



GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS Updated February 2022

The Coastal Conservancy's mission is to work with others to preserve, protect, and restore the resources of the California coast, ocean, and the San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy was created out of recognition that some of California's goals for coastal management require implementation of important projects to conserve land, restore habitat, or build trails. The Conservancy works along the entire length of California's coast and within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast. The Coastal Conservancy also works throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area and the entire Santa Ana River watershed. A map of our jurisdiction is posted [here](#).

The Conservancy provides technical assistance and grant funding to local communities, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and other government agencies to implement multi-benefit projects that:

- protect the natural and scenic beauty of the coast
- enhance wildlife habitat
- help the public to get to and enjoy beaches and parklands
- keep farmland and timberlands in production
- improve water quality
- revitalize working waterfronts
- prepare communities for the impacts of climate change
- sequester carbon or reduce greenhouse gas emissions

The Coastal Conservancy accepts pre-proposals on an ongoing basis. Grants are available to government agencies, tribes and nonprofit organizations and funding availability is subject to legislative appropriation. The pre-proposal is available [online](#). Pre-proposals are reviewed by Conservancy staff and full grant applications are requested for those projects that Conservancy staff want to further consider for potential funding recommendations.

This document provides instructions for completing a grant application. On the Conservancy website there are several other documents that may be useful references when applying for a grant.

- [Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines](#)
- [Coastal Access Project Standards](#)
- [Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives](#)
- [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#)

Exhibit A attached to this document provides additional information that may be a useful reference when applying for a grant: [Exhibit A: Typical Sequence of Activities for Grant Funding](#).

Applying for Grants

Prospective applicants **must discuss** their projects with Conservancy staff prior to completing or submitting a full grant application. Please contact the appropriate Program Manager from the list below, listed from North to South:

North Coast: Del Norte County to coastside Sonoma and Marin Counties
Karyn Gear: Karyn.Gear@scc.ca.gov or 510-286-4171.

San Francisco Bay Area: Nine Bay Area Counties, excluding the coastside of Sonoma, Marin, and San Mateo Counties
Moirra McEnespy: Moirra.McEnespy@scc.ca.gov or 510-286-0317

Central Coast: coastside San Mateo County to Santa Barbara County
Trish Chapman: Trish.Chapman@scc.ca.gov or 510-286-0749

South Coast: Ventura County to San Diego County
Megan Cooper: Megan.Cooper@scc.ca.gov or 510-286-4093

Continuous Submission Dates

Grant applications are accepted on a continuous basis. In addition, periodically grant rounds will be advertised and applications will be accepted for projects of a particular type or for specific locations.

Solicitation for Proposition 1 grants occur on a set schedule with a slightly different grant application form. Information about applying for Proposition 1 grants and the application form are posted [here](#).

Application Submissions

Applications should consist of the following files:

- Cover letter (optional, no more than 1 page, in pdf)
- Grant application form, includes cover page, project description, preliminary budget and schedule, and additional questions.
- RFP-specific application sections, if applicable
- Project maps and design plans (in one pdf file, 10 MB maximum size)
- Project photos (in jpg format)
- If applicant qualifies as a 501(c)(3) organization, provide your IRS 501(c)(3) letter and Articles of Incorporation as attachments to a completed [Non-Profit Organization Questionnaire](#). *Note: Applicants who have submitted the Non-Profit Organization*

Questionnaire in the past two years do not need to resubmit. Non-profits only need to submit the articles of incorporation and 501c3 letter once, unless they are updated.

Applications should be emailed to the Program Manager for the region in which the project is located. If the combined size of all the files is greater than 10 MB, please send files in separate email messages (email messages over 10 MB in size will be rejected by our server).

Any information that you submit is subject to the unqualified and unconditional right of the Conservancy to use, reproduce, publish, or display, free of charge. Please indicate if crediting is requested for any of the photos and/or maps.

Grant Amounts

If responding to a specific Request for Proposals released by the Conservancy, please refer to the RFP for any minimum or maximum amounts that apply. For all other applications, there are no established minimum or maximum grant amounts. The Coastal Conservancy will base the size of awards on project needs, benefits and competing demands for existing funding.

Eligible Applicants

Government agencies (federal, tribal, state, local, and special districts) and certain nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding. To be eligible, a nonprofit organization must:

- Be approved by the IRS as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- The organization's articles of incorporation must demonstrate that its purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, the [Coastal Conservancy's enabling legislation](#).

