



CALIFORNIA
**OCEAN
PROTECTION
COUNCIL**



OPC SB 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program

Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation

DRAFT Version: May 2025



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I. Introduction

A. Essential Background and Information

Sea level rise (SLR) in California is already impacting public health, safety, infrastructure, biodiversity, and public access. With the pace and scale of climate impacts expected to increase significantly, SLR presents an urgent challenge requiring immediate action. In response, [Senate Bill 1](#) (SB 1, Atkins, 2021), the Sea Level Rise Mitigation and Adaptation Act, was signed into law. SB 1 directs the [Ocean Protection Council](#) (OPC) to administer grants for local and regional governments to plan for SLR and implement adaptation projects to build resilience along the California coast and San Francisco Bay shoreline.

Despite significant SLR planning efforts over the past decade, standards and criteria for vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, and resilience projects vary across jurisdictions. To address these inconsistencies, [Senate Bill 272](#) (SB 272, Laird, 2023) was signed into law, requiring all coastal local governments to develop SLR plans by January 1, 2034. These plans must integrate into Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) or San Francisco Bay subregional shoreline resiliency plans. SB 272 also tasks OPC, in collaboration with the California SLR State and Regional Support Collaborative, to establish guidelines for preparing SLR plans.

SLR also poses unique and profound challenges to California Native American tribes, many of whom are deeply connected to the coast and ocean. Many tribal communities face impacts to ancestral lands and loss of access to cultural and natural resources due to rising seas, coastal erosion, and flooding. The loss or degradation of culturally significant sites and ecological resources threatens not only physical landmarks but also the preservation of tribal identities, practices, ways of life, and traditional knowledges. Compounding these hardships, traditional state funding structures are often limited, restricting who can receive funding and implement projects based on government status and jurisdiction.

The purpose of this solicitation is to provide an alternative and more flexible funding pathway within OPC's broader [Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program](#) (SB 1 Grant Program), designed specifically for California Native American tribes to address SLR threats to cultural resources on ancestral lands in alignment with their needs. This solicitation supports a broad and inclusive understanding of cultural resources, including but not limited to cultural sites, ecological resources, and cultural practices. This initiative aims to prioritize and streamline funding to tribes for critical SLR-informed assessments and planning projects for tribal resources, in recognition of the legacies of harm caused by the systematic dispossession of tribal land and exclusion from stewardship practices. This effort will also ensure that tribes can collect the necessary information and data to engage in consultation with local governments who are developing local and regional land use plans, consistent with the SB 1 Grant Program and SB 272, that include tribal ancestral sites and cultural resources.

This funding opportunity establishes a separate funding pathway within the SB 1 Grant Program to include, in addition to federally recognized tribes, non-profit organizations applying on

behalf of non-federally recognized tribes, inter-tribal consortiums, tribal conservation districts, and tribal partnerships.

For the purposes of this solicitation, the following definitions shall apply. "Applicant" shall be defined as those entities that intend to submit a response to this solicitation 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. "Grantee" shall be defined as the entity ultimately selected to receive funds to carry out a tribal cultural resources SLR adaptation planning project.

The Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation is a focused initiative under the broader SB 1 Grant Program. The SB 1 Grant Program is funded through California's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) (GGRF) via the 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. Through this solicitation, OPC will provide separate GGRF funding to support resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems, and directly benefit priority communities, including California Native American tribes.

II. Solicitation Overview

A. Program Goal

The goal of the Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation is to support California Native American tribes in preparing for and adapting to the impacts of SLR on ancestral lands and cultural resources, as well as engaging in local land use planning. This program will provide direct funding to tribes to conduct pre-planning activities (community visioning, data collection, and vulnerability assessments) and planning activities (setting adaptation priorities and developing culturally appropriate strategies to preserve and protect tribal cultural resources threatened by existing coastal hazards or future impacts of SLR). Ultimately, this funding initiative seeks to promote equity, sovereignty, and cultural preservation while building tribal capacity to address SLR challenges. The program also supports tribes in consulting with local jurisdictions, regional jurisdictions, and other coastal management entities to ensure tribal perspectives and traditional knowledge are recognized and inform land use planning processes.

