



CALIFORNIA
**OCEAN
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COUNCIL**



OPC SB 1 Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program Solicitation

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I. Introduction

A. Essential Background and Information

Sea-level rise in California is already impacting public health and safety, critical infrastructure, habitat and biodiversity, and public access. With the pace, frequency, and scale of impacts projected to increase through the end of the century and beyond, sea-level rise (SLR) poses an urgent climate threat that requires action now. In response to this threat, [Senate Bill 1 \(Atkins, 2021\)](#), the Sea Level Rise Mitigation and Adaptation Act, was signed into law in 2021. Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) directs the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to administer grants to local and regional governments to plan for SLR and implement adaptation projects to build resilience along the coast and shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

While much SLR planning and adaptation work has been conducted along California's coast over the past decade, it is currently understood that vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, and coastal resilience projects are not consistent in their standards or criteria across jurisdictions. In recognition of these gaps, and the urgency of preparing for SLR, [Senate Bill 272 \(Laird, 2023\)](#) was signed into law in 2023. SB 272 requires that all coastal local governments develop SLR plans and prioritizes local governments with approved SLR plans for SLR adaptation funding. With a deadline of January 1, 2034, these plans must be integrated into local coastal programs (LCPs) or San Francisco Bay shoreline resiliency plans. SB 272 also requires OPC, in coordination with the California SLR State and Regional Support Collaborative (SLR Collaborative), to establish guidelines for the preparation of SLR plans.

In 2022 and 2023, OPC received \$37.5 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) and \$54.5 million in General Funds respectively to support the implementation of SB 1, with an additional \$10 million anticipated in the 2024-2025 budget. Ultimately, OPC's SB 1 SLR Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) aims to provide funding for coastal communities to develop consistent SLR adaptation plans and projects to build resilience to SLR along the entire coast of California and San Francisco Bay. The SB 1 Grant Program is designed to ensure all California coastal communities are preparing for SLR through a consistent and equitable process utilizing a set of SLR Adaptation Criteria (SLR Criteria).

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to establish a process for selecting qualified grantees with SB 1 projects that intend to meet the SLR Criteria within their project type, establish minimum qualifications for Applicants, and explain usage and applicability of the SLR Criteria. The SB 1 Grant Program is part of [California Climate Investments](#), a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.

For the purposes of the RFP, the following definitions shall apply. "Applicant" shall be defined as those entities that intend to submit a response to this RFP and includes the lead entity and any partners and subcontractors that may be included in the proposal. "Project" shall be defined as the comprehensive undertaking detailed in the proposal, encompassing all planned activities, deliverables, and

collaborative efforts set forth by the Applicant, and may encompass SLR planning proposals and/or implementation project proposals, illustrating its broad applicability to both planning and implementation endeavors. “Grantee” shall be defined as the entity ultimately selected to receive funds to carry out a SLR adaptation planning or implementation project.

B. Solicitation Overview

Funding Information

Two funding tracks will be available for Applicants, depending on which phase of SLR adaptation planning is appropriate for the Applicant. Phases 1-4 reference the phases provided in the SLR Criteria.

Track One proposals (Projects in the Pre-planning, Data Collection, and Planning Phases) will be accepted through a rolling, quarterly, non-competitive process, provided the proposals satisfy the SLR Criteria and requirements of this solicitation. Track Two proposals (Projects in the Implementation Project Phase) will be accepted through a competitive process starting in mid-late 2024, subject to availability of funding.

Track 1: SLR Adaptation Planning (Phase 1-3)

- Funding Range: \$200,000 - \$1,500,000
- Maximum project timeline: 2 years
- Proposals accepted through a rolling, quarterly, non-competitive process

Track 2: SLR Implementation Projects (Phase 4)

- Funding Range: \$1,500,000 - \$10,000,000
- Maximum project timeline: 3 years
- Proposals accepted through a competitive process starting in mid-late 2024

Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations

To ensure adequate and equitable funding for SLR adaptation plans and projects that benefit tribal and environmental justice (EJ) communities,¹ no less than 15% of total available funds (\$12,960,000) are set aside to prioritize projects that include tribes and EJ communities. A minimum of \$4,320,000 will support proposals by federally recognized tribes or proposals co-created between local governments and California Native American tribes. This set-aside amount will be revisited and potentially increased as the SB 1 program evolves.