Eligible Activities

If responding to a specific RFP, please refer to the RFP for information on eligible activities. For all other applications, the Coastal Conservancy may fund property acquisition and project planning, design, and/or construction in accordance with [Division 21 of the Public Resources Code](#). Projects should meet the goals and objectives in the [Conservancy's Strategic Plan](#), and be consistent with the purposes of the funding source, typically bond funds. In addition, project applications should provide information that will enable consideration of any applicable criteria specified in the [Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines](#) established by the Conservancy's board. Regional planning, research, monitoring, and assessments will generally be considered only when directly tied to the furtherance of on-the-ground projects.

Applicant Capacity

The applicant must demonstrate that it can adequately administer the grant and manage the project, and that its entire operating budget is not dependent upon the underlying grant. The applicant should address the following organizational capacity and expertise elements, including but not limited to:

- Capacity to manage a state grant, including fiscal system and staff dedicated to financial operations;

- Ability to address cash flow and how the applicant will handle the process of reimbursement payments;
- Proof of qualified staff or contractors to carry out the project activities;
- A record of success completing similar projects and the commitment to see the project to completion.

Nonprofit Organizations Pre-Award Questionnaire

The Coastal Conservancy requires that all nonprofit organizations complete a [pre-award questionnaire](#) every two years. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help ensure that the non-profit organizations have adequate fiscal controls to receive and manage state grant funds. The Conservancy seeks to identify potential issues prior to awarding a grant to ensure our grantees have procedures in place at the start of a grant project. If your organization has submitted the questionnaire within 24 months, you may indicate that in your application. Non-profits only need to submit the articles of incorporation and 501c3 letter once, unless they are updated.

Things to Know:

As we are a state agency, we require specific deliverables and conditions from our grantees, and we are legally unable to fund certain activities. The information below summarizes key requirements of Conservancy grants. If applicants have questions about the eligibility for funding of specific tasks or budget items, we recommend you contact SCC staff (see Program Manager contact information above) for clarification.

- **CEQA** – If applying for an implementation grant for a project that is not CEQA-exempt, CEQA documentation must be completed and adopted by the lead agency before the Conservancy’s board can consider grant approval.
- **Overhead & Indirect Costs** – Overhead or indirect costs are the specific costs of doing business (for example, rent, computers, telephones, office supplies, internet access, copy machines, electricity). Certain types of indirect costs may NOT be charged to the Conservancy, including fundraising or lobbying. Any cost that is billed as a direct cost may NOT be included in the calculation to develop an overhead percentage. “Overhead” and “indirect costs” are both acceptable terms that represent the same category of costs. If a grantee seeks to recover overhead costs from a Conservancy grant, overhead should be included as a line item in the approved project budget and documentation to backup the charges. **The Conservancy limits overhead recovery to a maximum of 20% of the grant.** More information can be found in: [Budget Guidelines](#).
- **Withholding** – **Conservancy grants are distributed on a reimbursement basis**, with a standard 5% withheld from each payment for grants to non-profits. Large construction grants and contracts may have up to 10% withheld. The full withholding is released upon completion of the grant project.

- Insurance** - Grantees are required to maintain insurance against claims for injuries to persons and damage to property that may arise from or in connection with project-related activities of the grantee or its agents. Costs for insurance can be included in the SCC grant budget as long as they are also not included in the organization’s overhead. As an alternative to securing its own insurance, with the written approval of the Executive Officer, the grantee may satisfy the coverage requirement in whole or in part through: (a) its contractors’ procurement and maintenance of insurance for work under this agreement; or (b) the grantee’s participation in a “risk management” plan, self insurance program or insurance pooling arrangement, or any combination of these, if consistent with the coverage required by the grant contract. The grantee shall maintain all required insurance from the effective date through the completion date.

NOTE: Insurance requirements vary according to a given project’s purpose and needs. Typical insurance requirements are listed below.