Projects funded by the Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation should align with OPC's Strategic Plan Objective 1.1: Build Resiliency to Sea Level Rise, Coastal Storms, Erosion, and Flooding, and Objective 2.1: Enhance Engagement with Tribes. This alignment ensures that funded projects not only strengthen resilience to climate impacts on tribal cultural resources but also foster meaningful collaboration with tribes, respecting tribal sovereignty, traditional knowledge, and priorities. These efforts aim to protect cultural heritage, support adaptive capacity, and promote equitable climate solutions tailored to the unique needs of tribal communities.

B. Funding Information

This solicitation is funded through a dedicated allocation from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), which provides flexible support for California Native American tribes to assess the impacts of SLR on cultural resources, ancestral lands, and heritage, and effectively engage and inform local planning efforts. Unlike funding from the broader SB 1 Grant Program, this allocation is not tied to the specific land use planning mandates set by SB 1 nor restricted to federally recognized tribes. This separate allocation also enables tribes to undertake SLR vulnerability assessment and related activities on tribally owned lands, culturally significant (non-tribally owned) lands, or a combination of both. Funding is available either directly to tribes through this funding solicitation, or through the existing SB 1 Grant Program for projects that are co-developed by California Native American tribes.

Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation:

- Available to all California Native American tribes, regardless of federal recognition or land ownership, if such tribes have cultural resources potentially threatened by SLR, and that assessment of those resources would allow for their potential protection
- Supports tribal-specific SLR adaptation planning that is driven by tribal priorities and may include information to help tribes engage in local, regional, or state land use and adaptation planning processes
- Allows greater flexibility in assessing SLR impacts on tribal cultural resources, including use of traditional knowledge
- Funding available: Up to \$5,000,000.00

Tribal Cultural Resources projects are anticipated to range between \$250,000 and \$750,000, however less or more is possible with justification.

SB 1 Grant Program Track 1 Funding for Federally Recognized Tribes and Tribal Partnerships:

In addition to this solicitation, the broader [SB 1 Grant Program](#) dedicates 5% of total funding for federally recognized tribes for Track 1 planning projects leading to the development of a land use plan or proposals co-created between local governments and California Native American tribes. Applicants who align with either of these two requirements are eligible for this 5% set-aside and should apply to the SB 1 Track 1 Grant Program. Key factors of the set-aside are as follows:

- Reserved for federally recognized tribes **or** applicants with projects that are co-created between a local or regional government and a California Native American tribe (requires a letter or resolution, signed by the chairperson of the tribe(s), confirming the tribe is actively partnering in the project)
- Projects that lead to the development of a SLR adaptation plan that is incorporated into a local or regional land use plan, as required under [SB 1](#)

- Aligns with broader SB 1 Grant Program requirements, including [SLR Criteria](#) and [SB 272](#)

C. Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations

The Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation is designed to support tribal sovereignty by ensuring funding directly addresses the needs and priorities of California Native American tribes and tribal communities.

D. Funding Schedule

The Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation will operate on a rolling quarterly basis to provide consistent and timely access to funding. Awards will be granted on a first-come first-serve basis through four, quarterly non-competitive review cycles to ensure eligible projects are considered when they are ready, fostering a more flexible and responsive approach to addressing the urgent needs of tribes impacted by SLR. Funding cycles may be added or reduced depending on availability of funding.

To help ensure projects are reviewed and considered for funding in a timely manner, the following interim deadlines have been established. These deadlines are associated with the earliest possible Council meeting at which the proposal may be considered for funding approval and award. While OPC strives to review and prepare proposals for these meetings, additional review or follow-up may result in consideration and award at a subsequent Council meeting.

E. Projected Funding Schedule (Anticipated)

Informational webinar	July 1, 2025	As needed	As needed	As needed
Full Proposal Deadline	Sept 12, 2025	Jan 05, 2026	April 2026	July 2026
Earliest Meeting	Dec 9, 2025	February/March 2026	June 2026	September 2026
Earliest project start date	January 2026	April 2026	July 2026	December 2026

All dates are tentative and subject to change. Check the [SB 1 Grant Program webpage](#) for the most up to date information and dates. The quarterly OPC public meeting schedule is available on the [OPC Meeting webpage](#).

III. Solicitation Priorities

This Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation is designed to assist California Native American tribes in addressing the impacts of existing coastal hazards and future impacts of SLR on their cultural resources, sites, lands, and other asset types identified by the applicant. This project type provides a two-stage framework for tribes to collect information or compile data

(which may be quantitative or qualitative and may include traditional knowledge), assess vulnerability, and engage in comprehensive, culturally appropriate adaptation planning.

To protect confidentiality, applicants will not be required to submit site-specific data to the State and should not provide sensitive data, as defined by the tribe, in the application materials or project deliverables. In the event an applicant believes sharing sensitive or confidential information is necessary as part of the applicant's proposal, please contact OPC (OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov) before submitting the information to discuss potential solutions.

A. Eligible Projects

Proposed projects may be categorized into either or both of the following project stages.

Pre-Planning

This stage can include community visioning, background research, synthesizing existing data or information, data collection, and vulnerability assessments. Activities in this phase focus on engaging tribal communities to identify shared priorities around significant cultural resources, collecting qualitative and quantitative data (including traditional knowledges), and assessing the risks posed by SLR. Deliverables for pre-planning projects in this stage may include a comprehensive community/tribal visioning statement for achieving SLR resiliency, desktop research findings, memos describing generalized and anonymized cultural resource inventories, memos or reports on general findings related to GIS mapping of vulnerable sites, and vulnerability assessments that address cultural and natural resource risks.

Planning

This stage builds on pre-planning efforts, emphasizing the development of adaptation priorities, resources for planning or consultation in local and regional land use planning, and strategies for implementation. Tribes may define culturally appropriate adaptation priorities and create resources such as databases, case studies, frameworks, or guides to help with project prioritization and implementation. Deliverables for projects in the planning stage may include a prioritized list of adaptation projects or actions, culturally specific adaptation frameworks or memos, and outreach tools for regional partners.

B. Cross-Cutting Priorities for Projects

Engagement with Tribal, Local, and Regional Planning Processes

Awarded projects should equip tribes with data-backed information necessary to effectively consult and engage with neighboring local jurisdictions involved in coastal land use planning. Participation in these adjacent planning efforts is essential to ensure tribal perspectives, priorities, and cultural resource protections are recognized and meaningfully integrated into broader coastal resilience efforts.

Regional Tribal Collaboration

This Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation supports projects that address SLR impacts across broad geographic regions, foster collaboration among multiple tribes, or build upon existing efforts and resources. Regional projects promote efficient grant and project management allowing for cohesive approaches to identifying shared vulnerabilities. As such, OPC encourages sharing ecological data and vulnerability assessments with local, regional, and other tribal and non-tribal entities. However, each individual tribe participating in a regional or collaborative project is entitled to keep specific cultural resource vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies confidential, at their discretion.

Use of Existing Data and Avoiding Duplication

Applicants should identify and incorporate existing plans, data, or frameworks to leverage available resources and build upon prior projects.

To ensure the efficient use of state funds, OPC will not fund duplicative projects or activities that have already been completed under a different initiative. In geographic areas with overlapping jurisdictions, applicants should coordinate efforts with local and regional governments to maximize the impact of state resources. In these shared project areas, applicants are encouraged to consider using the same contractor, subconsultant, or methodology where appropriate to promote consistency and cost-effectiveness in planning efforts and state investments.

Data Confidentiality

All projects and planning documents must protect the confidentiality of tribal data and information concerning specific identity, location, character, and use of sensitive places, features, and objects. The term 'tribal data' shall be defined by individual tribes participating in a project and shall be protected as confidential data. While ecological data and vulnerability assessments and findings may be shared, as feasible, with local, regional, and other tribal and non-tribal entities, specific cultural resource vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies may remain confidential for each individual tribe. 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 will not be required to submit site-specific data to the State and should not provide sensitive data, as defined by the tribe, in the application materials or project deliverables. In the event an applicant believes sharing sensitive or confidential information is necessary as part of the applicant's proposal, please contact OPC (OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov) before submitting the information to discuss potential solutions. If confidential information is received, the State will work to maintain confidentiality consistent with existing law, including the Public Records Act.