Solicitation Schedule

The following schedule is for Track 1 Projects. An additional schedule will be provided for Track 2 projects in mid-late 2024.

Key Action	Date (and Time)
RFP Available to Prospective Applicants	Friday, December 15, 2023
RFP Webinar	Thursday, Jan 25, 2024 at 10:00 AM PT
RFP Office Hour	Friday, Feb 16, 2024 at 1:00 PM PT
Deadline for Proposal Receipt by OPC	10 weeks prior to each OPC Meeting
Evaluation of Proposals	5-10 weeks prior to each OPC Meeting
Selection of Projects	5 weeks prior to each OPC Meeting
Grantee and OPC staff build Grant work plan	1-3 months following OPC Meeting
Approximate Grant Start	2-4 months following OPC Meeting

1 Environmental Justice Communities, defined by the [OPC Equity Plan](#), are communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices and social inequities, that are environmentally- and economically-stressed and experience environmental health inequities which contribute to persistent environmental health disparities. No single tool is currently capable of identifying all EJ communities. Applicants are encouraged to use a combination of definitions below to identify their unique EJ communities:

- Rural communities of 50,000 or less and outside of urbanized areas
- California Native American tribes, including federally recognized Native American tribes and non-federally recognized Native American tribes
- Regionally/locally defined underserved communities
- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) and/or Severely Disadvantaged Communities, as identified with the Parks Community FactFinder Map
- At or below 80% Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016)
- At or above 75% CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0
- At or below 25% California Healthy Places Index (HPI)

II. Solicitation Priorities

A. SB 1 SLR Adaptation Planning Grant Program Goals

The overall goal of the SB 1 SLR Adaptation Planning Grant Program is to support the implementation of SB 1 for local, regional, and tribal governments, and specifically to support SLR adaptation planning for local governments. The SB 1 Grant Program intends to fund SLR adaptation planning and projects along the entire geographic coast of all of California and San Francisco Bay, as stated in [OPC's Strategic Plan](#), Targets 1.1.1 and 1.1.5, and as directed by section 30973(a) of SB 1 (Atkins, 2021).

OPC intends for the SB 1 Grant Program to ensure the entire coast of California, including San Francisco Bay, is preparing for SLR through a consistent and equitable process. To ensure adaptation planning efforts across jurisdictions are consistent, standardized, and equitable, OPC staff, alongside the California Sea-Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative (SLR Collaborative), have developed specific SLR Adaptation Criteria. This SLR Criteria must be followed when developing and executing projects under the SB 1 Grant Program, as feasible for each locality.

A complementary SB 1 Technical Assistance (TA) Program will provide application assistance to local, regional, and tribal governments that represent EJ communities applying for SLR adaptation planning funding through the SB 1 Grant Program. TA will be tailored based on the applicants' needs, including but not limited to capacity building and grant writing support. The TA Program is expected to launch in Quarter 1 of 2024. The most up-to-date information on the SB 1 TA Program, including information on how to apply for TA (once available), can be found on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

B. Priority Project Types

The SB 1 Grant Program aims to provide funding for SLR adaptation planning to help prepare communities for the impacts of climate change. While many jurisdictions have advanced planning already underway or complete, many others have yet to begin comprehensive planning or assessments. OPC aims to address this need by offering funding for a range of SLR planning activities. These fall into the following categories as reflected in the SLR Criteria:

Track 1: SLR Adaptation Planning

Phase 1: Pre-planning (explore, define, assess)

- Community Visioning
- Vulnerability Assessment

Phase 2: Data Collection

- Data/Information Gathering

Phase 3: Planning (define adaptation frameworks and strategies)

- SLR Adaptation Plan
- SF Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan
- Sector-Specific Adaptation Plan

Track 2: SLR Implementation Projects

Phase 4: Project Implementation (implement, innovate, assess, adjust)

- Nature-based and Green-Grey Hybrid² Adaptation Projects/Feasibility Study/Design Plans

Proposals that contain an Adaptation Plan as a final deliverable, either as a multi-phase project (Pre-planning, Data Collection, and Planning), or a Planning project alone, are encouraged.

