



CALIFORNIA  
**OCEAN  
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COUNCIL**



# OPC SB 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program

## Track 2: Sea Level Rise Implementation Project Funding Solicitation

DRAFT Version: September 2025

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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 directing 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. In 2023, OPC launched the [Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program](#) (SB 1 Grant Program) which provides support to local, regional, and tribal governments for SLR adaptation planning and implementation projects.

While much SLR planning and adaptation work has been conducted along California's coast over the past decade, vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, and coastal resilience projects are not consistent in their standards or criteria statewide. Recognizing 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.

OPC has received multiple appropriations to support this program, including \$37.5 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) and \$75 million through Proposition 4. Ultimately, OPC's 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. Since 2024, the SB 1 Grant Program has funded local governments to develop SLR adaptation plans through Track 1, which awards grants in a rolling, non-competitive process.

The purpose of this Track 2: Sea Level Rise Implementation Project Funding Solicitation (Track 2) is to establish a competitive grant process for funding SLR adaptation projects, as a separate but complementary funding track. Track 2 puts SLR adaptation planning into action by supporting the implementation of nature-based SLR adaptation projects.

This solicitation is intended for jurisdictions that have completed SLR adaptation planning and are now ready to translate these efforts into project implementation. Eligible projects must have been identified as a priority in a completed or in-progress SLR adaptation plan, coastal resilience plan, or comparable land-use planning effort. An exception to this requirement is for strategic relocation projects.

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Applications will be evaluated based on how well the proposal addresses the priorities of this solicitation (see Section II. Solicitation Priorities) and scores against technical evaluation criteria (see Section IV. Track 2 Proposal Evaluation Criteria). The goals of this solicitation align with SB 1's directive for investments to implement local and regional sea level rise adaptation. Track 2 also aligns with SB 272's directive for on-the-ground adaptation efforts, implementing solutions that protect vulnerable communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems.

For the purposes of the solicitation, the following definitions shall apply. "Applicant" shall be defined as those entities that intend to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) in response to this solicitation and, if invited, a full proposal. This includes the lead entity and any partners and subcontractors. "Project" shall be defined as the comprehensive undertaking detailed in the LOI and full proposal, encompassing all planned activities, deliverables, and collaborative efforts set forth by the Applicant for an implementation effort.

## B. Solicitation Overview

This solicitation outlines the funding information, solicitation priorities, proposal submission requirements and information, eligibility, and technical evaluation criteria for this and all future competitive funding rounds for Track 2. The solicitation is subject to change; please check the SB 1 Program website for the most current information. OPC expects to open this Track 2 funding opportunity annually, pending availability of funds.

### Funding Information

Track 2 will be funded by Proposition 4 (the 2024 Climate Bond), which includes a dedicated \$75 million allocation to OPC for the SB 1 Grant Program. In the Budget Act of 2025 (SB 105), OPC received \$20 million in Proposition 4 funds to support the SB 1 Grant Program. The funding information for the Track 2, Round 1 Solicitation is as follows:

- Anticipated funding available in this round: \$7,000,000
- Track 2 projects are anticipated to range between \$500,000 - \$2,500,000, however less or more is possible with justification
- Maximum project length: 3 years

Please note that additional Proposition 4 coastal resilience funding for SLR adaptation projects is available through the California State Coastal Conservancy's [grant program](#).

## Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations

As directed by Proposition 4, at least 40 percent of the total funds available shall be allocated for projects that provide meaningful and direct benefits to vulnerable populations or disadvantaged communities (DAC). At least 10 percent of the total funds available pursuant to this division shall be allocated for projects that provide meaningful and direct benefits to severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC). This directive ensures adequate and equitable funding for SLR adaptation projects that benefit disadvantaged, vulnerable communities, and environmental justice communities.

As written in the Climate Bond, the following definitions apply:

- DAC: a community with a median household income of less than 80 percent of the area average or less than 80 percent of statewide median household income.
- SDAC: a community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the area average or less than 60 percent of statewide median household income.
- Vulnerable population: A subgroup population within a region or community that faces a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change and that lacks adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from such impacts (Note: tribes are considered vulnerable populations).
- Tribe: A federally recognized Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized Native American tribe listed on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.

