

AWARD LIST AND PROJECT SUMMARIES

On March 24, 2023, \$3.3 million of General State Funds, were awarded to 1 organization under the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) Program Evaluation for Program Year (PY) 2022-23 Solicitation for Proposals. Awardee project list and project summaries are listed below. Funding decisions are final.

Project List

Applicant Name	County	Award
The Mark USA, Inc.	Orange County	\$3,326,107

Project Summary

APPLICANT	The Mark USA, Inc.
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AWARD	\$3,326,107
INDUSTRY FOCUS	Business related for-profit
KEY PARTNERS	University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy (USC)
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	<p>The Mark USA, Inc. (The Mark) is an innovative minority-owned, woman-owned business with 15 years of experience designing and implementing evaluation frameworks for over 900 projects across government, academia, business, and community-based organizations. The Mark will combine its leadership in inclusive, culturally sensitive, equity-based evaluation approaches with the 25 years of experience in participatory planning and economic and workforce development of the University of Southern California Center for Economic Development (CED), a U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration University Center. The Mark/CED team (The Mark Team) will provide a system-wide program evaluation of the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) project.</p> <p>The Mark Team will use the Theory of Change (TOC) as a framework for the program evaluation within a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach. TOC is a methodology for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation used to promote social change. It explains how a given intervention or set of interventions are expected to lead to a specific change. DE offers a powerful approach to monitoring and supporting social innovations by working in partnership with program decision makers. The Mark Team will partner with the CERF regions and the Inter-Agency Leadership Team to conduct workshops to develop TOCs and collect data to provide feedback for timely decision-making on the development of plans and implementation activities.</p> <p>A web-based platform will facilitate data collection along with community- and equity-based participatory methods. The evaluation will include both process evaluation to monitor the quality of the</p>

program content and implementation, and outcome evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the program. “The value of this approach is that it is adaptive, flexible, and allows each region to respond to diverse inputs from different communities and people groups directly affected by economic decisions while maintaining consistency,” says Traci Shirachi, CEO/President of The Mark USA, Inc.