C. SLR Adaptation Criteria

The SB 1 Grant program aims to support localized planning efforts, while ensuring that local plans are consistent and comprehensive. Utilizing a set of criteria to establish best practices and minimum requirements for all SLR adaptation plans is identified as a key recommendation in [Planning for Sea Level Rise on California's Coast: Status, Trends, and Recommendations](#) (Lester, 2023). The [SLR Criteria](#) is a standardized set of minimum standards for each project type. These criteria ensure that all pre-planning, planning, and implementation projects that address SLR vulnerability and impacts include the same components, ensure neighboring communities are planning for SLR at the same level and caliber, and promise smart investments throughout California.

The SB 1 Grant Program is also intended to support local and regional governments at any stage of the SLR adaptation planning process and ensure that planning efforts are consistent with the Coastal Act for the outer coast, the McAteer-Petris Act for the Bay Shoreline, and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act for the Suisun Marsh Shoreline. Principle #4 in [OPC's Principles for Aligned State Action](#) further states this commitment: Support Local Leadership and Address Local Conditions. To advance the intention and commitment of this program, Applicants are allowed to offer sound justification for why

² Green-Grey Hybrid SLR Adaptation Projects are those that incorporate natural coastal ecosystems with grey infrastructure to combine the values of wave attenuation and flood control of natural ecosystems with the benefits of engineered structures. The result is a mixed hybrid ecosystem in which the conservation and restoration of natural coastal ecosystems can extend the lifespan of gray infrastructure, while also supporting fisheries, regulating water quality, and sequestering carbon.

a specific criterion does not apply to their project and will therefore not be included in the project outcome.

The SLR Criteria may be updated as new science and best practices are determined. The most updated version of the SLR Criteria will be made available on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

III. Proposal Submission Requirements and Information

This section contains instructions for the submission of your proposal. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to carefully read and follow all proposal requirements within this RFP. Compliance with the RFP instructions is mandatory for your proposal to be considered for award. Failure to comply with the RFP instructions may cause your proposal to be deemed non-compliant and non-responsive, thus ineligible for the award.

A. Grant Eligibility

Applicants that are eligible to apply for this SB 1 Grant Program opportunity consist of:

- Local governments
- Regional governments
- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Organizations or consultants who apply on a government's behalf may be considered, however, explicit support and collaboration between the organization and government must be provided within the application (via Letter of Support)

Please be aware that OPC cannot enter into a grant agreement without governing board approval or other verification that the Applicant can accept funding from the state. Applicants will be required to submit this verification before grant execution.

B. Technical Assistance

A complementary SB 1 Technical Assistance (TA) Program is in the process of being established to provide application assistance to local, regional, and tribal governments that represent EJ communities applying for SLR adaptation planning funding through the SB 1 Grant Program. TA will be tailored based on the applicants' needs, including but not limited to capacity building and grant writing support. The TA Program is expected to launch in Quarter 1 of 2024. The most up-to-date information on the SB 1 TA Program, including information on how to apply for TA (once available), can be found on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

C. Questions Regarding RFP Requirements

All questions and/or concerns to the RFP requirements must be directed to: OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov.

Questions received and answers will be added to an SB 1 Grant Program Fact Sheet available on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

D. Solicitation Webinar and Proposal Office Hours

OPC will hold an informational webinar on Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The webinar will discuss the solicitation process and receive questions from prospective Applicants. If you want to attend the webinar, please register using [the webinar Zoom link](#). The Informational Webinar will be recorded and posted on the SB 1 Funding webpage for future reference.

