

**Clean CA Program
Community Cleanup and Employment Pathway (CCEP) Grant Proposal**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

| CALTRANS DISTRICT | PROJECT TITLE | AGENCY NAME | AGENCY CONTACT NAME | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS |
|-------------------|--|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8 | Revive the Desert: Illegal Dumping Cleanup & Community Stewardship in Needles | City of Needles | Rainie Torrance, Utility Manager | (760)326-2115 Ext. 140 | rtorrance@cityofneedles.com |

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Needles proposes the “Revive the Desert: Illegal Dumping Cleanup & Community Stewardship in Needles” project, a citywide initiative to clean up 25 illegal dumping sites identified across the community. These sites have been impacted by the accumulation of hazardous waste, bulky items, and general debris, posing environmental and public health risks.

The cleanup will be carried out by a combination of City of Needles Public Works staff and two part-time temporary Maintenance Construction Workers hired locally. The team will be responsible for removing waste, addressing graffiti, and restoring the affected areas using appropriate safety gear, disposal containers, and equipment. The City will also utilize its existing fleet, trailers, backhoes, and dump trucks, with associated fuel and maintenance costs included in the project budget.

In parallel, the City will launch a comprehensive community education and engagement campaign led by nonprofit partners Saint Vincent de Paul and Set Free. These organizations will:

- Distribute pamphlets, flyers, and mailers created by the City to educate residents about the impacts of illegal dumping.
- Conduct in-person outreach in high-foot-traffic areas.
- Promote the campaign through social media and local newspaper publications to reach a broader audience.
- Participate as volunteers in the city’s proposed community cleanup event as proposed by the project.

This public engagement effort is designed to raise awareness, encourage responsible waste disposal, and foster long-term community stewardship.

The project includes:

- Planning/Outreach: Illegal dumping education campaign.
- Employment: City staff and temporary hires for cleanup and project management.
- Cleanup: Supplies, safety gear, disposal fees, and roll-off containers.
- Other Costs: Vehicle use, fuel, maintenance, and administrative oversight.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

The City of Needles continues to face significant challenges related to illegal dumping and environmental degradation. As a small desert community with limited staffing and resources, the city has identified 25 illegal dumping sites that have accumulated hazardous waste, bulky items, and general debris. These sites pose risks to public health, diminish the natural beauty of the Mojave Desert, and contribute to a sense of neglect in the community.

Illegal dumping not only impacts the environment but also undermines civic pride and discourages the use of public spaces. The City's Public Works Department does not have the capacity to address the scale of the problem alone, and without targeted intervention, these conditions will persist and worsen.

This project provides a structured and collaborative solution to these challenges. The City will deploy a combination of municipal staff and two part-time temporary workers to conduct cleanup operations across all 25 sites. This approach ensures that the work is completed efficiently while also creating short-term employment opportunities for local residents.

In addition to physical cleanup, the project includes a robust community education campaign led by nonprofit partners Saint Vincent de Paul and Set Free. These organizations will engage residents through pamphlets, mailers, flyers, social media outreach, and local newspaper publications. Their efforts will raise awareness about the impacts of illegal dumping and promote responsible waste disposal practices.

By restoring public spaces and engaging the community, the project will revitalize neglected areas, improve environmental conditions, and foster a culture of stewardship. It also supports workforce development by providing paid work experience and involving local organizations in meaningful civic efforts.

Ultimately, this initiative aligns with the Clean California Program's goals by addressing litter and blight, creating employment pathways, and promoting sustainable community revitalization in an underserved region.

1.4 MAP (Attachment A)
Instructions: Include any relevant project location maps, and associated data maps.

1.5 COST – Suggested Amount: \$50,000 to \$200,000
Instructions: Provide a detailed cost estimate for each activity below and submit with Attachment E.

| Activity | Estimated Cost | Would applicant accept partial funding for this activity? |
|--|----------------|--|
| Planning / Outreach | \$ 11,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Project Implementation – Employment (based on historic number of litter crews/staff) | \$ 122,735.60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Project Implementation – Cleanup (based on historic quantities of litter collection) | \$ 15,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Matching Funds – In-Kind Contribution | \$ 0.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Other – Project Management & Vehicle Use | \$ 20,619.20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| TOTAL | \$ 169,354.80 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

1.6 SCHEDULE

Note: Project implementation should be completed by April 1, 2027 and final reports/close-out completed by October 31, 2027.

