



CALIFORNIA
**OCEAN
PROTECTION
COUNCIL**

General Grant Guidelines

Ocean Protection Council

Proposed Final Grant Guidelines on June 10, 2025

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Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of these General Grant Guidelines (Guidelines) is to establish the process, procedures, and general requirements through which the [California Ocean Protection Council](#) (OPC) administers its allocated funds through competitive and non-competitive (discretionary) grants. These Guidelines are intended to provide a clear and streamlined framework for all OPC-administered funding programs, creating consistency for applicants while supporting projects that advance OPC’s mission and strategic priorities.

These Guidelines apply broadly across multiple funding sources and are designed to reduce administrative burden, support equitable access to funding, and ensure efficient use of public resources. Individual grant solicitations will identify any program-specific criteria, priorities, or additional requirements that supplement these Guidelines.

OPC may revise these Guidelines periodically to respond to new statutory requirements, funding sources, or lessons learned from implementation. The most current version of the Guidelines will be posted on OPC’s website.

1.2 Background

OPC was established in 2004 through the [California Ocean Protection Act](#) (COPA) and operates under the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). OPC’s mission is to protect California’s coast and ocean by advancing innovative, science-based policy and management, making strategic investments, and catalyzing action through partnerships and collaboration. These efforts deliver significant benefits to the state while providing a global model for ecosystem-based protection and conservation. OPC is charged with safeguarding the health and resilience of coastal and ocean ecosystems for the benefit of all Californians.

1.3 Goals and Priorities

In 2020, OPC adopted its [Strategic Plan to Protect California’s Coast and Ocean](#) (Strategic Plan), which outlined OPC’s goals and priorities through 2025. OPC is currently developing its Strategic Plan for 2026–2030, which will provide an ambitious, science-based roadmap for protecting California’s coast and ocean through the end of this decade. All projects funded through OPC’s grant programs must demonstrate alignment with OPC’s mission and strategic goals. OPC prioritizes projects that deliver cross-cutting, multi-benefit outcomes and advance OPC’s work to build coastal resilience, conserve biodiversity, enable a sustainable blue economy and provide direct benefits to California Native American tribes and underserved communities. Projects should reflect one or more of the following priority benefits:

- Restore marine and coastal ecosystems, including water quality
- Increase climate resilience and accelerate nature-based climate solutions for communities and ecosystems, including addressing sea level rise and ocean acidification impacts
- Advance community benefits and stewardship in coastal policy, research, and funding
- Support tribal co-management and tribally-led stewardship, including land return of coastal lands
- Promote sustainable fisheries and local stewardship
- Expand equitable access and stewardship opportunities to the coast and ocean
- Support California's 30x30 initiative to conserve 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by 2030 and broader biodiversity goals
- Support economic and workforce development in ocean and coastal conservation

Projects are also encouraged to complement broader state climate and conservation initiatives and should align with any additional guidance provided in individual grant solicitations.

As OPC finalizes its Strategic Plan for 2026-2030, future updates to these Guidelines may further refine funding priorities. Applicants should always refer to the most current Strategic Plan and applicable solicitations for direction.

Maximizing Community Benefits

OPC prioritizes projects that deliver meaningful and direct benefits to communities, particularly those most burdened by environmental, socioeconomic, and health challenges. This includes communities such as state-defined Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) and Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), California Native American tribes, vulnerable communities, and other groups that have historically had limited access to decision-making processes.

Funded projects should aim to:

- Prioritize community needs by supporting community-led and tribally-led initiatives throughout project design, implementation, and outcomes
- Build community capacity and provide technical assistance
- Expand workforce development and training opportunities
- Improve equitable access to coastal and ocean resources

Applicants should clearly demonstrate how their projects will deliver direct and meaningful benefits to communities. Project benefits should be responsive to community-identified needs, result in tangible and measurable improvements, and be intentionally embedded throughout the project's design and implementation. Benefits should be substantial and not incidental or speculative.

Individual grant solicitations may include specific evaluation criteria or additional requirements related to community benefits to help applicants further demonstrate community and tribal benefits.