A 'meaningful benefit' ensures the creation of direct, tangible, substantial, and measurable benefits to residents of the disadvantaged community or vulnerable population that would not have materialized without its implementation. These benefits are not incidental, indirect, or speculative and should protect or enhance a DAC, SDAC, or vulnerable population's resources and quality of life by building climate resilience or creating community assets in response to the community's expressed need, either through direct project input or as part of a larger planning or engagement effort. A 'direct benefit' should be defined as tangible, measurable improvements or advantages provided to a specific community. These benefits aim to address disparities and enhance the quality of life for residents in DACs, SDACs, or vulnerable populations.

## Tribal Consultation and Partnership

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

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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 project actively partnering with a tribe.

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.

## II. Solicitation Priorities

### A. Track 2 Program Priorities

Track 2 provides funding for nature-based SLR adaptation implementation projects in the California coastal zone or the San Francisco Bay that directly advance local and regional SLR adaptation plans. These investments advance [OPC's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#), particularly Targets 1.1.1 and 1.1.5, and fulfill Public Resources Code section 30973(a) (SB 1, Atkins, 2021).

#### Identification in an Approved or In-Progress Plan

Eligible projects must be identified as a priority in a completed or in-progress SLR adaptation plan, coastal resilience plan, or other comparable land-use planning effort. If the proposed project is in a jurisdiction that is currently developing a SLR adaptation plan to comply with SB 272, through either a Local Coastal Program (LCP) Update or San Francisco Bay Area Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (SSAP), Applicants should demonstrate clear alignment and coordination with that planning effort. This requirement aims to ensure that a proposed project is complementary and clearly advances a local jurisdiction's long-term adaptation planning, has community buy-in, and complies with key statutes, including the Coastal Act, the McAtteer-Petris Act, and Suisun Marsh Preservation Act.

#### Exception for Strategic Relocation Strategies

An exception to this requirement is if the project advances a strategic relocation strategy. This exception will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of OPC. Strategic relocation is defined in OPC's [State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update](#) as:

"A landward redevelopment pattern and thoughtful realignment of development along the coast so that natural erosion and other coastal processes, including beach formation, can continue. This approach also allows shorelines to migrate naturally, rather than using seawalls, flood barriers, or rock revetments to anchor them in a specific location and may involve changing patterns of residential, commercial, or industrial development and restoration of

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natural areas to enhance ecosystem services, make sound infrastructure investments, and provide additional protection and safety against flooding through buffering effects, as described above.”

## Nature Based Adaptation Requirement

This Track 2 funding opportunity will exclusively fund nature-based SLR adaptation projects. Nature-based adaptation is defined for the purposes of this solicitation as coastal adaptation methods that are comprised of natural or mostly natural elements, which contribute to the persistence and enhancement of coastal processes and ecological benefits while also protecting inland areas. OPC will exercise discretion in reviewing nature-based projects that incorporate some gray infrastructure (i.e. hybrid design) to achieve design goals. Applicants should clearly demonstrate why a hybrid design is the best strategy for the project, and how the hybrid design will minimize environmental impacts and incorporate natural features. Projects that rely primarily on gray infrastructure (e.g. seawalls, revetments, shoreline armoring) or are solely research or monitoring efforts are not eligible for this solicitation. Beach nourishment projects may only be considered if coupled with other nature-based approaches or long-term adaptive management plans/solutions.

## Program Priorities

Specific Track 2 program priorities for nature-based SLR adaptation projects include:

- Protecting or restoring coastal habitats threatened by SLR, benefiting biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Coastal hazard risk reduction for coastal dependent-uses, critical infrastructure, and coastal communities.
- Maintaining and strengthening public access to coastal resources.
- Building resilience of public trust resources.<sup>1</sup>
- Providing multiple co-benefits to human and ecological communities.
- Meaningful and direct benefits to vulnerable populations, disadvantaged communities, or severely disadvantaged communities.
- Co-developing and partnering with California Native American tribes through collaboration or formal consultation to embed tribal priorities throughout the design and execution of the project.

Projects should seek to meet these program priorities as applicable to local conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the public trust doctrine, public trust resources include coastal lands covered and uncovered by the ebb and flow of the tides, including beaches and wetlands. These lands are



## B. Track 2 Project Types

Applicants may request funding for three project types: 1) Site Assessment and Preliminary Design; 2) Final Design and Permitting; 3) Construction. Projects may include both Site Assessment and Preliminary Design, and Final Design and Permitting within the same grant. Generally, OPC does not fund both pre-construction activities (i.e. Site Assessment and Preliminary Design and/or Final Design and Permitting) and Construction within the same grant. However, construction projects in the final phases of design may be considered, so long as both pre-construction and construction activities can be executed within the grant term.