IV. Proposal Submission Requirements and Eligibility Information

This section provides detailed instructions for submitting your proposal. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review and adhere to all requirements outlined in this solicitation. Following these instructions is essential for your proposal to be considered for funding.

A. Grant Eligibility

Applicants that are eligible to apply for the SB 1 Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation are as follows:

- **Federally recognized tribes:** 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-profit organizations applying on behalf of non-federally recognized tribes, an inter-tribal consortium, tribal conservation district, or tribal partnerships:** Qualified 501(c)(3) organizations must 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/>.

Projects may focus on tribally owned lands and coastal waters, non-tribal lands and coastal waters with cultural significance, or both.

Governing Board Approval: 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.

Limited Waivers 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.

B. Technical Assistance

The broader SB 1 Grant Program offers a complementary Technical Assistance (TA) Program to support eligible applicants addressing significant and imminent SLR impacts. This program provides tailored assistance based on each applicant's needs, including capacity building, grant writing support, and other resources to strengthen applications and project proposals. This TA Program is also available to support applicants with the development of their Tribal Cultural Resource Planning Project applications. For the latest information on the SB 1 TA Program, including details on how to apply, visit the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#) or email OPCSB1TA@coastalquest.org.

C. Inquiries and Information

All questions and/or concerns to the solicitation requirements must be directed to: OPCSB1@resources.ca.gov.

Updates will be shared on the SB 1 Grant Program Webpage: <https://opc.ca.gov/sb-1-funding/>

OPC will host an informational webinar about the Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Opportunity on July 1, 2025. The recording will be available on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

Office Hours will also be hosted periodically, as announced on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

D. Proposal Requirements

General Proposal Requirements

1. Proposals should provide clear and concise descriptions of the applicant's qualifications, as well as those of any subcontractors, demonstrating their ability to meet the requirements outlined in this solicitation. Proposals must be complete, accurate, and free of omissions or misstatements, as these could result in disqualification.
2. Proposals must address the project priorities and activities described in this solicitation. Any deviations from the specifications detailed in herein may result in the rejection of the proposal.

Required Proposal Components

Applicants should complete the following application template: SB 1 Tribal and Cultural Resources Funding Proposal Template and Instructions (MS Word .docx) with project proposal information, including the following:

- Proposal Cover Page (using the Template) *required*
- Proposal Application (using the Template) *required*
- Budget (using the Template) *required*
 - Project Team Resumes/CVs *required*

- Project Letters (see further discussion below) *required in certain scenarios*
- [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#) *required for nonprofit organizations only*

Project Letters

A. Tribal Letters of Commitment / Resolutions / MOUs

Project Letters of Commitment may include Tribal Resolutions, MOUs, or Letters of Commitment that demonstrate a commitment from a tribal government providing specific resources, funding, or services, and a commitment to carrying out the project and its deliverables as described in the proposal. These are required or strongly encouraged for the following scenarios:

- Non-profit organizations applying on behalf of a tribe (or tribal entity): A resolution, MOU, or letter, signed by the chairperson of the tribe(s), is required that confirms a California Native American tribe has an established relationship with the applicant, details the status of the current working relationship, affirms the tribe's commitment to the project, and describes how the project outcomes will be utilized by the tribe.
- A project proposal that includes tribal cultural sites or resources in shared ancestral territory: For projects that take place on shared ancestral territory, as identified by the applicant and/or through OPC-led tribal consultation, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a description of outreach with other tribes in the project application.
- For projects that include active participation or interest from partnering tribes (e.g., through direct project involvement, pass-through funding, or deliverables), a Letter of Commitment, MOU, or Resolution from a high-ranking official within the partnering tribe's government administration must accompany the application to describe the tribe's level of interest, commitment to the project, and intended use of the project's outcomes. It should also confirm that the partnering tribe will not seek future SB 1 funding for the same activities or assessment funded or completed by this project. Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or Resolutions are not required for tribes with overlapping or adjacent geographic regions that are not actively participating in the proposal.