Tribal Engagement and Community-Driven Approaches

In alignment with OPC's [Equity Plan](#) and [Tribal Engagement Strategy](#), OPC seeks to fund projects that promote authentic collaboration, shared decision-making, and community-driven outcomes. Projects are encouraged to:

- Integrate community-informed needs and priorities
- Foster inclusive engagement and participation opportunities across sectors
- Expand access through multilingual and culturally appropriate outreach and engagement
- Support youth engagement, leadership development, and workforce pathways
- Center Traditional Knowledges (TK) and tribal expertise, when appropriate

Partnership with California Native American Tribes

Consistent with OPC's Tribal Engagement Strategy and Executive Orders [B-10-11](#) and [N-15-19](#), applicants are strongly encouraged to conduct early and meaningful outreach and/or consultation with California Native American tribes, especially where projects may affect tribal lands, resources, or communities. Projects that are co-developed with tribes, demonstrate active tribal partnership, and support tribal-led initiatives are especially encouraged.

Applicants should review OPC's [Tribal Engagement Strategy](#) for additional best practices and are advised to refer to individual grant solicitations for any program-specific tribal engagement requirements.

1.4 Eligible Grant Applicants

As established in Chapter 4 of COPA, OPC can award funds to public agencies (including local, state, and federal), public or private universities, nonprofit organizations (including community-based organizations), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private entities, federally recognized and

non-federally recognized California Native American tribes¹, and tribally-led entities located in California. Nonprofit organizations must be 501(c)(3) as verified by the Internal Revenue Service.

Individual solicitations will define applicant eligibility for specific grants and may outline additional eligibility or partnership requirements based on grant program goals or funding sources.

1 Federally recognized tribes must provide evidence of inclusion in the annually published federal register from the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to 25 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 83, Section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994. Non-federally recognized tribes must apply through a qualified 501(c)(3) organization and provide an IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter or printout from the IRS tax-exempt organization search tool on the official IRS website, see <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos>.

Section 2. Funding Sources

Applicants interested in current funding opportunities should visit OPC's [Funding Opportunities webpage](#) for the latest information about available grants and application instructions.

OPC receives funding from a variety of sources, briefly described below. Applicants should refer to individual grant program webpages and grant solicitations for specific requirements, priorities, eligibility criteria, and application materials tied to each funding source.

In some cases, specific funding sources, such as Proposition 68, have additional program-specific guidelines that remain in effect and supplement these General Guidelines.

2.1 Proposition 4 – Climate Bond

[Public Resources Code section 90000 et seq. -- Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024]

Proposition 4 allocated \$135 million to OPC for grants to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, through both new and existing OPC programs. Preference shall be given to projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems.

Additionally, Proposition 4 allocated \$75 million to OPC to support the implementation of the [California Sea Level Rise Mitigation and Adaptation Act of 2021](#) through the existing Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program).

Proposition 4 also commits significant funding to ensure that grant awards go towards vulnerable populations or disadvantaged communities. Specifically, the bond requires at least 40% of the total allocated funds to provide meaningful and direct benefits to these groups, with at least 10% of that funding designated for severely disadvantaged communities.

2.2 Proposition 68

[Public Resources Code (PRC) section 80000 et seq. – California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018]

Proposition 68 allocated funding to OPC in Chapters 9 and 10 of the bond measure.

- Chapter 9 ("Ocean, Bay, and Coastal Protection") allocated \$35 million to OPC for grants consistent with COPA (Section 356650). These funds can be awarded through competitive or discretionary (non-competitive) grant programs for projects that conserve, protect, and

restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, with an emphasis on the state's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and sustainable fisheries.

- Chapter 10 ("Climate Preparedness, Habitat Resiliency, Resource Enhancement, and Innovation") allocated \$21 million to OPC for a competitive grant program focused on assisting coastal communities, including those reliant on commercial fisheries, with adaptation to climate change. Climate adaptation projects may address ocean acidification, sea level rise, or habitat restoration and protection

Projects funded through Proposition 68 must comply with the OPC [Proposition 68 Grant Guidelines](#) (2024), which supplement these General Grant Guidelines. Applicants should refer to the [Proposition 68 webpage](#) for additional information, including program-specific requirements, past funding opportunities, and any future solicitations.

