the Grants Review Panelists:

Grassroots Ecology strongly supports Alviso In Action and the valuable work they do in their community. We have participated in many of their monthly Community Climate Change Team meetings and observed the impressive outcomes they achieve. We can confidently say that their efforts are making a meaningful and lasting impact in Alviso.

Alviso In Action is dedicated to community-led work with an environmental focus. They have demonstrated this through their garden-at-home workshop, community cleanups, and their engagement with us for habitat restoration in Alviso. They approach this work with professionalism, compassion, integrity, and a passion for their community. Their programs have reached throughout Alviso and have demonstrated both the need for their services and the effectiveness of their approach.

Grassroots Ecology is proud to support Alviso In Action in their current and future endeavors, including our continued participation in their community meetings and our ongoing collaboration in habitat restoration. We believe their work deserves recognition and support from funders, community leaders, and partners.

Please feel free to contact us if you need further information or insight into our experience with Alviso In Action. We are confident that they will continue to be a vital resource in their community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "TYLER FELD". The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Tyler Feld
Co-Executive Director
Grassroots Ecology

Director Richard P. Santos

Santa Clara Valley Water District | rsantos@valleywater.org | (408) 234-7707

Date: 10/08/2025

To:

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
Urban Grant Program Review Committee

Re: Letter of Support for *Alviso in Action – Community Garden Expansion and Climate Resilience Education Program*

Dear Urban Grant Program Review Committee,

As a lifelong resident of Alviso and Director representing District 3 of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water), I am writing to express my full support for Alviso in Action's (AIA) application to the 2025 Urban Grant Program. This initiative—*The Alviso Community Garden Expansion and Climate Resilience Education Program*—aligns strongly with the Open Space Authority's mission to connect people living in urban areas to nature and to build a climate-strong future for all communities in our valley.

For more than five decades, I have witnessed both the strength and challenges of Alviso—a small but proud community rich in culture, history, and resilience. Yet, Alviso continues to face serious inequities. Over 60 percent of our residents identify as Latino, and many families do not have access to nearby organic produce. Our community is also highly vulnerable to flooding, sea-level rise, and climate impacts, making environmental education and sustainable agriculture especially critical here.

Alviso in Action's proposal provides a meaningful and inclusive response to these challenges. By expanding the Alviso Community Garden, hosting bilingual workshops, and teaching sustainable, climate-smart gardening practices, this program will directly empower residents to improve their own food security and resilience. The inclusion of participant stipends and hands-on training ensures that low-income residents—often those most affected by climate change—can take part fully and equitably.

As a community advocate and public servant for over fifty years, I have worked alongside countless organizations seeking to make a difference in Alviso. **Alviso in Action's** volunteer-driven approach, focus on local empowerment, and partnerships with environmental educators make them well suited to deliver this program successfully.

I strongly urge the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority to fund this project. Investing in Alviso in Action means investing in the long-term health, resilience, and unity of one of the most historic and underserved communities in our region. Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership in creating equitable access to nature and opportunity for all.

Respectfully,

Richard P. Santos
Director, District 3