### Site Assessment and Preliminary Design

Priority SLR adaptation projects that have been identified in broader adaptation plans may require more detailed planning to lay the groundwork for implementation. Projects under this category are requesting funds to conduct the first stages of site-specific, project-level planning.

Eligible activities under this category include, but are not limited to, the evaluation of potential project sites and project alternatives, continued and expanded stakeholder engagement efforts, gathering baseline data, conducting site-specific technical studies, cost-benefit analyses, site-specific feasibility studies, preliminary engagement with permitting agencies, land acquisition, and preliminary project design (generally 30-60%).

### Final Design and Permitting

SLR adaptation projects that have completed preliminary planning may require additional technical work and approvals before initiating construction. Projects under this category are requesting funds to advance projects from conceptual or preliminary designs into final designs (95-100%) and engineering plans.

At the end of the grant period, projects under this category are expected to demonstrate readiness to undertake construction, including having final designs that are sufficient to meet environmental review and permitting requirements, even if permits have not yet been obtained.

Eligible activities under this category include but are not limited to, completing detailed engineering drawings and specifications, continuing and expanding stakeholder engagement

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held in trust by the state for the benefit of the public. The Coastal and the McAteer-Petris Acts recognize the public's constitutional right to public trust uses of tidelands along the Outer Coast and in the San Francisco Bay Area, including water related commerce, recreational uses, public access, and conservation. As sea levels rise, the boundary of the state's public trust lands will shift landward, resulting in "coastal squeeze" and the loss of beaches and habitats.



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efforts, preparing detailed cost estimates, securing permits, completing environmental planning tasks, and other related activities that position the project for implementation.

## Construction

Projects that have completed final design and secured necessary approvals may be ready to proceed directly to on-the-ground implementation. Projects under this category are “shovel-ready” and are requesting funds to carry out construction activities during the grant term.

At the start of the grant period, projects in this category must have completed final design, obtained all required environmental permits and approvals, and be able to demonstrate site control or legal right-of-way access.

Eligible activities under this category include, but are not limited to: construction and installation of project elements, implementation of nature-based adaptation measures, site preparation, and post-construction monitoring (when coupled with construction activities, required by permits, and conducted only within the grant term). Projects may be conducted on federal, tribal, state, or local government lands, or on private lands where there is a demonstrated commitment from the landowner to support implementation and ensure the long-term preservation of the project.

## III. Proposal Submission Requirements and Information

This section contains instructions for the submission of the LOI and full proposal. The Applicant must first submit a LOI and can only submit a full proposal if invited to do so by OPC staff. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to carefully read and follow all LOI and proposal requirements within this solicitation. Compliance with the solicitation instructions is mandatory for the proposal to be considered for award. Failure to comply with the solicitation instructions may cause the proposal to be deemed non-compliant and non-responsive, thus ineligible for the award.

### A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants that are eligible to submit an LOI and proposal for this Track 2: SLR Implementation Project Funding include:

- Local governments, including Special Districts
- Regional governments
- California Native American tribes, including federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes<sup>2</sup>
- State agencies

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- Public or private universities
- Nonprofit organizations, including community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private entities. Nonprofit organizations must be 501(c)(3) as verified by the Internal Revenue Service.

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 provides application assistance to eligible SB 1 Applicants facing significant and imminent sea level rise threats along the California coast and San Francisco Bay shoreline. TA is tailored based on the Applicants' needs, including but not limited to capacity building and grant writing support. The most up-to-date information on the SB 1 TA Program, including information on how to apply for TA, can be found on the SB 1 Funding webpage.

## C. Solicitation Webinar and Pre-Proposal Office Hour

OPC will hold an informational webinar. The webinar will discuss the solicitation process, information on the complementary SB 1 TA Program, and receive questions from prospective Applicants. The Informational Webinar will be recorded and posted on the SB 1 Funding webpage. OPC staff will also be available for "office hours" in webinar format to answer questions.