2.3 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) is the funding source for [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.

The Budget Act of 2024 (Assembly Bill 107, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2024) appropriated \$27.5 million to OPC from GGRF for grants or expenditures supporting resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. Additionally, the Budget Act of 2024 (Assembly Bill 157) further authorized certain expenditures from GGRF to improve climate change adaptation and resiliency, or to enhance environmental quality and public health for disadvantaged communities or low-income households or communities.

More information, including any competitive solicitations when available, can be found on OPC's [GGRF webpage](#).

Senate Bill 1 Grant Program

The Budget Act of 2022 (Assembly Bill 179, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2022) appropriated \$37.5 million to OPC from GGRF to support the implementation of the [California Sea Level Rise Mitigation and Adaptation Act of 2021](#) (Senate Bill 1, Atkins, 2021). OPC's Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program (SB 1 Grant Program) provides funding for coastal communities to develop consistent sea level rise adaptation plans and projects to build resilience to sea level rise along the entire coast of California and San Francisco Bay.

Applicants should refer to the [SB 1 Grant Program webpage](#) for additional information, including program requirements, technical assistance opportunities, and the [SB 1 Grant Program Solicitation](#), which contains additional program-specific requirements related to this funding source.

2.4 General Fund

In certain years, the California state budget has allocated General Funds directly to OPC to support specific legislated or discretionary initiatives related to ocean and coastal protection. Examples of General Fund allocations include:

- 2018: \$7.5 million was allocated to OPC to address whale and sea turtle entanglement in fishing gear.
- 2022: The Budget Act of 2022 allocated \$50 million for coastal resilience projects that protect and restore ocean and coastal ecosystems, and \$2 million for research on offshore wind impacts to ecosystems, fisheries, and cultural resources.

More information, including program goals and any competitive solicitations when available, can be found on OPC's [General Fund webpage](#).

2.5 Environmental License Plate Funds

In 2018, OPC received a one-time appropriation of \$15 million from the Environmental License Plate Funds (ELPF) to support climate resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore California's coastal and ocean ecosystems.

Applicants should refer to individual solicitations for any specific requirements associated with ELPF-funded projects.

2.6 Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Funds

Consistent with the State Water Resources Control Board's Once-Through Cooling (OTC) Policy, OPC has received \$5.4 million in OTC Interim Mitigation Funds annually to support projects that increase marine life associated with MPAs. Eligible projects may include restoration, outreach, education, research, and monitoring.

More information, including updates to program goals and funding amounts, and any competitive solicitations when available, can be found on the [Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Program webpage](#).

2.7 Other Funds

Over the last several years, the annual state budget has allocated \$200,000 directly to OPC for the Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP). RASGAP was [legislatively mandated](#) to help fund scientific research that supports coastal and ocean management and policy priorities and decision-making. More information, including updates to program goals and funding opportunities (when available), can be found on the [RASGAP webpage](#).

Section 3. Project Development

OPC's approach to project development is grounded in its Strategic Plan and other foundational policy frameworks that guide OPC's mission. Projects funded by OPC must align with the priorities identified in the current Strategic Plan and demonstrate clear, meaningful contributions to ocean and coastal protection and restoration, climate resilience, equity, and biodiversity.

Individual grant solicitations will define specific project types, eligibility requirements, and funding priorities based on available funding sources, legislative intent, and program goals. Applicants must carefully review the solicitation to ensure their proposed project meets all stated criteria and requirements.

3.1 Guiding Principles

All proposed projects should:

- Advance the goals and objectives of OPC's Strategic Plan
- Align with applicable OPC key policy documents and broader state climate and conservation policies and initiatives

Individual solicitations will outline which key policies apply to a given funding opportunity.

