

# UNITED STATES CLIMATE ALLIANCE

## USCA State Climate Leaders Fellowship

DRAFT Concept Note

April 19, 2019

### | Overview

U.S. Climate Alliance (Alliance) governors have committed to an ambitious suite of actions to drive down their greenhouse gases, sequester carbon and build resilience to climate impacts. By joining the Alliance, these governors have agreed to uphold the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit temperature increases to well below 2°C and with efforts towards 1.5°C.

Through the Alliance, states are engaged in peer-to-peer learning and connected with outside technical expertise to help them accelerate implementation of their policy priorities. However, meeting this goal requires more than just political will and access to technical resources. It requires staff capacity to do the work of developing, seeking support for, and implementing the policies that will help states deliver on their bold climate agenda. In one-on-one consultations with Alliance states, bandwidth constraints were most frequently cited as a key barrier to implementation. Even with access to substantial outside technical assistance, states often do not have the staffing resources to effectively manage those relationships and the outside resources they are provided.

The USCA State Climate Leaders Fellowship (USCA Fellows) would aim to fill critical staffing constraints for leading states by providing additional staff resources to deliver specific outcomes as determined by each state. USCA Fellows would be selected by, and embedded with, governors' offices or delegated agencies to ensure they support the state's priorities.

### | Program Details

USCA Fellows would be expected to work directly with decision-makers in the office of the governor or a designated state agency to accelerate implementation of the governor's major climate priorities, as well as support engagement through the Alliance. If funding rules allow, USCA Fellows would be provided for a two-year term to allow sufficient time for policy formulation and implementation.

Alliance states would apply for a USCA Fellow through a competitive process, conducted annually or semi-annually as determined by funding availability. A committee comprised by the Alliance Secretariat and representatives of governors from non-competing states would select recipient states according to objective criteria that could include:

- Results the USCA Fellow is expected to achieve in the 2-year period, and long-term outcomes the USCA Fellow would support (i.e. it is essential that USCA Fellows have specific projects to support from the onset);
- Placement in the state government that demonstrates sufficient integration with and reporting to decision-makers to most effectively support priority climate policies and programs;

## DELIBERATIVE

- History of engagement within the Alliance, especially current or expected leadership roles in the Alliance or regionally;
- Potential for achieving emission reductions and carbon sequestration at scale, or implementing substantial climate resilience programs;
- Replicability across Alliance states; and
- Consideration of regional, political, sectoral or other diversity.

Alliance states could apply for more than one USCA Fellow, and could apply to extend the terms of current Fellows. States selected to receive a USCA Fellow would write the position description and select their candidate of choice to ensure full ownership. The process for posting the position, negotiating salary, and signing a contract would differ depending on the mechanism used to fund the position (see below). The Alliance Secretariat will not attempt to influence any programs or policies supported by the USCA Fellow.

Due to varying rules across Alliance states on receipt of grant funds, the Alliance would provide three options for covering the costs of a USCA Fellow, in order of preference below. In all cases, the state would develop the position description, interview and select the candidate.

- **Option 1: Sub-grant to Alliance State Agency**  
USCA sub-grants to the state directly. The state would post the position, and handle all hiring, provision of salary and benefits, and funds for travel.
- **Option 2: Consultant**  
The fellow would be hired as a fixed-term consultant. USCA could negotiate an MOU with the state, the state would hire the consultant and then invoice USCA for services delivered. Alternately, USCA could hire the consultant to provide services as identified by the state.
- **Option 3: Inter-governmental Partnership Program with Universities**  
Universities that are trusted partners to states could hire and second individuals to staff state governments. This approach could provide further benefits if the university agreed to provide further support e.g. through access to graduate students and professors that could provide additional technical, analytical, or policy support. By using local universities, you can also avoid the administrative burden of navigating multiple, state-specific tax and other local rules.
- **Option 4: Secondment (fallback)**  
USCA would post the position, hire the selected USCA Fellow on a 2-year contract and cover any salary and benefits costs directly. The USCA Fellow would be considered a USCA employee on secondment to the state, and would report directly to the state. A secondment agreement would be negotiated between USCA and the state. Secondments potentially require substantial additional oversight and governance to ensure compliance with host state laws and taxes, and thus incur higher costs. Accordingly, this option is recommended only when state laws do not allow sub-granting or use of consultants.