

**URBAN GREENING PROJECTS
FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM**

PROPOSITION 84

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Last Updated: 2/10/10

Funding Specifics

Q: How much of the total bond allocation is available for Urban Greening projects?

A: Between \$38.5 and \$63.0 million will be available for projects depending upon the amount awarded for urban greening plans and other uses that may be permitted in the Bond Act.

Q: How many funding rounds will there be?

A: The Council is currently planning three (3) funding cycles.

R: How much is available in this round?

A: Up to \$15.2 million, beginning Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Q: What are the minimum and maximum amounts that will be awarded per individual grants?

A: None. No minimum or maximum amounts have been established for this round.

Q: By when must the funds be expended?

A: Currently, appropriation of the funds is pending so there is no specific timeline. In the past, the timeline for bond funds has been three years to encumber the funds (via the execution of a grant agreement) and an additional two years to fully expend.

Q: Are matching funds required?

A: No. Matching funds are not required for this program. The guidelines, however, are structured to encourage leveraging all resources, which would include other sources of funds.

Q: At the time of application, does the project need to be completely funded other than the funds requested through the grant process?

A: No. However, if other funding sources have not been secured at the time of the application, a contingency plan should be provided describing how the applicant will proceed with the project if all necessary funds to complete the project cannot be secured during the grant process.

Eligible Applicants

Q: What types of organizations are eligible for this grant?

A: Eligible applicants are defined in statute as city, county, or non-profit organization.

Q: Are Federal Agencies eligible to apply for a grant?

A: No. Federal Agencies are not eligible applicants.

Q. Is there a way for organizations that are not deemed “eligible” to participate in this grant opportunity?

A: Entities not eligible for funding can partner with cities, counties and non-profit organizations. Collaboration, including partnerships, is highlighted in the guidelines as a priority.

Eligible Projects

Q. Will there be an opportunity for our project concept to be reviewed for eligibility prior to completing the application?

A: Yes. Applicants may mail or e-mail written concept papers for input regarding eligibility and competitiveness for their proposed project.

Q. What are projects that use “natural systems”?

A: Projects that use natural systems are projects that utilize current or historical climatic, geologic and hydrologic conditions to preserve, re-establish and/or improve natural processes. Project examples include preservation of land for habitat and/or open space, flood plain restoration, daylighting streams, and restoration with native plants.

Q. How can I determine if my project meets the criteria of an urban area?

A: Applicants should contact their city or county planning department to identify existing or planned densities in the proposed project area.

Q. Do projects that are developed to satisfy a storm water MS4 permit qualify for this grant? For example, developing guidance to mitigate impacts from development projects and decrease the erosion potential of local water bodies?

A: No. Those types of projects are developed to meet pre-existing requirements of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit (NPDES). Projects would have to go beyond compliance and meet all other statutory requirements for eligibility.

Q. Are acquisitions of property eligible?

A: Yes. Acquisitions proposed must meet all statutory requirements, must be from a willing seller and must be acquired for no more than fair market value (defined in Appendix Q, beginning on page 40 of the guidelines).

Eligible Costs

Q: Are costs directly related to the urban greening project, but incurred prior to the project award date or after the end of the project performance period, eligible for reimbursement?

A: No, costs must be incurred during the project performance period to be eligible. The project performance period is the beginning and end dates of the grant agreement.

Q: If awarded a grant, will the applicant be able to use an overhead rate for personnel and/or employee services?

A: No. All eligible costs must be tracked and correlated directly to implementation of the project by specific project codes, employee timesheets, invoices, etc.

Q. Will costs associated with dying trees, such as removal, trimming, disease treatments and/or inter-planting be eligible?

A: Yes. As part of a project that meets all statutory requirements, removal and/or control of dead, dying or diseased trees are eligible costs.

Q. Because the majority of wheeled, non-motorized travel occurs on shared roadway with automobiles, is signing or striping roads an eligible cost?

A: No. Grant funds cannot be used to facilitate motorized use. However, costs of a trail that would occasionally need to accommodate maintenance vehicles may be eligible as part of a project that meets all statutory criteria.

Project Specifics

Q: Is it the applicant who must have site control/land tenure?

A: Yes. However, there are various ways to meet the site control/tenure requirement, (e.g., fee ownership, long-term agreements and easements). Site control must include the right to develop, operate and maintain all lands included in the project for the period required in the guidelines.

Q: Does CEQA need to be completed prior to submitting a grant application?

A: No. CEQA does not need to be completed at the time of the application. In general, grantees have one year to complete this process.

However, at a minimum, the applicant is required to submit a copy of the Initial Study or Environmental Checklist covering the project. If the project is exempt, the application can submit a draft copy of the Notice of Exemption. Additionally, the applicant is asked to explain how and when they anticipate CEQA being completed. See page 17 of the Guidelines for complete requirements.

Q: Are permits required to be completed prior to submitting an application?

A: No. Permits are not required to be in place when submitting an application. The Guidelines do, however, require that the applicant include a status of all necessary permits. This status may be considered when evaluating project readiness.

Q: The grant guidelines require prevailing wages be paid for any public work projects financed with Prop 84 grant funds. How is this requirement applicable to a city (the grantee) that plans on using their Public Works Department to complete the project?

A: Labor Code Section 1771 specifically exempts the prevailing wage requirement for work carried out by a public agency with its own forces.

Application Process

Q: When are grant applications due and awards announced?

A: Applications are due by 5:00 Friday, April 30, 2010. Awards are anticipated to be announced in September/October and are contingent upon inclusion in and enactment of the State budget, as well as available cash.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of applications each applicant can submit?

A: No. There is no limit on the number of submittals per applicant.

Q. My organization has several eligible projects that we feel are competitive. Should we submit one application for all projects, or individual applications for each?

A. Submit one application for each individual project. Each proposed project (as defined on page 5 of the guidelines) will be evaluated and scored by the committee on an individual basis.

Q. Will an applicant be penalized for submitting more than one application?

A. No. The committee will evaluate and score each proposed project on its own merit.

Q. Can an applicant apply for a grant to create an urban greening plan and also apply for a separate grant to implement an urban greening project?

A. Yes. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for either or both programs, as long as the proposals meet the stated requirements.

Each application will be scored independently and must have no interdependence on the other application, either stated or implied. Each application should also note the future of the proposed action (plan or project) if either application is not funded. For an Urban Greening **project**, the budget should detail that no more than 25% of the total grant will be spent on non-construction costs such as project design, administration, or CEQA compliance.

Grant Selection Process

Q: Will an application go forward for review without a letter from the Willing Seller?

A: No. Applications must include a willing seller letter stating that if grant funds are awarded, the seller is willing to enter into an agreement for the sale of the real property and for a purchase price not to exceed fair market value.

Q: How will you determine whether or not you are going to schedule a site visit?

A: The number of projects receiving site visits will depend upon the ranking, number of applications received, requested funding amounts, etc.