3.2 Project Types

OPC funds a wide range of project types across programs, including, but not limited to:

- Research and data collection
- Climate adaptation and sea level rise planning
- Ecosystem restoration and enhancement
- Marine biodiversity conservation
- Community-driven coastal resilience efforts, including nature-based infrastructure or public access improvements
- Technical assistance and capacity building

For examples of previously funded projects, refer to OPC's [past Staff Recommendations and Council Meeting Materials](#) or individual grant solicitations and [funding program webpages](#).

3.3 Project Eligibility, Timing, and Budget

Eligibility criteria, funding timelines, and proposal budget requirements vary by funding source and will be defined in each individual solicitation.

OPC does not accept unsolicited project proposals. All funding requests must be submitted through formal solicitation processes or developed collaboratively through programmatic initiatives led by OPC.

3.4 Ineligible Projects

The following list provides examples of projects that will not be funded nor considered eligible under OPC funding programs. This is not a comprehensive list.

- Projects that are inconsistent with the goals and purposes of OPC and its obligation to be a steward of the environment
- Projects that are not consistent with OPC's priorities
- Projects that are not consistent with or do not directly address specific grant solicitation priorities
- Projects that are incompatible with the specific environment or location in which they are proposed to be situated
- Projects requesting funding to implement activities required as legal mitigation for development projects or other obligations, unless the proposed work provides substantial public and ecosystem benefits beyond what is required for compliance
- Projects that do not inform or promote improved state management or protection of coastal and ocean resources or infrastructure that impacts the management of coastal and ocean resources

Section 4. Application Submission and Evaluation

The application processes and evaluation criteria vary across OPC's grant programs and are defined in each program's solicitation.

Applicants should consult the relevant solicitation for detailed instructions regarding:

- Proposal templates (e.g., Letter of Intent (LOI) or full proposal) and required attachments
- Submission method and deadline
- Whether a Letter of Intent (LOI) is required
- Evaluation criteria and review process
- Additional requirements for certain applicants (e.g., a non-profit questionnaire)

4.1 General Considerations

Across most grant programs, OPC considers the following when evaluating proposals:

- Alignment with OPC's Strategic Plan and solicitation-specific priorities
- Contributions to maximize community benefits and stewardship
- Use of best available science
- Project readiness and team capacity
- Long-term outcomes and public benefit

Evaluation processes may include:

- Internal OPC staff review
- External panel or technical expert review
- Partner state agency review (e.g., State Coastal Conservancy, California Coastal Commission, California State Parks, etc.)

4.2 Staff Recommendations and Council Approval

Following evaluation, OPC staff will recommend eligible projects to the Ocean Protection Council at a publicly noticed meeting. Final funding decisions are made by the Council based on staff recommendations and availability of funds.

For more information on this process, see [Section 5 – Project Approval and Implementation](#).

Section 5. Project Approval and Implementation

All projects funded by OPC must adhere to the approval and implementation processes outlined in this section to ensure compliance with state requirements and alignment with OPC's mission. This section outlines expectations for project readiness, grant agreement terms, invoicing, reporting, and project management.

5.1 Applicant Capacity

Applicants must demonstrate the organizational capacity needed to successfully manage a state grant and deliver the proposed project. Capacity expectations include, but are not limited to:

- Capacity to manage state funds, including an adequate fiscal system and financial staff
- Ability to manage cashflow under a reimbursement-based funding model (except for projects eligible for advance payment, see [Section 5.4](#))
- Proof and availability of qualified staff or contractors to complete project work
- Sound governance structure and commitment to project completion

Applicants who have concerns about meeting these capacity expectations are encouraged to contact OPC staff early in the application process to discuss potential technical assistance or support opportunities.

Applicants serving, or projects that serve or provide community benefits, particularly to state-defined DACs and SDACs, California Native American tribes, or other historically underrepresented groups, may be eligible for technical assistance to support capacity needs. Applicants should refer to individual grant solicitations for details on available technical assistance opportunities.