OPC staff will also be available for an “office hour” in webinar format to answer questions on Friday, February 16, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. If you want to attend the office hour, please register using [the office hour Zoom link](#).

For further questions, please contact: OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov.

E. General Proposal Requirements

1. Proposals must provide straightforward and concise descriptions of the Applicant’s and any subcontractors’ ability to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. The proposal must be complete and accurate. Omissions, inaccuracies, or misstatements will be sufficient cause for rejection of a proposal.
2. Proposals must be submitted for the performance of all services described herein. Any deviation from the work specifications contained in this RFP, *Section III, Proposal Submission Requirements and Information*, may cause a proposal to be rejected.

F. Submission of Proposals

1. Proposals must be submitted electronically only to: OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov using the subject: [Main Applicant Name]-Track 1 Project-Proposal
2. While Track 1 proposals are accepted on a rolling, quarterly basis, proposals must be submitted to, and received by OPC, by the deadline identified in the Solicitation Schedule in order to be considered for funding and brought to the corresponding Quarter’s Council meeting. Proposals received after the due date will be considered in the next quarter.
3. Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if it meets the administrative requirements. Failure to meet the administrative requirements for the RFP may be cause for rejection of the proposal for lack of responsibility on behalf of the Applicant and/or lack of responsiveness on behalf of the proposal.

4. OPC reserves the right to reject proposals for failure to achieve proposal completeness (Track 1) or due to competitive criteria (Track 2). All projects are subject to funding availability.

G. Proposal Requirements

Track 1 Proposals

Applicants should completely fill out the [SB 1 Track 1 Proposal Template and Instructions \(MS Word .docx\)](#) for projects in the following categories: Community Visioning, Vulnerability Assessments, Data/Information Gathering, SLR Adaptation Plan, and Bay Shoreline Adaptation Plan. The final version of the proposal should be attached as **one PDF** and submitted to OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov, as an email entitled “[Main Applicant Name]-Track 1 Project-Proposal” that includes the following:

- Proposal Cover Page (using the Template)
- Proposal Application (using the Template)
- Budget (using the Template)
- Project Team Resumes/CVs
- Letter of Alignment³ from California Coastal Commission (CCC) or Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) for applications along the outer coast or San Francisco Bay Shoreline, respectively
- Project Letters
- Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire (required for nonprofit organizations only)

Applicants submitting proposals for Sector Specific Adaptation Plans should first complete a Letter of Intent (LOI). Interested parties should completely fill out the [Sector Specific Letter of Intent \(MS Word .docx\)](#).

³ Applicants are encouraged to initiate contact with CCC or BCDC early in the scoping and proposal drafting process to allow ample time for review and the provision of the required Letter of Alignment. It is important to note that CCC or BCDC may offer feedback or require changes to the project to ensure alignment. By engaging with CCC or BCDC early on, applicants can mitigate the risk of substantial revisions in the later stages of the proposal.

For applicants requesting a Letter of Alignment from CCC, applicants should email statewideplanning@coastal.ca.gov using the subject line: SB 1 Letter of Alignment Request-[Main Applicant Name].

For applicants requesting a Letter of Alignment from BCDC, applicants should email reception@bcdc.ca.gov using the subject line: SB 1 Letter of Alignment Request-[Main Applicant Name].

The final version of the LOI should be attached as **one PDF** and submitted to OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov, as an email entitled “[Main Applicant Name]-Sector Specific LOI.” OPC will review the Letter of Intent and determine the next course of action, which may be a consultation or full proposal.

Track 2 Proposals & Urgent Phase 4 Projects

Starting in mid-late 2024, Track Two proposals (Implementation Project Phase) will be accepted through a competitive process. Information on how to submit a Track 2 Proposal will be made available at that time.