## D. Letter of Intent Phase

For this competitive funding opportunity, Applicants must first submit a completed LOI package by the deadline. Applicants should use the forms, templates, and instructions available on the OPC SB 1 Grant Program webpage. The LOI package should provide a concise description of the proposed project and should be no more than 11 pages total, including responses to questions, text, a preliminary budget table, and one table for the project timeline (all included within the LOI template). Supplementary materials such as maps, site photos, and other relevant attachments do not count toward the page limit.

Applicants must complete the following steps:

- Carefully review this entire solicitation to confirm project eligibility.
- Download LOI template from the OPC SB 1 Grant Program webpage and follow template instructions to complete an LOI.

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- Submit LOI package [to OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov](mailto:OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov), with the subject '[Main Applicant Name]-Track 2 Project-Proposal-LOI'

**An Applicant may not submit a full proposal unless an invitation from OPC is received following review of LOIs.**

All questions on the solicitation requirements must be directed to:  
[OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov](mailto:OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov).

Questions received and answers will be added to an SB 1 Grant Program, Track 2 Fact Sheet available on the [SB 1 Funding webpage](#).

## E. Letter of Intent Administrative Evaluation and Scoring

During the Administrative Evaluation, OPC staff will review each LOI to check for completeness of all required information and to ensure that the Applicant is eligible. If the LOI is incomplete, OPC has discretion to either return the LOI to the Applicant or assist the Applicant with gathering additional information.

LOIs that pass the Administrative Evaluation will be scored according to the table below:

SCORING CRITERIA FOR LOI	Points
Project must be identified in a completed or in-progress SLR adaptation plan, coastal resilience plan, or other comparable land-use planning effort OR Project is a strategic relocation strategy	1
Project is a nature-based adaptation project	1
Project meets solicitation program priorities, as applicable (see Section II)	1
Project is well organized and has a high likelihood of success	1
Total Required Points	4

**LOIs that do not receive all required points during scoring will not proceed in the solicitation process.**

## F. Full Proposal Phase and Requirements (Subject to Change)

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal after the LOI stage must complete and submit all required materials using a template that will be provided.

If the Applicant is invited to submit a full proposal, the following expectations apply:

1. Proposals must provide straightforward and concise descriptions of the Applicant's and any subcontractors' ability to satisfy the requirements of this solicitation. 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 solicitation may cause a proposal to be rejected.
3. Proposals must be submitted electronically only to: [OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov](mailto:OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov) using the subject: [Main Applicant Name]-Track 2 Project-Proposal
4. 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 Council meeting for funding approval and award.
5. Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if it matches the eligibility requirements and content submitted in the LOI. Failure to meet these requirements 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.
6. OPC reserves the right to reject proposals for failure to meet competitive criteria. All projects are subject to funding availability.
7. For projects funded by Proposition 4, Applicants are encouraged to include the use of services of the California Conservation Corps or certified community conservation corps. Projects are required to review and adhere to the California Conservation Corps' [consultation process](#). For more information about OPC's grants and the requirements associated with specific funding sources, please see the [OPC General Grant Guidelines](#).

## IV. Track 2 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All competitive proposals will be reviewed and scored in accordance with the following evaluation criteria. Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a minimum of three reviewers with relevant expertise. Reviewers may include staff from other state agencies. OPC staff will determine the qualified proposals to recommend to the Council for funding and the amount of funding, taking into account the project's score relative to other eligible projects and the total amount of funding available in a given round for Track 2 projects.

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SCORING CRITERIA FOR FULL PROPOSALS	Points
Project Proposal Scope, Readiness, and Applicant Capacity	10
Project Methodology and Likelihood of Success	15
Relative Need	15
Alignment with Track 2 Solicitation Program Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protecting or restoring coastal habitats threatened by SLR, benefiting biodiversity and ecosystems</li><li>• Coastal hazard risk reduction for coastal dependent-uses, critical infrastructure, and coastal communities</li><li>• Maintaining and strengthening public access to coastal resources</li><li>• Building resilience of public trust resources</li><li>• Providing multiple co-benefits to human and ecological communities</li></ul>	40
Meaningful and Direct Benefits to vulnerable populations, DAC, or SDAC	10
Partnership with California Native American Tribes and Prioritization of Tribes' Interests	10
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100</b>

## Project Proposal Scope, Readiness, and Applicant Capacity

Successful implementation of Track 2 projects depends on a clear and feasible project scope, demonstrated readiness, and an Applicant team with the capacity to deliver results. Proposals will be evaluated on these factors and should:

- Provide a detailed scope of work, budget, and schedule for the project using the provided templates.
  - Outline practical benchmarks and timelines for the successful completion of the project, including the development and review of all final deliverables.
  - Demonstrate that the budget is appropriate to the tasks and commensurate with the outlined work.
  - Identify any leveraged funding sources, including non-state and other state agency sources, as OPC encourages leveraged funding.