| Milestone | Start Date | End Date |
|---|------------|------------|
| Planning & Community Engagement Begins | 1/1/2025 | 2/15/2026 |
| Hiring/Training Program Launch | 2/16/2026 | 3/31/2026 |
| Cleanup Activities Begin | 4/1/2026 | 3/31/2027 |
| Project Completion (By April 1, 2027) | 4/1/2027 | 4/1/2027 |
| Project Close-out (By October 31, 2027) | 4/2/2027 | 10/31/2027 |

1.7 KNOWN CONCERNS OR RISKS

Known environmental concerns or risks

- No
 Yes

Known right-of-way concerns or risks

- No
 Yes

The cleanup sites span 25 illegal dumping locations throughout the City of Needles, many of which are situated in ecologically sensitive areas of the Mojave Desert. These include locations near the city's water reservoir and along Eagle Pass Road adjacent to a substation. The presence of hazardous waste, such as tires, bedding, and household debris, poses risks to both the natural habitat and public health. Coordination with the State Lands Commission may be required due to jurisdictional boundaries and land ownership.

Right-of-way concerns may also arise due to the proximity of several sites to utility infrastructure and state-managed lands. The City will need to work closely with relevant agencies to ensure proper access, safety protocols, and regulatory compliance.

Additional risks that could impact project delivery include:

-Staffing limitations: The City's small municipal workforce may face challenges in maintaining consistent progress across all 25 sites. While two part-time temporary workers will be hired to support the effort, scheduling and oversight may be affected by availability and workload.

-Weather conditions: Desert climate extremes, including high temperatures, wind, and seasonal monsoons, could delay outdoor cleanup activities or pose safety risks to workers and volunteers.

-Permitting and interagency coordination: Delays in securing necessary permits or approvals from state agencies could impact the timeline, particularly for sites near protected or regulated lands.

-Budget constraints: Although the project is designed to be cost-effective, unexpected costs such as increased disposal fees, equipment maintenance, or fuel expenses could strain the budget if not carefully managed.

To mitigate these risks, the City will implement a detailed project schedule with built-in flexibility, maintain close coordination with Caltrans and the State Lands Commission, and ensure clear communication. The involvement of nonprofit partners will also help support outreach and community engagement, keeping the project on track and within scope.

2 EVALUATION CRITERIA ALIGNMENT

2.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA ALIGNMENT

Litter Abatement

The proposed project will address 25 illegal dumping sites identified throughout the City of Needles. These locations have been impacted by the accumulation of hazardous waste, bulky items, and general debris, posing risks to public health and the Mojave Desert ecosystem. Cleanup activities will include the removal of tires, bedding, household waste, and graffiti. Crews will be equipped with appropriate safety gear and tools to ensure thorough and safe removal. The project will significantly improve the environmental quality and visual appeal of these public spaces, making them safer and more accessible for residents and visitors.

Job Creation & Employment Pathways

To support implementation, the City will deploy a combination of municipal Public Works staff and two part-time temporary Maintenance Construction Workers hired locally. These positions will provide paid work experience and exposure to municipal operations, offering transitional employment opportunities for underserved individuals. The City's Public Works Director will oversee project implementation, ensuring that employment pathways are integrated into the broader revitalization strategy. While the project does not include formal workforce training, it provides meaningful job access and civic engagement.

Community Engagement & Partnership

Community involvement is a cornerstone of this initiative. The City has partnered with Saint Vincent de Paul and Set Free, two local nonprofit organizations that will lead the public engagement and education campaign. These partners will distribute educational materials, including pamphlets, flyers, and mailers created by the City, and conduct outreach through social media, local newspaper publications, and in-person engagement in high-foot-traffic areas. Their efforts will raise awareness about the impacts of illegal dumping and promote responsible waste disposal practices. The City will also implement a Public Engagement Plan to guide inclusive participation throughout the project lifecycle.

Sustainability

To ensure long-term impact, the City will integrate cleanup responsibilities into routine Public Works operations and continue collaborating with nonprofit partners for ongoing outreach. The public education campaign is designed to shift community behavior and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. The City will also explore infrastructure improvements, such as signage and waste bins, to discourage future dumping. These strategies aim to sustain the project's outcomes beyond the grant term and promote lasting civic pride.

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INFLUENCE

Community input has played a central role in shaping the City of Needles' proposed CCEP project. Residents and local organizations have consistently voiced concerns about the environmental and health impacts of illegal dumping across the city. These concerns were raised during informal community meetings and through feedback received by city staff and nonprofit partners. The decision to expand the project to include all 25 identified illegal dumping sites was directly informed by this input and reflects the community's desire for a comprehensive solution.