Minimum Limits of Insurance. The grantee shall maintain coverage limits no less than:

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| a. General Liability:
<i>(Including operations, products and completed operations, as applicable)</i> | \$2,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage. If Commercial General Liability Insurance or other form with a general aggregate limit is used, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to the activities under this agreement, or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit. |
| b. Automobile Liability: | \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and property damage. |
| c. Course of Construction: | Completed value of the project with no coinsurance penalty provisions. |
| d. Property Insurance | 90 percent of full replacement cost of the facilities or structures. |

- Acknowledgement** - All grantees are required to acknowledge Coastal Conservancy support, typically through a sign and social media. Specific acknowledgement plans are required as part of the grant agreement and designed by the grantee in consultation with their Conservancy project manager. Approved plans are included in the overall work program. Costs to implement the acknowledgement plan can be included in the SCC grant budget. See here for [acknowledgement guidelines](#) and [logo use information](#).
- CRAM** –If the project will be conducted in a wetland or riparian area, grantees are required to conduct pre-construction and post-construction assessments using the

California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) reviews of the project area (more information is available at <http://www.cramwetlands.org/>). Prior to the release of funds for construction, the grantee will be required to conduct a baseline report utilizing CRAM within the year prior to the beginning of project construction, unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the Conservancy and the grantee. The grantee will also be required to conduct at least one Post-Construction CRAM Assessment in order to document the change in wetland condition at the project site. This assessment should be timed to document a measurable degree of change in wetland condition. The post-construction assessment should be conducted prior to the completion date of the grant but, if appropriate, can be done after the completion date of the grant agreement. The grantee should submit a plan for completion, including budget and timeline, with the application. Costs to CRAM can be included in the SCC grant budget.

- **Allowed Costs Include:**

- Conferences or trainings that are included as a separate line item in the approved budget of the Work Program when they clearly support successful implementation of the project. ***Check with your Conservancy project manager before participating in a conference/training you expect to request reimbursement for.***
- Conservancy funds may be used to pay for travel expenses consistent with state travel reimbursement criteria. Travel expenses in excess of these rates will not be reimbursed. All travel expenses must be documented with receipts. Credit-card statements or accounting system printouts are not sufficient. ***Check with your Conservancy project manager before you incur travel costs.***
- Generally, Conservancy funds may not be used to purchase equipment, such as furniture, computers, phones, etc. If a piece of equipment is directly related to carrying out a grant's purposes, it may be purchased as a grant expense. ***Check with your Conservancy project manager before you purchase any equipment to ensure that it is appropriate under the grant agreement.***

- **Disallowed Costs** – Costs the Conservancy cannot pay for include, but are not limited to:

- Food, drinks, or snacks.
- Fundraising or lobbying.

California Conservation Corps

The Coastal Conservancy encourages all applicants to consider using the California Conservation Corps for construction projects.

Application Instructions

All answers must be provided in 11 or 12-point type. Applicants should add space as necessary after each item in the application to provide the requested information.

Project Description – Provide a clear, detailed description of the project proposed for Conservancy funding. Limit to 4 pages (preferred). The project description should answer all of the questions listed in the application.

Project Graphics – Provide the requested project graphics with your application. Project maps and design plans should be combined into one pdf file with a maximum size of 10 MB. Project photos should be provided in jpg format.

Preliminary Budget and Schedule –

- Please provide a brief narrative explanation of the budget that explains and justifies the costs. The purpose of the narrative is to provide background and detail to explain the costs in the budget, including the source of the estimates. The narrative should specify whether the budget includes administrative or indirect costs, and/or contingencies and those amounts of each. If the budget is based on an engineer’s cost estimate, provide a copy of the estimate and specify how complete (i.e., what percent) is the design on which the estimate is based.
- The preliminary budget and schedule should include a line item for every task identified in the project description. For each task, applicants should provide the estimated completion date, estimated total cost of the task, amount requested from the Conservancy, and amount that will be provided by other funding sources. The task list in the Preliminary Budget and Schedule must match the task list provided in the project description.
- In the Preliminary Budget, please show matching funds provided by the State of California in a separate column from other matching funds. In kind contributions of staff time and/or bargain sales should not be included in the table but may be listed below. For other matching funds, please include the total amount by source below the table. If you have other grants for the project, please indicate when you expect them to be awarded.

Additional Information –Additional questions are intended to provide the Conservancy with sufficient information to evaluate your project’s readiness, eligibility for funding, and the extent to which the project is consistent with the Conservancy’s [Project Selection Criteria and Guidance](#) and adopted [Climate Change Policy](#). **Questions 11-19 should be answered by all applicants.** For questions 20-23, enter “not applicable” if the question does not pertain to your project. For each question, limit your answer to a half page, with one concise paragraph preferred.

