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Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

2020 Urban Grant Program

Deadline: 7/1/2020

Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet **You(th) Be the Change**

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\$ 250,000.00 Requested

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Project Description [top](#)

Applicant Type

1. What type of organization is this?

- Public Agency
- School or School District
- 501(c)3 Nonprofit
- Eligible organization acting as Fiscal Sponsor for another organization

2. Does the application include a fiscal sponsor?

If the project includes a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor must be the applicant.

- YES
- NO

Overview

3. Which type of grant are you requesting?

- Small (\$10,000 - \$39,999)
- Large (\$40,000 - \$250,000)

4. Grant category (check all that apply)

- Environmental Stewardship and Restoration
- Parks, Trails, and Public Access
- Environmental Education
- Urban Agriculture / Food Systems

5. Type of project (check all that apply)

- Capital improvement (Large projects only)
- Planning
- Program

6. 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.

Virtual programming happening throughout Santa Clara County

7. Project Location: Open Space Authority District (check all that apply)

A detailed map of the Authority Districts can be found under the Library tab, or online at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/public-information/board-of-directors.html>.

- Authority District 1
- Authority District 2
- Authority District 3
- Authority District 4
- Authority District 5
- Authority District 6
- Authority District 7

8. Who does the project serve? Please indicate which Open Space Authority Districts are served (check all that apply)

A detailed map of the Authority Districts can be found under the Library tab, or online at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/public-information/board-of-directors.html>.

- Authority District 1
- Authority District 2
- Authority District 3
- Authority District 4
- Authority District 5
- Authority District 6
- Authority District 7

9. Project Abstract

(Brief, 3-4 sentences)

The fast-moving effects of climate change are now resulting in clear threats to human health and welfare in

the Bay Area. At the same time, policy support for climate action at the Federal level is at its weakest. Change is absolutely necessary if we are to both mitigate the worst effects of climate change and help our communities adapt to the change that is already taking place. Acterra's key is to leverage the efforts of our youth through science-backed education and professional development.

Project Planning (20 points)

10. Describe the proposed project.

Acterra's You(th) Be the Change program focuses on content for climate effects (e.g. sea level rise) and climate actions (ex. zero food waste). Acterra's goal is to educate youth about the impacts of climate change and provide students with the knowledge, tools, and opportunities to connect with their community, empowering them to take meaningful environmental action. In partnership with local schools, districts, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Acterra will strengthen the limited climate-based education happening through school curriculum, highlighting state NGSS standards wherever possible. Acterra hopes that climate education will become a mainstay in public schools and CBOs across the Bay Area, much like it is in New Jersey after the recent passing of climate policy in schools. The program's long-term outcome is building youth leadership so students have the capacity and agency to organize and advocate for themselves and their communities.

June 2019 marked the official pilot of Acterra's climate change literacy program, Earthwise Kids. The program was integrated into a Summer Session at local East Palo Alto charter school, Oxford Day Academy (ODA). 29 students, the majority of whom were rising 9th graders from Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, participated.

In order to test Acterra's educational programming goals, 5 partners were recruited to teach unique, challenging, and locally relevant curriculum -Each pilot partner had a unique approach:

- San Jose State University Green Ninja Project took students on a learning experience centered around sea level rise.
- The San Mateo County Youth Exploring Sea Level Rise Science (YESS) program facilitated the Game of Floods, an educational game on sea level rise adaptation.
- Grassroots Ecology welcomed youth on environmental educational field trips to Cooley Landing. On site, the youth learned to become active stewards of the natural environment by participating in a habitat restoration project.
- Stanford's Sustainable Urban Systems Initiative (SUSI) Resilience Team exposed students to environmental justice, the scientific method, and public education in a hands-on and engaging way.
- Youth United for Community Action worked with students to compile their experiences to create a reflective art piece that illustrated a plan of action towards the resilient future that they will help to build.

Acterra evolved Earthwise Kids into You(th) Be the Change (YBtC) through a Stanford-designed curriculum. The result is a certificate program representing a high-dosage model. Once students and/or school groups are certified, by completing a three-week program, Acterra seed funds the development of a student led Green Team for that campus/school group which scales the impact. Acterra's education programming integrates into the youth climate movement, elevating and supporting student action and leadership, through continuing education, mentorship, career readiness, and advocacy.

11. Describe key project deliverables and estimated completion dates.

Acterra's goal is to educate middle school and high school students about climate change science, problems, solutions, and to empower them to take climate action to improve their own health as well as that of the local community and the planet. Acterra's YBtC will focus on educational programming that enables students to:

- 1) Share the fundamentals of climate change science and its localized impacts.

- 2) Consider complex human-ecological systems and the trade offs made when designing solutions.
- 3) Apply critical thinking and analytical skills to interpret scientific data sets.
- 4) Demonstrate written, visual, and oral presentation skills to communicate scientific knowledge.
- 5) Apply techniques and instrumentation to solve problems in their community.
- 6) Feel connected with their local human-ecological systems.
- 7) Connect with other student leaders and mentors to strengthen networks for resilient communities.

Participants will be trained and empowered to serve as youth leaders at their school, creating a new Green Team or joining an existing environmental team/club and bringing new knowledge and insight. After completing the training, they will receive a program certificate and guidebook (in English and Spanish) to use with their team in developing and implementing a school-wide campaign to promote student climate action pledges. They will track results and provide pledge data to Acterra. Acterra will use the pledge data to estimate potential greenhouse gas reductions from behavioral changes.

Target audience

120 middle and high school students (grades 7-12) in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties in both Fall and Spring. After receiving the certificate, and founding or joining their local Green Teams or clubs, the students will then implement a campaign to educate the entire student body of their schools, an expected total of 3500 students.

Project Length

12 hours of programming delivered in 6 sessions. Each week will include 2 sessions of 2 hours each. The sessions will be highly interactive with hands-on activities and experiential learning. Access to water, refrigeration and cooking equipment is encouraged.

Week 1 – Introductions, Climate Change Science (Greenhouse Gasses, Temperature Changes, Sea Level Rise)

Week 2 – Local Impact of Climate Change (Flooding, Drought, Fires, Food Insecurity) and Opportunities for Resilience

Week 3 – Action to Prevent Climate Change and Health Benefits (Food Choices, Food Waste, Transportation Alternatives), Next steps (Mounting a School-Wide Campaign)

Target dates and locations

As the curriculum is accessible virtually, there is no target date for completion. Students aim for the 12 hours to be completed in a three week period. The locations as well are open because the curriculum is available through Google Classroom (a display copy is attached for review). Acterra believes in reducing barriers for fact-based climate change education.

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

No

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

Acterra will focus on meeting our programmatic goals, including metrics, over the next three years.

Potential Partners

It is critical for Acterra to partner with other organizations to operate and maintain YBtC. We look to partners like Stanford University, School Districts, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Local Government, Alliance for Climate Education (ACE), and Youth United for Community Action. Acterra will also be working closely with SVYCA youth leaders who will provide peer to peer training to new youth leaders from Acterra You(th) Be the Change Green Team training program. Rising youth leaders will learn about advocacy and civic education, be exposed to career pathways for climate related careers, gain important effective advocacy, presentation, organizing, marketing, technology, and event coordination skills.

Acterra's ability to maintain the program long term is built on the foundation of our 50 year history creating,

designing, implementing and scaling climate programming. Acterra leans into partnerships to shore up areas that other organizations have as intrinsic strengths. Because of our belief in partnership, education, and community service, Acterra is confident that this program will continue to thrive well beyond the three year term projected for this requests purpose.

14. Describe the project's readiness for implementation.

A recent study by the University of California, Berkeley, Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, estimates that nearly 20% of the average Bay Area resident's carbon footprint comes from food. This is a close second to the largest factor, driving a car, which makes up about 25% of their carbon footprint. YBtC relies on numerous forms of climate education, but even one area, food, can make all the difference to our students.

When we analyze the greenhouse gases emitted by growing, sourcing, processing and transporting different types of foods within the average American's diet, it becomes apparent that a plant-based diet is more climate-friendly. Acterra can directly impact the education of youth, which in turn directly impacts green house gases.

Encouraging a plant-forward diet through climate change curriculum is a workable solution that:

- emphasizes and celebrates, but is not limited to, plant-based foods, and
- reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability.

Behavior change scientists have shown that a tipping point may be reached when 25% of the local population has adopted a new behavior, and it then may become the social norm with a push from activists. The time is now for educational curriculum that focuses on the benefits of plant forward diets as well as other effects of climate change. Students need a reason to be hopeful. Their actions matter. The time is now.

Project Budget (15 points)

15. Budget Summary - Grant Request

This is a budget summary only; a detailed Project Budget must be submitted using the Documents Upload tab. Please enter dollar amount. Note: after the application is submitted, the software will automatically add a TOTAL.

138000	Grant request: Personnel
44,500	Grant request: Contracted Services
20750	Grant request: Supplies / Materials