Explore the Coast Grants

2024 ANNOUNCEMENT & APPLICATION
Released November 6, 2023

Application is attached to this announcement
Submit Application via email to grants@scc.ca.gov
Application **Due Wednesday, January 31, 2024**.
For questions only, email **explorethecoast@scc.ca.gov**
Please read the instructions and application thoroughly.

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Explore the Coast (ETC) Grants Request for Proposals

Summary

The California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) announces the availability of grants to public agencies, federally recognized tribes and California Native American communities, and nonprofit organizations for programs that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to explore California's spectacular coast and San Francisco Bay shoreline. The ocean, coast, and beaches have long been recognized and used as spaces of joy, relaxation, and healing for many Californians. The ability to experience the coast without fear of physical barriers, feelings of not belonging, or financial challenge is crucial to how individuals cultivate their lifelong connections with the coast. Furthermore, joyful memories of the coast can organically inspire stewardship. The Explore the Coast grant program seeks to provide enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast ("ETC Priority Communities").

ETC Priority Communities
ETC Priority Communities may include but are not limited to lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, people of color, California Native American communities, immigrant communities, foster youth, and other historically excluded communities who face societal challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. You can use the Outdoor Equity Program Community FactFinder Mapping Tool, CalEnviroScreen Mapping Tool, or Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. or other resources you know of to help determine if you are serving low-income communities (please note the tools linked will refer to these as a "disadvantaged" or "severely disadvantaged community"). These tools are not required, but you may consult them to help describe the community that you aim to serve.

Projects should also meet one or more of the following priorities:
- Provide an enjoyable experience at the coast.
- Reduce economic, physical, operational, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.
- Inspire ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive activities.

Award Amount
Applicants may request a grant amount of up to $100,000. Approximately $800,000 is available for this grant round. Approximately $134,000 of the $800,000 is available for participants to go to the San Francisco Bay shoreline. The remaining $666,000 must be used to bring participants to the outer coast.

Project Start and End Date
Applicants should apply for projects that aim to **start in late 2024 or early 2025 and aim to be completed by December 2027.** The Conservancy will base the size of the award on each project's needs, its overall benefits, and the extent of competing demands for funds.

Project Eligibility

The Conservancy is a non-regulatory state agency that provides grants to preserve, improve, and restore public access, natural resources, and agricultural lands along the Pacific coast, San Francisco Bay shoreline, and adjacent counties. The Conservancy undertakes projects and works with public agencies, tribes, and nonprofit organizations to accomplish these goals.

Increasing public access to California's coast is a core component of the Conservancy's work. With the Explore the Coast Program, the Conservancy seeks to support programs and organizations that work with people and communities who face challenges accessing the coast and/or enjoying the coast.

Eligible Applicants
Public agencies, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding. To be eligible, a nonprofit organization must qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Other community-based organizations and tribes or California Native American communities that are not federally recognized may apply with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.

PLEASE NOTE: Organizations with a current Explore the Coast grant cannot apply for funding that would overlap their existing grant; therefore, organizations that have a current Explore the Coast Grant are only eligible if their existing grant will be complete by **March 1, 202**6.

Eligible Project Locations
Projects must involve participants visiting the coast of California including the shores of bays. The Conservancy is interested in supporting programs that bring participants from throughout the state to the coast, including participants from inland areas. Please note that because of legal restrictions on the sources of funding used for the Explore the Coast program, only a small amount of funding is eligible for projects that visit the shores of San Francisco Bay.

Eligible Projects
Eligible projects include a wide range of programs and activities that help to bring people to the coast and/or enhance their experience at the coast. **At least 70% of participants served by the grant must be from ETC Priority Communities.** Competitive projects will provide participants with joyful and culturally relevant coastal experiences and reduce barriers for ETC Priority Communities. Other benefits such as hands-on ecosystem stewardship and environmental education are secondary benefits and are not necessary for a project to be eligible. (See Selection Criteria below for more information).

Examples of eligible projects:

- Connecting low-income youth to the coastline through a series of expeditions including hiking the Coastal Trail, visiting a marine Lab, kayaking in the sea, and birdwatching.

- Serving adults with developmental disabilities by implementing a weeklong summer day camp at the coast with activities such as yoga, surf lessons, and beach tours.

- Providing tribal youth and families with two summer camping trips in their ancestral lands to participate in fishing, tide pooling, edible kelp gathering, beach exploration, and cooking.