However, OPC recognizes the importance of funding timely implementation projects. Therefore, during the period between the release of this Solicitation and the acceptance of Track 2 proposals, the following mechanism has been put in place:

Urgent projects that address near-term SLR threats, meet Phase 4 SLR Criteria requirements, and have completed necessary planning work may submit a request for consultation with OPC staff. Interested parties should completely fill out the [Track 2 Letter of Intent \(MS Word .docx\)](#). The final version of the LOI should be attached as **one PDF** and submitted to OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov, as an email entitled “[Main Applicant Name]-Track 2 Project-LOI.” OPC will review the Letter of Intent and determine whether the project warrants prioritization of funding. If so, a consultation between the Applicant and OPC will be scheduled.

This mechanism is designed to address urgently needed projects that have undergone SLR Planning processes. OPC exercises complete discretion in selecting urgent projects. The primary process for allocating funds for Implementation Projects will be via Track 2 once it becomes available. This mechanism operates strictly on a case-by-case exceptional basis.

IV. Evaluation, Selection, and Award – Track 1

A. Administrative Evaluation (Pass/Fail)

The following processes apply to Track 1 Proposals only. Information on the Evaluation, Selection, and Award of Track 2 Proposals will be released in mid-late 2024.

During the Administrative Evaluation, OPC staff will review each proposal to check for completeness of all required information and to ensure that the Applicant meets the Grant Eligibility requirements. Only proposals that meet all Eligibility requirements will move forward to subsequent evaluation. During this Administrative Evaluation, if an item is unclear or needs further clarification, Applicants may be requested to provide additional clarification and/or documentation.

B. Technical Evaluation

Applications for the SB 1 Grant Program will be evaluated for their ability to complete the proposed work. Projects selected for funding will be those that sufficiently meet the SLR Criteria, OPC's program priorities, and evaluation criteria below.

Staff will evaluate grant applications against the following selection criteria. The criteria will be considered as a whole, not weighted. In this sense, if a project shows greater need or value in certain areas, but is missing justification for other required areas, OPC staff will use discretion to determine if the project is still eligible to receive funding.

Alignment with OPC's Strategic Plan and SLR Adaptation Criteria

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed projects align with [OPC's Strategic Plan](#) and the specific priorities outlined in the SB 1 Solicitation. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation should advance implementation of OPC's Strategic Plan. Projects should identify and demonstrate quantitative progress in implementing Strategic Plan targets.

Applicants must also address the minimum criteria listed in the SLR Criteria. If certain criteria do not apply to an Applicant, whether due to a unique local condition or because it has already been accomplished by a previous planning effort, an explanation should be provided in the proposal. OPC will rely on these explanations to determine if the omission of a criterium is justified, and if the project is therefore still eligible for funding.

Use of Best Available Science

For all projects, the use of the best available science is imperative. Applicants must prioritize the integration of the latest scientific research and knowledge into their proposed projects, including the use of the [2024 State SLR Guidance](#). Projects should demonstrate use of the SLR Guidance when crafting their projects, particularly for projects that include a Vulnerability Assessment.

Relative Need for SLR Planning

The relative need for the proposal must be provided in terms of SLR planning and coastal or shoreline resilience and to meet the goals of SB 1 for statewide coastal adaptation planning. Relative need will be assessed based on the following concepts:

- Proposals must adequately demonstrate the vulnerability of the community to the impacts of SLR and the urgent need for SLR planning within the region, as required within the SB 1 language. This may be demonstrated by showing SLR projection or flooding maps, sharing statistics or reports about recent climate driven coastal impacts, or showing past or anticipated beach erosion or damage to public access. Urgent proposals are those that address pressing needs that occur with high frequency or pose safety risks.

- Additionally, Applicants are asked to describe community readiness and buy-in to accomplish the proposal. Applicants must discuss any SLR planning work that has already been completed, or is currently underway at the local level, and how this grant is needed to substantially further the effort. Finally, Applicants should also discuss the political willingness and momentum for completing the proposed pre-planning or planning project.