B. Project Letters of Support

Project Letters of Support are encouraged—from partnering local jurisdictions, nonprofits, private entities, or subconsultants—as applicable. While not required, letters can help demonstrate interest, provide regional context, and strengthen overall support for the proposed project.

E. Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically to OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov with the subject line: **[Main Applicant Name]-Tribal Cultural Resources-Proposal**. Submissions are due by the quarterly deadlines outlined in the Solicitation Schedule, with the most up-to-date deadlines available on the [OPC SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

Each proposal will undergo an administrative review to ensure it meets the solicitation requirements. Proposals that fail to meet these requirements may be rejected for lack of completeness or responsiveness. OPC reserves the right to reject incomplete proposals or those that do not meet the Project Evaluation and Selection Criteria, as applicable. All awards are subject to funding availability.

OPC will seek tribal consultation on all accepted proposals prior to final approval.

V. Project Evaluation and Selection

A. Administrative Evaluation (Pass/Fail)

OPC staff will review each proposal to ensure it meets all administrative and eligibility requirements outlined in this solicitation. Proposals must be complete, accurate, and include all required documentation to be considered. Incomplete or non-compliant proposals may be deemed ineligible for funding. If clarification or additional documentation is needed, Applicants may be contacted during this stage. Only proposals that pass the administrative review will move forward to technical evaluation.

B. Technical Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to address the impacts of SLR on tribal cultural resources and align with the goals of the Tribal Cultural Resources Funding Solicitation. The following criteria will guide the evaluation process:

Use of Best Available Science and Knowledge

Applicants must prioritize integrating the latest scientific research, such as the [State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update](#), and best available knowledge, including traditional knowledge. Vulnerability assessments, data collection, and adaptation strategies should demonstrate a commitment to using the best available science and traditional knowledge, as appropriate, to ensure informed and effective outcomes.

Relative Need for SLR Planning

Proposals should provide evidence of the urgency and importance of addressing SLR impacts on tribal cultural resources. This may include maps of vulnerable areas, statistics on recent SLR and

coastal hazard impacts, or documentation of anticipated threats. Proposals should also demonstrate how the project addresses pressing issues such as flooding, erosion, or threats to safety and access to cultural sites.

Likelihood of Success and Effectiveness

Proposals must outline clear objectives, practical timelines, and achievable benchmarks for the successful completion of the project. This includes defining deliverables, such as vulnerability assessments, adaptation strategies, or collaboration frameworks. Projects should also detail plans for consultation with neighboring jurisdictions and alignment with local or regional planning efforts. Letters of support, MOUs, or resolutions of intent from tribal entities, local governments, or participating/supporting community organizations will strengthen the application.

Budget Alignment

Proposal applications should include a budget that reflects the project's scope, geographical reach, tasks and deliverables, and timeline. Budget justification should include reasonable explanation for cost estimates, hourly rates, or other items.

Engagement with other Tribal, Local, and Regional Planning Processes

Applicants are required to engage in relevant tribal, local, and regional planning processes to ensure that SLR adaptation efforts are coordinated, effective, and reflective of broader resilience strategies. The extent and nature of engagement will be determined by the tribe based on its specific needs, governance structures, and project focus.

This engagement may include, but is not limited to:

- Providing tribal consultation on SLR-related planning efforts within overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions.
- Coordinating with local and regional agencies to integrate tribal priorities into coastal and ocean adaptation planning.
- Sharing relevant ecological data while maintaining confidentiality of sensitive cultural resource information.
- Aligning methodologies with existing or neighboring planning efforts where feasible.

VI. Solicitation Updates and Contacts

This solicitation may be updated periodically to reflect evolving circumstances or incorporate additional information. Updated versions will be posted on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#) along with the corresponding update date. Applicants are encouraged to check the webpage

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regularly, join the OPC [email list](#), and follow OPC on [social media](#) for the latest information about the solicitation process.

For questions regarding this solicitation or the application process, please contact:

- Ella McDougall, Climate Change Program Manager
- Megan Williams, Coastal Resilience Program Manager
- Email: OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov

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