- Taking low-income children and their families from inland communities to an island for an overnight camping excursion.

- Taking students on a field trip where they participate in a community science project.

- Hosting a surf camp over several weeks for children that are victims of abuse. Providing a safe space for joyful experiences and mentorship. Provide leadership opportunities to teens that have graduated from the program.

Ineligible Projects

 Examples of ineligible projects include:

- Projects that comprise 25% or more of classroom-based programs and/or curriculum. For example, a 4-hour field trip that includes a maximum of 1 hour in the classroom and a minimum of 3 hours recreating at the coast would be eligible for Explore the Coast funding.

- Projects that solely involve beach clean-ups or volunteer ecosystem stewardship activities.

- Construction of new facilities. Please note, however, that the Conservancy has funded hundreds of projects to build new trails, trailheads, and other amenities (beach stairways, bathrooms, overlooks, etc.) through other funding programs. Please contact us directly if you are pursuing this type of project.

We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions regarding the eligibility of your project. Additional information on how to contact us for technical assistance is located below.

Application Submittal

The Explore the Coast grant application can be accessed by clicking the links below or clicking the links on our website.

IF USING WORD: Please open using the link here.

IF USING GOOGLE DOCS: Please open using the link here. When it is opened, go to file > "Make a copy". You can then freely edit and share the document in Google Docs. When you are ready to submit the application, go to File > Download > Microsoft Word (.docx). If you do not have a

Microsoft Office license, you can instead download the document as a PDF and send it to the email below.

Submit completed application as a word document to grants@scc.ca.gov by **Wednesday, January 31, 2024, by 11:59 pm.**

Applicants are welcome to attach supplemental documents, including up to 3 relevant photos (preferably as jpg), programs, and schedules with their application submission; these attachments should not exceed 10MB total. Relevant documents, including photos, should provide examples of the participant activities of the proposed project. Letters of support will be requested after the applicant has been notified that they are being recommended for funding to the Conservancy Board.

Please be aware that all documents submitted to the Conservancy become public records. The Conservancy will assume that submitted photos are permissible for use unless the applicant clarifies otherwise.

Contact Us for Technical Assistance

Prospective applicants are highly encouraged to discuss their projects with Conservancy staff before submitting their applications. We can help you make your application as competitive as possible. You can request a consultation, join our informational webinar, and/or join the technical assistance "Office Hour" sessions.

Contact Information
To request a project consultation call, please email explorethecoast@scc.ca.gov. Please provide a brief description of your project idea, the general geographic area your participants will come from, and the name, phone number, and email of the person to be contacted. We will respond within 3 business days. **Potential applicants can contact us any time before the application due date for technical assistance.**

Informational Webinar
The Conservancy will hold a webinar on December 4, 2023, from 1 - 2pm to walk through the Explore the Coast Grant Program and address questions regarding the application. Potential project applicants are encouraged to attend. The registration link for the webinar is here. The recorded webinar will be posted on our website afterward.

Technical Assistance "Office Hours"
The Conservancy will offer two one-hour Technical Assistance "Office Hour" sessions where Conservancy staff will answer more specific grant questions and provide guidance with application preparation to potential applicants via zoom meeting. Break-out rooms will be an option for one-on-one assistance.
- **January 11th** Technical Assistance registration link is here.
- **January 25th** Technical Assistance registration link is here.

Anticipated Grant Schedule

Grant Round 2024	
November 6, 2023	Release Explore the Coast Application and Instructions
December 4, 2023	ETC Informational Webinar, 1 - 2pm
January 11, 2024	Technical Assistance Office Hours #1, 4 - 5pm
January 25, 2024	Technical Assistance Office Hours #2, 12 - 1pm
January 31, 2024	Applications Due by 11:59 pm
February – June 2024	Conservancy Staff & ETC Advisory Board Review of Applications
Late June 2024	Selection of Projects to Recommend for Funding
Late 2024 or Early 2025	Grantees Start Work on their Projects

Application Review and Grant Award Process

Project Review
Conservancy staff will evaluate each application for how well it meets the Selection Criteria stated below. Applicants may be contacted to provide additional information during the review process. Conservancy staff may seek assistance in evaluating the applications from individuals and technical experts with pertinent expertise from other governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other entities. After an initial round of review, a subset of the applications will be reviewed by the Explore the Coast Advisory Board.