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- Provide a brief description of project readiness, including commitments from project partners; the status and timeline for design plans; CEQA compliance (if required); permitting; land access and tenure agreements; and any property restrictions or encumbrances. This description should also:
  - Address the feasibility, and any limitations, of completing the project within the proposed timeframe and budget.
  - Identify possible factors that could significantly delay the implementation and/or completion of the project and describe how these factors will be addressed (e.g., permitting delays, habitat seasonal restrictions).
- Describe the Applicant's capacity and the qualifications of the Applicant or project team to successfully complete the project.

## Project Methodology and Likelihood of Success

Proposals will be evaluated on the strength and feasibility of the project methodology, and on the likelihood of achieving successful, lasting outcomes. Proposals should clearly demonstrate why the project represents a sound investment of state funds. Proposals should:

- Describe the project methodology and how effectiveness will be measured, including:
  - How best available science and/or practices will be applied, including reference to state climate change guidance such as the [State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update](#).
  - How project effectiveness will be monitored, evaluated, and reported during the grant term and, where applicable, over a long-term period (up to 30 years).
  - Any long-term plans for operations and maintenance, if applicable, including responsible parties and how these activities will be funded or supported.
- Demonstrate the project's likelihood of success by addressing:
  - Practicality, feasibility, and effectiveness of the proposed activities and the likelihood of the proposal resulting in an implemented project.
  - Community readiness and buy-in, political willingness, and momentum, including how the project was identified as a priority in a SLR adaptation planning effort.
  - Any relevant SLR planning, design, or implementation work completed or currently underway at the local level, including compliance with SB 272 or comparable long-term land-use strategies, and how the project builds on these efforts.
  - Anticipated coordination with the public and key regulatory bodies, (e.g., California Coastal Commission or the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) based on project location, as well as with any partners essential for permitting, implementation, or stewardship.

## Relative Need

Proposals will be evaluated on the project's relevance and importance to addressing SLR impacts within the community or region. Proposals should:

- Demonstrate the community's vulnerability to SLR impacts, which may be shown through SLR projection or flooding maps, statistics or reports about recent climate-driven coastal impacts, or evidence of past or anticipated beach erosion, damage to public access, or other relevant impacts.
- Describe the specific SLR impacts the project will address, including, where applicable, factors that contribute to the urgency of implementing the project

## Alignment with Track 2 Solicitation Program Priorities

Proposals will be evaluated on how well the project addresses the Program Priorities, as outlined in **Section II.A** of this solicitation. The Program Priorities selected by the Applicant in the LOI will form the basis for this evaluation.

For each Program Priority identified in the LOI, the full proposal should clearly describe how the project meets and advances that priority, providing sufficient detail and evidence to support the claim.

## Meaningful and Direct Benefits to Vulnerable Populations, Disadvantaged Communities, and Severely Disadvantaged Communities

Proposals will be evaluated on how effectively the project delivers meaningful and direct benefits to vulnerable populations, DAC, or SDAC, as defined in **Section I.B: Equity and Environmental Justice Considerations** of this solicitation. Proposals should:

- Clearly identify the specific community or population that the project will benefit.
- Demonstrate that these benefits are both direct and meaningful.
- Describe how the project responds to a community or population's expressed needs, priorities, or desired outcomes, citing previous engagement or input received.

## Consultation and Partnership with California Native American Tribes

Proposals should demonstrate meaningful partnership and collaboration with California Native American tribes. Proposals should:



- Describe previous and ongoing engagement with tribes, including opportunities for consultation to ensure tribal perspectives, priorities, and cultural resource protections are recognized and meaningfully integrated into the project.
- Explain how tribal data and information regarding the identity, location, character, and use of sensitive places, features, and objects will be kept confidential. The term 'tribal data' shall be defined by each participating tribe and treated as confidential in accordance with that definition.

## V. Contact Information

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

[OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov](mailto:OPC-SB1@resources.ca.gov).