Likelihood of Success/Effectiveness

The success of OPC's SB 1 Grant Program is measured by its contributions to SLR planning along the California coast and San Francisco Bay. Grant proposals will be evaluated based on their likelihood of success, including the practicality, feasibility, and effectiveness of the proposed activities and the likelihood of the proposal eventually achieving a local or regional SLR Adaptation Plan. Proposals should address the need for coordination with the public and either the Coastal Commission or BCDC (depending on the location of the plan or project). **A Letter of Alignment from either the Coastal Commission or BCDC is required to be submitted with the proposal.** The proposal should also outline practical benchmarks and timelines for the successful completion of the plan or project, including the development and review of all final deliverables. Implementation of final deliverables in terms of next steps should also be presented. The proposal's alignment with the Coastal Act for outer coast, the McAteer-Petris Act for the San Francisco Bay Shoreline, the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act for Suisun Marsh shoreline, and the Public Trust Doctrine, will also be considered.

Letters of Support or resolutions of intent and endorsement for the proposed work from the jurisdiction, California Native American tribes, and community organizations will also support this criterion.

Equity and Environmental Justice

Grant proposals should explicitly address and consider environmental justice as defined in California Government Code Section 65040.12(e) (as updated in 2020): "The fair treatment and meaningful engagement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." Proposals and proposal deliverables should take into account the unique challenges faced by disadvantaged communities, indigenous communities, communities of color, and marginalized communities, particularly in relation to SLR issues. Addressing these disparities and fostering equitable access to ocean resources is a priority of the state.

Applicants should integrate principles from the following Equity and Environmental Justice policies, as applicable for the proposal jurisdiction:

- [California Coastal Commission – Environmental Justice Policy](#)
- [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission \(BCDC\) - Environmental Justice](#)

Tribal Consultation and Partnership

Consistent with and in furtherance of Executive Orders B-10-11 and N-15-19, SLR adaption planning and project Applicants should conduct meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes. In addition to early and meaningful consultation, SLR adaption plans and projects co-created and developed in partnership *with* California Native American tribes are highly encouraged.

A letter or resolution, signed by the chairperson of the tribe(s), confirming a California Native American tribe is actively partnering with and supporting the proposal must be included in application materials for a proposal to be considered to qualify for the \$4,320,000 set aside (see [Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations](#) section above).

All projects and planning documents must protect the confidentiality of tribal data and information concerning specific identify, location, character, and use of those places, features, and objects. All Applicants that partner with California Native American tribes will be required to outline measures to protect confidentiality of tribal data or knowledge prior to the disbursement of grant funds.

Applicants interested in co-creating proposals with California Native American tribes are encouraged to contact the SB 1 TA Program, as this process may qualify the Applicant for receiving technical assistance. The [SB 1 Funding webpage](#) has the most up-to-date information regarding the SB 1 TA Program.

Proposal Integration/Leverage/Matching Funds

OPC encourages, but does not require, the integration of grant-funded projects with other relevant planning efforts. Applicants are encouraged to highlight any ongoing or planned projects that complement the proposal including those supported by past OPC grant rounds, the Coastal Commission, Coastal Conservancy, Caltrans, or the Strategic Growth Council. Staff will consider the ability to integrate and leverage additional program funds for the betterment of SLR planning, and Applicants should describe how the proposal aligns with and supports broader coastal and shoreline resilience goals.

V. Solicitation Updates and Contacts

This solicitation is subject to periodic updates. As circumstances evolve or additional information becomes available, revisions may be necessary. A new version will be provided on our [SB 1 Funding webpage](#), accompanied by the respective date of update. Please check the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#) regularly, join our [email list](#), and follow our social media for the most recent updates on this solicitation process.



Contact Information

If you have further questions about this solicitation and application process, please contact:

Megan Williams, Coastal Adaptation Program Manager

Ella McDougall, Climate Change Program Manager

Email: OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov