

2007 Watershed Coordinator Grant Program

Response to Questions on the Request for Proposals

General / Eligibility

1) QUESTION: Is there a specific start and end date for the grants? Or will the contracts run 36 months from the start date during ANY month in 2008 that the contract started? If so could a contract start later than spring of 2008? When do you expect to have contracts signed? Should our budget be based on the actual start date of the contract?

RESPONSE: The contracts will be for 36 months (3 years) and we expect that anyone applying for the grants will have the capability to initiate work shortly after the contract is signed. If the grant is not initiated within 60 days of finalizing the contract, it may be necessary to revisit the award and reduce the funding amount.

The budget should be based on the actual start date of the contract. For planning and budgeting purposes, we recommend using a start date of March 17, 2008 if you already have a coordinator ready to start work. We expect the award letters to go out in early March and the contracts to go out soon after. As the funding is on the State fiscal year cycle and there is a time limit for expenditure of the funds, the latest date the contracts can go through will be June 30, 2011.

If you anticipate starting later than 60 days after the contract is finalized, justification must be provided and the budget must reflect the timeline if it runs less than 36 months. When constructing the budget, factor in time to hire a coordinator if your organization does not already have one on staff who will be able to fill the position. Time spent hiring a coordinator cannot be charged to the grant and should not be part of the budget. If needed, organizations should start the hiring process soon after receiving the award letter as the process may take a few weeks.

2) QUESTION: Because DOC will award only two grants per USGS HUC, will applications addressing watersheds that capture less than 50% of the HUC be at an automatic disadvantage, due to a perceived lack of geographic scope?

RESPONSE: One of the goals of this grant program is to support efforts identified by the local watershed community, regardless of its relation to coverage of the HUC. Proposals will be scored based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP, which will not include geographic scope

3) QUESTION: Can a proposal address more than one watershed?

RESPONSE: Yes, within the HUC limitations contained in the RFP. However, proposals must justify the need for working in multiple watersheds, and must demonstrate the benefit to each watershed.

4) QUESTION: My board will not have a board meeting by the time the RFP is due. How can we show the board's support of the proposal?

RESPONSE: Include a letter from the Board President or appropriate officer indicating that the proposal is on the agenda of its next board meeting. Please note that if your proposal is successful, there must be a Board action indicating support/approval by the time the grants are awarded. Otherwise, the grant cannot be awarded.

5) QUESTION: Has any consideration been given to extending the deadline for the WCGP application, to compensate for the inevitable delays due to Christmas and New Year holidays that occur in the middle of the week?

RESPONSE: The question of delaying the release of the RFP and proposal due dates to avoid the inherent delays of the holiday season was brought up at several of statewide meetings this fall. What department staff overwhelmingly heard was not to wait and to get the RFP out as soon as possible, which is what we did.

6) QUESTION: Can a proposal request one FTE (full-time employee), which could either be a single full-time watershed coordinator or two half-time coordinators depending on the strategy the organization would want to take after a grant is awarded? What amount of flexibility regarding personnel is permitted?

RESPONSE: As stated on page 2 of the RFP, "each proposal may request no more than the equivalent of one-full time watershed coordinator (which can be shared by no more than two people)." The "breakdown" of such arrangements will be left to the applicant, but it doesn't have to be strictly two half-time positions. Depending on the applicant's workplan, other arrangements (i.e. 60/40) are acceptable. In all cases, there can be no more than two coordinators sharing one FTE position.

7) QUESTION: Support of Established Watershed Goals. If the watershed has an approved Water Quality Plan and an approved Strategic Plan that will be addressed under this criteria, should or shouldn't the Water Quality Plan and Strategic Plan be attached? Or, should only summaries be provided in the narrative with links to websites?

RESPONSE: Do not submit or attach actual plans. A citation or summary will be sufficient.

8) QUESTION: Will the grant committee award partial funding, or will it be all or nothing until the funding runs out?

RESPONSE: Funding will be all or nothing.

9) QUESTION: Will multiple applications be accepted for different projects through the same fiscal sponsor?

RESPONSE: Yes, one organization may submit multiple applications. Keep in mind that the grant program funds positions and not projects.

10) QUESTION: If the FTE is split between two different positions, held by people, can there be a difference in salary, particularly because skill sets for work plans might vary?

RESPONSE: If the position is split between two people, they may be listed at different rates as justified by their skill set and work plan.

11) QUESTION: When does DOC anticipate executing grant agreements, so that work plans can begin accordingly?

RESPONSE: We anticipate executing grant agreements in March 2008, which means most grants will be effective in March or April, depending on when the signed agreements are returned to DOC. For planning and budgeting purposes, we recommend using a start date of March 17, 2008 if you already have a coordinator ready to start work.

12) QUESTION: Why there is not any recognition of disadvantaged communities in the grading system? My thought is that small entities do not have much support that we can draw from and would be at a disadvantage on the match level.

RESPONSE: Consensus from the workshops was that addressing disadvantaged communities should not be added as a criterion, so it was not included. Workshop feedback strongly supported making in-kind match equal to cash match in order to help smaller entities, which DOC implemented.

13) QUESTION: How can performance measures incorporate on-the-ground benefits, if the grants do not fund projects?

RESPONSE: While watershed coordinators may coordinate, facilitate, and plan projects, they are not expected to conduct projects. Watershed coordinators frequently play a critical role in projects by obtaining funding, garnering support, planning, and facilitating project implementation. As a result, watershed coordinator efforts may lead to project-related on-the-ground benefits. This grant program does not fund project management. Many previous grantees have been very successful in designing

performance measures. Applicants should refer to previous grant program reports on our website.