RFP-Specific Criteria – For applications responding to a RFP, there will likely be an additional list of RFP-specific questions that must be answered as part of the application. Be sure to include this with your application package.

GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

A complete application will consist of the following files:

- Grant Application form (in Microsoft word or rtf format), consisting of 3 sections:
 - Project Description
 - Preliminary Budget and Schedule
 - Additional Information
- Project maps and design plans (in one pdf file, 10 MB maximum size)
- Project photos (in jpg format)
- For Nonprofit Organizations, please submit a completed [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#), and the organization's 501(c)(3) letter and Articles of Incorporation. *Note: Applicants who have submitted these documents in the past two years do not need to resubmit. Non-profits only need to submit the articles of incorporation and 501c3 letter once, unless they are updated.*

Typical Sequence of Activities for Grant Funding from Application through Project Completion

After discussing your project with State Coastal Conservancy staff, submitting the grant application is the next step in the process of receiving grant funds. There are several steps and additional support that the grantee will need to provide prior to the award of funding and throughout the project. To help prospective grantees understand the process, the requirements and associated time commitments, this document describes the **typical** steps in the process of receiving funds from the State Coastal Conservancy. Specific requests for proposals (RFP) grant rounds may involve additional review and/or a revised process from that described below. If applying in response to a specific RFP, please refer to the RFP for further guidance on process.

1. Conservancy staff review and rank applications to establish priorities for funding . All projects must be authorized for funding by the governing board of the Coastal Conservancy (Board) at a noticed public meeting. Recommended projects may be presented to the Board as early as a few months after grantee is notified, or later depending on the project's readiness, urgency for funds, and availability of Conservancy staff.
2. A Conservancy Project Manager is assigned to the proposed project. He/she will contact the grantee to learn more about the project and arrange for a tour of the project site, if appropriate. The Project Manager will be the grantee's main contact at the Conservancy from the beginning to the end of the project.
3. When it is determined that the proposal fits within the Conservancy's priorities, the Conservancy Project Manager will write a detailed Staff Recommendation for the Board's consideration, and includes letters of support gathered by the grantee as an exhibit to the report. The Staff Recommendation is reviewed by several Conservancy staff members, including a regional manager, an attorney and the Executive Officer. Staff Recommendations are started approximately two to three months prior to each board meeting and finalized approximately one month prior to each Board meeting.

Applicants are required to provide staff with all pertinent information in a timely manner to ensure Board consideration at any particular meeting. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to provide letters of support for their proposed project, including letters from local elected officials. Letters of support should not be submitted at the time of application, but will need to be provided at least one month prior to the date of the Board meeting at which the proposed project will be considered. Support letters may be addressed to the applicant or to the Chair of the Conservancy, Douglas Bosco, and sent to the Coastal Conservancy at 1515 Clay Street, Suite 1000, Oakland, CA 94612.

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4. Board meetings take place about five times each year and are held at various locations around the state. Small, noncontroversial projects may be placed on consent, in which case there is no presentation of the project unless a Board member has questions or comments. Most projects are on the regular agenda and typically the Project Manager will make a brief presentation to the Board members, usually followed by a brief presentation by the Grantee. The Board generally votes on staff's recommendations at this same meeting.
5. Following Board approval, the Conservancy Project Manager prepares a draft Grant Agreement. This Grant Agreement, when signed, is legally binding and includes requirements of the grantee and information about how and when funds can be disbursed. Preparation and finalization of a Grant Agreement usually takes at least three weeks. Five copies of the Grant Agreement are sent to the grantee for signatures, and all five must be sent back to the Conservancy. The Executive Officer signs each copy, and one fully executed copy is sent back to the grantee.

It is important that the person administering the project for the grantee be familiar with the procedures and requirements of the Grant Agreement. It may be useful for the grantee to arrange a meeting with the Conservancy Project Manager early in the project to review the Grant Agreement conditions.

Expenses incurred before the Grant Agreement with the Conservancy is completed are typically not reimbursable. Such expenses should be discussed with the Conservancy Project Manager early in the application and agreement preparation phase if pre-agreement costs will be a problem for the grantee.

6. The Grant Agreement requires the grantee to prepare additional documents for the Executive Officer's review and approval before the project may begin (or, at least, before the parts of the project for which the Conservancy will be asked to provide reimbursement may begin). Typical accompanying documents may include:
 - A resolution from the grantee's governing board containing the following: (1) authority to enter into an agreement with the Conservancy; (2) approval of the agreement's terms and conditions; and (3) designation of the applicant's authorized representative to negotiate and sign the agreement. Be sure to get this resolution on your board's agenda before the date you plan to start work. Ask the Conservancy Project Manager for a template resolution if needed.
 - A work program that includes a budget and schedule of tasks to be completed.
 - The names, titles, and pay rates of staff and any subcontractors.
 - A plan for signs and other outreach acknowledging the Conservancy's contribution to the project.
 - Verification of adequate insurance at the levels required in the Grant Agreement.
 - Proof that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained for construction projects.

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- Written evidence that contractors have complied with bonding requirements for construction projects.
- Written agreements with landowners, if project is implemented on property not owned by grantee.
- Other legal documents that may require notarized signatures and recording.

For projects involving the acquisition of real property or conservation easements, appraisals, title documents, draft purchase agreements, escrow instructions, a baseline report, a monitoring and reporting program, and other documents will be required. The Coastal Conservancy's *Environmental Appraisal Specifications* are available from Conservancy staff.

In addition to the items above, the Grant Agreement may require, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

- Close coordination and communication with Conservancy staff and other entities.
- Acknowledgement of the Conservancy on signs, reports, press releases, social media, and web sites.
- An agreement to operate and maintain the project improvements, typically for 20 years.
- The granting of a license to the Conservancy to use, reproduce, publish, grant to third parties, etc., all material produced, developed, or acquired under the agreement and a limitation on the grantee to use any work produced under the agreement for profit.
- Indemnification of the Conservancy from liabilities.
- Maintenance of financial records in accordance with the guidelines of the "Generally Accepted Accounting Principles" published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and retention of records for at least three years following final disbursement by the Conservancy.
- Review of statutory and regulatory provisions related to prevailing wage and other requirements of the California Labor Code to determine the responsibilities of the grantee. The grantee, if required by law to do so, shall pay prevailing wage to all persons employed in any part of the project. Certain sources of state funding may also trigger the requirement for a grantee constructing a public works project to adopt and enforce a "labor compliance program".
- A prohibition against use of the constructed project or acquired real property for mitigation, unless approved by the Executive Officer of the Conservancy.
- The right of the Conservancy to inspect and monitor constructed projects or acquired real property.
- Certification that state funds are not used for acquisition or operation of computer software in violation of copyright laws.
- No unlawful discrimination against employees or applicants.
- Additional requirements if the fund source derives from outside sources of funding, such as mitigation funds or federal grants.

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The Grant Agreement describes these and other requirements in greater detail and is the controlling document. If there are any questions about the Grant Agreement, discuss them with the Conservancy Project Manager. **Close review of and compliance with the Grant Agreement is essential and is the grantee's responsibility.**

7. Once the Grant Agreement has been signed and the Project Manager has received, and the Executive Officer has approved any required additional documents, the Project Manager will provide a written approval for the project to commence.
8. Invoices can then be sent to the Conservancy for reimbursement of tasks specifically agreed upon in the Grant Agreement and its accompanying documents. Grantees are required to use a "Request for Disbursement" form (to be provided by the Conservancy Project Manager, along with an instruction sheet) as the form of the invoice. Requests for Disbursement shall be accompanied by receipts, invoices from subcontractors, and any other necessary backup documentation. **Each invoice must be accompanied by a supporting progress report.** The invoices will be reviewed by the Conservancy Project Manager and the contracts office, and then forwarded to the State Controller for payment. Payment will be mailed to the grantee usually within three weeks after the invoice is found to be complete. Generally, the Conservancy will withhold five percent of invoiced amounts until the project is satisfactorily completed.
9. At project completion, the grantee submits a final invoice for remaining project costs and withheld amounts along with a final summary report of the project and any work products specified in the work program as deliverables. For acquisition projects, the request for disbursement is sent to the Conservancy, and when all acquisition documents have been approved by the Executive Officer and escrow conditions met, the warrant is sent directly to escrow for disbursement. For construction projects, an inspection report and as-built drawings of the completed project, as well as documentation that signs were installed, are required. Upon the Project Manager's assessment that all requirements of the Grant Agreement have been met, the final invoice and the withholding are paid. Capital improvement projects must be operated and maintained for the term of the agreement, typically twenty years. Real property must be operated and maintained in keeping with the purposes of the acquisition in perpetuity.