Selection Criteria
Projects will be evaluated against the following criteria:
1. The extent to which the project provides an enjoyable experience at the coast. (10 points)

2. The extent to which the project reduces economic, physical, or societal barriers for participants in accessing or enjoying the coast. (5 points)

3. The extent to which the project inspires ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive activities. (5 points)

4. The extent to which the project serves participants from groups that consistently face barriers getting to or enjoying the coast. (5 points)

5. The extent to which the applicant has a mindful strategy to outreach and recruit participants from targeted ETC Priority Communities. (5 points)

6. The extent to which the project is inclusive of all participants and considers differences in cultural and social backgrounds, past experiences, knowledge, comfort levels, etc. (5 points)

7. The extent to which the project serves participants with varying physical and/or cognitive capabilities. (5 points)

8. The extent to which the applicant builds and fosters connections with the community served through partnerships and leadership roles for the community. (10 points)

9. The extent to which the project has long-term positive impact on participants. (10 points)

10. The extent to which the project description is clear. (5 points)

11. The extent to which the budget is clear and reasonable given the impact on each participant. (5 points)

12. The extent to which the applicant has the capacity to carry out the project effectively and in a timely manner. (5 points)

Total possible points: 75

Final Selections
Applicants will be notified in late June 2024 if their project has been selected to bring to the Conservancy's Board for final approval. Applicants will be notified of the final decision after the Conservancy's September 5, 2024, Board Meeting.

Conservancy Board Approval
Projects recommended by staff for funding are subject to approval by the Coastal Conservancy Board at a public meeting. Conservancy staff will present the recommendations for Explore the Coast grants to the Conservancy Board on September 5, 2024. Applicants recommended by staff for funding are required to provide staff with all pertinent information in a timely manner to ensure Board consideration.

Project funding will not be available until a grant agreement between the Conservancy and the grantee has been executed and the grantee has met the grant pre-conditions. This generally takes at least six weeks after Board approval.

Helpful Resources

The following resources may be helpful for the preparation of your grant application.

Grant Writing Skills
In 2016, the Conservancy offered training to "Improve Your Grant Writing Skills." The recording of this webinar provides helpful guidance on how to write robust grant applications.

Conservancy Grant Terms
Please review the sample grant terms before completing your application. Please note the insurance requirements for ETC grants. If the requirements result in higher insurance premiums for the applicant, this cost can be included in the grant budget.

Project Scope and Budget

Please review the [Example Application Tables](#) to see example Participant Statistics tables, a Project Scope table, two Budget tables, and a Budget Description to help you to answer questions 3, 9, and 10. Use this [Allowable Costs document](#) to determine what project costs can be reimbursed using ETC grant funds.

Assistance with Incomplete Application Documents

The Conservancy does not automatically disqualify an application if it is missing a required element. In these cases, the Conservancy will request the missing information and provide a deadline for submittal. If multiple parts of the application are missing, it will be considered ineligible.

Feedback

If your project does not receive a grant award, you can reach out to Conservancy staff to get feedback based on the Project Selection Criteria once all decisions have been made. This feedback may be helpful to you in applying for funding in the future.

Photo Release

Photos and Records Submitted with Application

All information that you submit is a public record subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act. Please only submit photos, maps, or other materials with this application in which either (1) you own the copyright, trademark, or have some other ownership rights in the materials, or (2) you have permission to use and have the authority to grant the Conservancy the permission to use such materials for non-commercial purposes. When submitting photos, maps, or other materials, please confirm in writing via the grant application or some other method that you are granting the Conservancy the unlimited right to use such materials for non-commercial purposes. Please indicate if photos, maps, or other material submitted with this application require crediting when reused by the Conservancy - you should indicate this on each document.

If you provide any photographs of individuals to the Conservancy, you should ensure that the individuals (or the guardians of individuals under the age of 18) were informed that photographs may be taken and used for any non-commercial purpose.

Map of Explore the Coast Regions

Use this map to determine which region(s) your project will serve:

Regions

![red]	1 - North Coast
![orange]	2 - Far North
![light orange]	3 - Bay Area
![tan]	4 - Sacramento Valley & Sierras
![yellow green]	5 - Central Coast
![green]	6 - San Joaquin Valley
![teal]	7 - South Coast
![blue]	8 - Inland Southern California & Deserts