5.2 Grant Approval Process

Grant proposals follow a multi-step review and approval process:

1. Staff Review and Recommendations

OPC staff (and/or evaluation teams) review and score eligible proposals based on criteria outlined in the individual grant program solicitation. Staff may contact applicants to suggest minor scope or budget adjustments to better align with program priorities and funding availability. OPC staff will determine which qualified proposals to recommend to the Council for grant award funding. Staff recommendations will include an assessment of project compliance with applicable permitting and environmental requirements (see [Section 6.3](#) for more details).

2. Council Approval

Grants are awarded through formal approval by the Ocean Protection Council at a public meeting. Council meetings are held quarterly. Meeting agendas and staff recommendations are posted to [OPC's website](#) at least 10 days before the meeting date.

3. Grant Agreement Execution

Following Council approval, each awarded project will be assigned an OPC Project Manager who will work closely with the grantee to develop and execute a grant agreement. Execution of the Grant Agreement typically takes between three to six months after Council approval.

A typical Grant Agreement includes:

- A signature page,
- Standard terms and conditions based on the applicable funding source,
- A detailed Project Work Plan, outlining the project scope, budget, deliverables, timeline, and reporting requirements.

Before the Grant Agreement can be finalized and executed, grantees must complete and submit the following required documents:

- Final Project Work Plan: Developed collaboratively with OPC and based on the approved project proposal and any post-award revisions.
- Governing Board Resolution (GBR): Authorizing the grantee to accept state funding. OPC provides a required template for the GBR.
- State Payee Data Record Form (STD 204/205): For tax and payment processing purposes.
- (If Applicable) Certificate of Insurance: Demonstrating required general liability and workers compensation insurance coverage.
- (If Applicable) Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity: For tribal governments receiving grant funds for certain projects (See Section 5.6 for more information).

Templates and instructions for these documents will be provided to grantees upon award notification. Applicants are encouraged to review requirements early to avoid delays in executing the grant.

Note: Project work may not begin until the Grant Agreement is fully executed. Any project work performed or costs incurred before execution will not be eligible for reimbursement.

5.3 Typical Grant Agreement Conditions

All OPC-funded projects are subject to standard grant conditions, including but not limited to:

- State funding is subject to availability. All funding is contingent upon appropriation, and applicants acknowledge through the submission of an application that no vested right or other entitlement, either implied or expressed, is created as a result of execution of the grant agreement or any amendment thereto.
- Funds are paid on a reimbursement basis unless advance payments are authorized (see [Section 5.4](#)).
- Project-specific work plans, budgets, and deliverable schedules must be approved by OPC.
- Indirect costs and overhead are generally capped at 15% of the whole grant amount, with exceptions for University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) entities. For more information, see [OPC's Budget and Invoicing Guide](#).
- Grantees must maintain adequate liability insurance throughout the project term.
- Grantees must maintain all project records for potential state audits.
- Grantees are responsible for project maintenance and operation for at least 10 years, and in many cases 20-30 years, as specified in the grant agreement.
- Grantees may be required to reimburse OPC for some or all the disbursed grant funds if the project is not completed.
- Projects funded through OPC will require the use of the OPC grant agreement template, the California Model Agreement, or the AB20 form (for CSU and UC awardees), or Interagency Agreements (for contracts with state agencies). These Grant Guidelines are intended to apply broadly and will take precedence over any conflicting terms and conditions in alternative agreement templates. For projects administered by existing OPC program-specific guidelines (such as, but not limited to, the Proposition 68 Guidelines), those program-specific guidelines will serve as the primary source of guidance, unless otherwise specified in an individual grant solicitation.

Note: Specific grant terms will be detailed in each grantee's executed Grant Agreement and must be strictly followed.

5.4 Payment Options and Cashflow Support

Standard Payment Terms:

- OPC grants are reimbursed after project costs are incurred.
- Grantees must submit complete Request for Disbursement (RFDs) on a quarterly basis.
- Invoices are processed within 45 days of receiving a complete RFD package.
- A 10% retention is withheld from each invoice and released upon successful project completion.

Options for Financial Support:

To support grantees facing cashflow challenges, OPC may offer alternative payment options, subject to OPC discretion and approval, and available only under certain circumstances:

Options	Description
Advance Payment	Eligible projects serving DACs, SDACs, tribes, or other underrepresented groups (see Maximizing Community Benefits section) may request an advance of up to 25% of the total grant amount. Grantees must show project eligibility, cashflow need, and provide supporting documentation to qualify. Proof that all the money advanced has been spent is required prior to advancing further funds.
Monthly Invoicing	Grantees demonstrating financial hardship may be approved to submit invoices monthly, rather than quarterly.
Lower Withhold	A lower retention rate (below the standard 10%) may be negotiated for grantees with documented hardship, subject to OPC Executive Director approval. Any reduced rate must be approved by the Executive Director before the execution of the Agreement.
Early Withhold Release	In rare cases, the retention may be released early with approval from CNRA's Assistant Secretary of Administration and Finance. Early withhold release can be paid upon completion of separate and distinct tasks and requires documentation showing cashflow crisis and satisfactory project progress/status.

For more information, see [OPC's Budget and Invoicing Guide](#).

5.5 Land Tenure and Site Control

Applicants proposing on-the-ground work must demonstrate sufficient land tenure or site control to ensure long-term project success. Acceptable forms of land tenure include:

- Fee title ownership, or
- Legally enforceable agreements such as easements or licenses.

Maintenance and Long-term Commitment Requirements:

Maintenance obligations and long-term use requirements for funded development projects will be specified in individual grant solicitations and agreements. These may include, but are not limited to, commitments to operate and maintain the project for a defined period, the recording of deed restrictions, and/or other legal instruments to protect the state's investment. Applicants should refer to the specific terms and conditions outlined in the relevant solicitation or grant agreement for detailed requirements.

Land Acquisition Projects:

Properties acquired with OPC funding must be preserved and maintained in perpetuity for public benefit. Specific restrictions or conditions will be detailed in the grant agreement.

5.6 Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity

Projects involving federally recognized California Native American tribes may require a limited waiver of sovereign immunity, as well as post-project monitoring and reporting. The need for a waiver will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the type and scope of the project. Projects that require a limited waiver include, but are not limited to:

- Land acquisition
- Capital improvement projects
- Advance payment eligibility

OPC is committed to working collaboratively with California Native American tribes to tailor waiver terms in a way that supports tribal priorities while meeting the State's legal obligations. Additionally, OPC is available to meet with a tribe should they wish to discuss this matter further prior to an application submission.

5.7 Project Monitoring and Reporting

All OPC-funded projects must include a monitoring and reporting component that explains how the effectiveness of the project will be measured and reported to determine its success. Monitoring components should describe:

- Project-specific performance measures
- Methods for data collection, storage, and long-term management
- How data and findings will be shared with participants, partners, the public, and the State

The purpose of monitoring is to evaluate project effectiveness, ensure accountability, and promote long-term benefits.

Data and Metadata

Applicants should indicate any applicable data platforms (e.g., CeNCOOS, SCCOOS, NOAA, DataOne) to which project data will be submitted and describe how their team will ensure data is shared in compliance with platform requirements.

All data and associated metadata must be delivered to OPC during or at the completion of the project. OPC's DataOne repository (opc.dataone.org) serves as the primary platform for submitting project data. OPC may also require data and metadata to be uploaded to other open data systems, as appropriate.

Final payment will not be issued until all required data and metadata have been received.

If a project cannot integrate data into an existing statewide system, applicants must provide a clear explanation. When using previously established data, applicants must establish and follow data-sharing agreements with the original data owner.

All awarded projects must:

- Employ a standardized reporting protocol, developed in consultation with OPC after project selection;
- Follow OPC's [Budget and Invoicing Guide](#) to support project implementation and reporting requirements;
- Submit quarterly progress reports and a final report, including relevant data deliverables (e.g., images, reports, databases, maps, GIS layers).

Each data deliverable should be clearly identified in the proposal and accompanied by sufficient metadata describing collection methods, reporting structure, and relevant standards. Additional data management, monitoring, and reporting requirements may be outlined in individual grant solicitations or grant agreements.

Public Accessibility of Project Data

Upon delivery to OPC, project data and metadata will generally be made publicly available to promote transparency, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing.

However, applicants must comply with all confidentiality and sensitive information protections outlined in Section 6.2, particularly regarding tribal, cultural, or other sensitive information.

Investigators retain the right to publish their results both before and after project completion. Project data may also be used to support broader analyses, reports, and materials developed by OPC.

Section 6. General Requirements

Each grant application submitted to OPC must be in full compliance with all stated requirements. Any changes to the application submission process will be posted in a timely manner on OPC's website.

6.1 Conflict of Interest

All applicants and individuals who participate in the review of submitted applications are subject to state and federal conflict of interest laws. Any individual who has participated in planning or setting priorities for a grant solicitation or who will participate in any part of the grant development and negotiation process on behalf of the public is ineligible to receive funds or personally benefit from funds awarded through that solicitation. Failure to comply with the conflict-of-interest laws, including business and financial disclosure provisions, will result in the application being rejected and any subsequent grant agreement being declared void. Other legal actions may also be pursued. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to, California Government Code section 1090 and Public Contract Code sections 10365.5, 10410, and 10411.

6.2 Confidentiality

Applicants must identify any potential privacy issues or sensitivities in their project proposals and propose appropriate measures to address them. Remedies may include, for example, delivering sensitive data only to OPC and under protection of a signed nondisclosure agreement, or developing a protocol to anonymize information to enable appropriate sharing with researchers, government agencies, or partners.

All projects and planning documents must protect the confidentiality of tribal data and information that is sensitive to California Native American tribes, including those that concern specific identify, location, character, and use of places, features, and objects. The term 'tribal data' shall be defined by individual tribe(s) participating in a project and shall be protected as confidential data. Applicants will be required to outline measures to protect confidentiality of tribal data or knowledge prior to the disbursement of grant funds.

To protect confidentiality, applicants should not provide tribally sensitive data, including specific locations of culturally important sites, in the application materials or project deliverables.

Applicants should also be aware that once submitted, all applications, communications, and supporting materials may be subject to public disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Gov. Code § 7920.000 et seq.). While OPC will make reasonable efforts to protect sensitive or proprietary information, any privacy rights or confidentiality protections that exist under law may be waived upon

submission, unless a specific legal exemption applies. Applicants are encouraged to clearly identify sensitive content and consult with OPC staff in advance if they anticipate confidentiality concerns.

6.3 Compliance with Laws and Permitting Requirements

All activities funded through OPC grants must comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws, including environmental review and permitting requirements. Applicants should ensure that any costs associated with environmental compliance are reflected in their project budgets.

Permitting and Environmental Review

For proposed projects that require permitting or environmental review, applicants must include the following in their application:

- Identify any required local, state, or federal permits;
- Indicate whether each required permits has been secured;
- Describe the process and timeline for obtaining any outstanding permits;
- Highlight any permits that could significantly delay implementation.

OPC is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Applicants must clearly explain whether CEQA applies to their project. If CEQA applies, applicants must provide the current status of compliance, such as an Environmental Impact Report, Negative Declaration, Initial Study, or Categorical or Statutory Exemption documentation. If CEQA does not apply, applicants must still provide written justification or documentation.

Where applicable, projects must also demonstrate compliance with other environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and any relevant state or federal environmental regulations. Applicants must submit any necessary documentation of compliance or exemption.

Project Readiness for Council Consideration

Environmental compliance status is a key factor in determining whether a project is recommended for Ocean Protection Council approval. Generally, projects that have completed environmental compliance requirements, or have made substantial progress toward compliance, may be eligible for Council consideration. If environmental review or permitting are incomplete or significantly delayed, OPC reserves the right to:

- Request modifications to project design or scope
- Require additional mitigation measures as a condition of funding, or
- Determine the project is not ready for funding.

In certain cases, OPC may approve a project for funding with the condition that funds will not be disbursed until environmental compliance is fully satisfied.

Scoping Permitting and Construction Activities

Applicants seeking funding for permitting tasks should carefully review individual grant solicitations, which may outline eligibility restrictions or readiness requirements based on project type and scope.