Local nonprofits Saint Vincent de Paul and Set Free have been instrumental in identifying problem areas and offering support. Their involvement has helped the City understand the scale of the issue and the need for a coordinated response that includes both cleanup and public education. These organizations will lead the community education campaign, distributing pamphlets, flyers, and mailers created by the City, and conducting outreach through social media, local newspaper publications, and in-person engagement in high-foot-traffic areas.

During implementation, the City will activate its Public Engagement Plan (see Attachment B), which includes:

- Community education campaigns to raise awareness about the impacts of illegal dumping and promote responsible waste disposal.
- Flyer and mailer distribution to residents, with materials created by the City and disseminated by nonprofit partners.
- Social media outreach and local newspaper ads to reach a broader audience.
- In-person engagement by nonprofit staff in areas with high pedestrian activity.
- Youth outreach through local schools and community centers to foster environmental responsibility among younger generations.
- Partnership development with additional local organizations, businesses, and tribal groups to expand the project's reach and sustainability.

The City will maintain open communication with residents throughout the project via public notices, social media updates, and community meetings. Feedback mechanisms will be established to ensure that community voices continue to guide project decisions and adjustments.

By embedding community engagement into every phase of the project, from planning to implementation and beyond, the City of Needles aims to build lasting civic pride and a shared commitment to maintaining clean, safe, and welcoming public spaces.

4 UNDERSERVED or HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES

4.1 ANALYSIS

Is the project located in an underserved or historically excluded community?

- Yes
- No
- partially located in an underserved community

What was the basis for determining if any part of project is located in or benefits an historically excluded community: (only check a box if in or partially in an historically excluded community)

- a. Median Household Income
- b. CalEnviroScreen 4.0
- c. Free or Reduced-Price School Meals
- d. Healthy Places Index
- e. Native American Tribal Lands
- f. Other

4.2 BENEFITS TO UNDERSERVED or HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED COMMUNITY

The City of Needles, located in a geographically isolated region of the Mojave Desert, faces persistent socioeconomic and environmental challenges. With a low median household income, limited municipal staffing, and proximity to Native American tribal lands, the community qualifies as underserved and historically excluded. This project is designed to directly address these disparities by delivering tangible benefits across multiple dimensions.

Job Access

The project will create employment opportunities for underemployed and underserved residents through the hiring of two part-time temporary Maintenance Construction Workers to support the City's Public Works Department. These roles will provide paid work experience in public works and environmental cleanup, offering a pathway to future employment. By engaging individuals who face barriers to traditional employment, the project supports economic inclusion and workforce development.

Cleaner, Safer Public Spaces

Illegal dumping has compromised the safety and usability of public areas across the city. The cleanup of 25 identified dumping sites will remove hazardous waste and restore these spaces, making them safer for recreation, community use, and environmental preservation. Improved aesthetics and reduced health risks will enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors.

Increased Civic Pride and Stewardship

Through partnerships with Saint Vincent de Paul and Set Free, the project will engage community members in a citywide education campaign about the impacts of illegal dumping. These efforts will include flyer distribution, mailers, social media outreach, and local newspaper publications. By involving residents in both education and cleanup efforts, the project will foster a sense of ownership and pride in the local environment, encouraging long-term stewardship and responsible waste practices.

Connection to Public Resources and Services

The project will strengthen ties between residents and city services, including the Public Works Department and local nonprofits. By participating in cleanup efforts and public engagement activities, community members will gain greater awareness of available resources and how to access them. The initiative will also serve as a model for future collaborations, demonstrating the City's commitment to inclusive, community-centered development.

5 LETTER OF SUPPORT

5.1 LETTER OF SUPPORT

Instructions: Attach signed letters from Caltrans district (where proposal is located) endorsing the project.

6 ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

6.1 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Instructions – Attach any applicable documents as follows:

- **Attachment A:** Project / Data Maps
- **Attachment B:** Public Engagement Plan
- **Attachment C:** Existing Site Photos
- **Attachment D:** Letters of Support
- **Attachment E:** Cost Breakdown & Estimate
 - Break down expenses by category (e.g., staff time, equipment, materials, outreach, etc.)
 - Briefly explain the purpose of each cost to demonstrate alignment with project goals.

Prepared by:
Rainie Torrance, Utility Manager
City of Needles

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