In most cases, OPC prefers not to fund both permitting and construction activities under a single grant. Permitting processes often result in changes to project design, scope, timeline, and costs. Separating permitting and construction into distinct phases ensures that construction funding is based on fully permitted and finalized project plans. This approach minimizes the risk of delays, cost overruns, or major project modifications after grant execution.

6.4 Signage, Accessibility, and Communications Materials

To ensure transparency and public awareness of state investments, all OPC-funded projects must, to the extent practicable, include signage and communications that acknowledge OPC's support.

Grantees are required to provide visible recognition of OPC's funding in project signage, digital and printed materials, and public communications developed during the grant term. This includes, but is not limited to press releases, reports, presentations, social media posts, websites, brochures, and on-site displays. When signage is installed, it must incorporate the OPC logo and, where applicable, any additional recognition requirements identified by the funding source, grant solicitation, or grant agreement.

All signage must comply with the CEQA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other relevant environmental and accessibility standards. Signage design, content, and placement must be approved by OPC and, if relevant, by the landowner.

Grantees must refer to [OPC's Signage and Communications Materials Guide](#) for detailed requirements related to signage, accessibility, communications materials, and public acknowledgment of OPC funding. These requirements will also be incorporated into the grant agreement.

6.5 California Conservation Corps

OPC encourages the use of California Conservation Corps (CCC) or a Certified Community Conservation Corps (collectively, "the Corps") whenever feasible, particularly when implementing restoration and ecosystem protection projects. Projects that incorporate the use of the Corps services may receive preference for funding consideration. In certain cases, such as funding from general obligation bonds, consultation with the Corps may be required as part of the application process.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with CCC during application development to identify potential collaboration opportunities. Specific requirements and consultation processes will be outlined in individual grant solicitations.

Appendices

Appendix A: State Auditing Requirements

The list below details the documents or records that State Auditors may need to review in the event of a grant agreement being audited. Grant recipients should ensure that such records are maintained for each State funded project. For additional details including specific audit tasks performed during a bond audit, see the California Department of Finance [Bond Accountability and Audits Guide](#) and the [Bond Audit Bulletins](#).

State Audit Document Requirements Internal Controls:

1. Organization chart (e.g. grant recipient's overall organization chart and organization chart for the State funded project)
2. Written internal procedures and flowcharts for the following:
 - a. Receipts and deposits
 - b. Disbursements
 - c. State reimbursement requests
 - d. State funding expenditure tracking - guidelines, policies, and procedures on state funded projects
3. Audit reports of the Grant recipient's internal control structure and financial statements within last two years
4. Prior audit reports on State funded projects

State Funding:

1. Original grant agreement, any amendment(s) and budget modification documents
2. A list of all bond-funded grants, loans or subventions received from the State
3. A list of all other funding sources for each project

Agreements:

1. All subcontractor and consultant contracts and related documents, if applicable
2. Agreements between the grant recipient, member agencies, and project partners as related to the State funded project

Invoices:

1. Invoices from vendors and subcontractors for expenditures submitted to the State for payments under the grant agreement
2. Documentation linking subcontractor invoices to State reimbursement requests and related grant agreement budget line items
3. Reimbursement requests submitted to the State for the grant agreement

Cash Documents:

1. Receipts (copies of warrants) showing payments received from the State
2. Deposit slips or bank statements showing deposit of the payments received from the State
3. Cancelled checks or disbursement documents showing payments made to vendors, subcontractors, consultants, or agents under the grant agreement

Accounting Records:

1. Ledgers showing receipts and cash disbursement entries for State funding
2. Ledgers showing receipts and cash disbursement entries of other funding sources
3. Bridging documents that tie the general ledger to reimbursement requests submitted to the State for the grant agreement

Administration Costs:

1. Supporting documents showing the calculation of administration costs

Personnel:

1. List of all contractors and grant recipient staff that worked on the State funded project
2. Payroll records including timesheets for contractor staff and the grant recipients

Project Files:

1. All supporting documentation maintained in the files
2. All grant agreement related correspondence.