Authorized Costs and Matching Funds

14) QUESTION: I noticed that there is a cap of 32% for benefit charges that is allowed to be charged. Our benefits are much higher than that and so I was wondering what the 32% benefits included? Also, can some of the difference be made up in the hourly rate amount for the employees being charged to this grant?

RESPONSE: Benefits may include such items as social security/Medicare, health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, SDI, retirement contributions, etc. No, it is not allowable to artificially increase the hourly rate to accommodate benefits in excess of 32% of the actual hourly rate.

15) QUESTION: How will the grant review committee be determining what is a reasonable rate for a coordinators salary? We base our salary structure on the most current salary data from the Center for Nonprofit Management, which at the moment is the 2006 salary survey data compilation, which looks at a number of factors including geography, size of organization and various other factors.

RESPONSE: The review committee will look at factors you have mentioned, plus the rate must be competitive with other proposals which cannot be predicted at this time.

16) QUESTION: Do we have the ability to consider the watershed coordinator position as an "independent contractor" and apply our billing rate, rather than a breakdown of the costs associated with wages, benefits and overhead?

RESPONSE: You may consider the watershed coordinator position (WC) as an "independent contractor;" however you cannot use your normal "contractor's" billing rate, as that normally includes overhead and other costs that need to be broken out for the purposes of this grant. This grant is unique in that it funds positions. Because of this, and the fact that the grants are funded with public bond funds, we have to show an hourly breakdown of the salary and a breakdown of the benefit and administrative costs, whether the WC is a staff person or a contractor. This is done for audit purposes and program accountability.

17) QUESTION: Is there a typical value for this salary? Do you have a maximum acceptable value?

RESPONSE: There is no maximum hourly wage nor is there a typical value for salary. Rates must be competitive with other proposals; however those rates cannot be predicted at this time. Factors that comprise compensation for the watershed coordinator include geographic location, size of organization, work experience, etc.

18) QUESTION: Can matching funds be used to waive institutional overhead?

RESPONSE: Matching funds cannot be used to waive institutional overhead.

19) QUESTION: Can time spent by trained citizen water quality monitors performing water quality sampling pursuant to a state-approved QAPP and state-approved Water Quality Plan as part of an activity overseen by the watershed coordinator qualify as in-kind match in terms of “time donated by someone with technical expertise”?

RESPONSE: Water quality monitoring work done by volunteers cannot be used as match.

20) QUESTION: Can time spent by trained college teachers and high school teachers who calibrate water quality monitoring equipment (on behalf of the watershed coordinator) and train student volunteers be counted as in-kind match in direct support of the watershed coordinator?

RESPONSE: What you are describing leans toward project work and while it does support the WC position, cannot be counted as match.

21) QUESTION: Allowable costs state that up to \$1,500 in equipment expenditures is permitted. A match must be an allowable expense. Can a donation of water quality monitoring equipment (associated with a work plan task) by a local agency be counted as match in excess of the \$1,500 limit (i.e., Can an entity donate \$6,000 worth of water quality monitoring equipment and can the entire \$6,000 be counted as match even though it exceeds the \$1,500 “allowable cost” limit?)

RESPONSE: No, only \$1,500 of the equipment can be counted as match, as match must be an allowable expense.

22) QUESTION: If someone from CA State Parks were to make a presentation to the watershed group on the presentation projects they are doing within the watershed or take the watershed group members on a tour of these sites, would that be valid in-kind match?

RESPONSE: If the work directly supports the watershed coordinator position and the work plan and is not related to a specific project, then the time for the State Parks employee can be used as in-kind match. Volunteer time at watershed meetings do not qualify.

23) QUESTION: The RFP says technical assistance must directly support the coordinator position and cannot be project-related. My question is, if my position is to manage our restoration projects and their associated grants, wouldn't technical expertise that supports the development and implementation of those projects be a direct support of my position?

RESPONSE: The grant program is designed to support watershed coordination and is separate from project management. Support for projects and direct support of the watershed coordinator position and workplan really need to be kept separate.

24) QUESTION: We have an organizational structure with a Management and Steering Committee, which are comprised of many of our signatory partners. The signatory committee members vote on management issues and projects that our organization will undertake. Their attendance at our committee meetings does support the coordinator's position in managing and coordinating our Watershed Restoration Program. Could their time commitment as committee members be counted as an in-kind match?

RESPONSE: Committee members' time cannot be counted as in-kind match. While important, steering or strategic committee's time is more general in nature. In-kind match of technical support of the coordinator's workplan is acceptable.

25) QUESTION: In the allowable and non allowable costs section, mailing for projects is listed as an unallowable cost, but in the example budget, postage and printing are included as operating costs. Does this mean that postage, printing and office supplies are allowed to be used as match for normal operations of the watershed coordinator and that any additional mailings such as newsletters, educational information, and such project related items would be covered under match from cooperators? I guess I am confused since unallowable costs cannot be used as match also and how the coordinator would fund such operations that we will be outlining in our work plan.

RESPONSE: Items directly related to specific projects or general functions of an organization are not allowable as reimbursement or match. The grants may only fund salaries and directly associated costs for the position. Therefore, postage, printing and office supplies for normal operations of the watershed coordinator (WC) are allowable as reimbursement or match. For example, if outreach is part of the WC's work plan, and a task in the work plan is for the WC to send out watershed meeting announcements, then the grant can fund the printing and postage for those announcements. However, if an organization normally puts out a general newsletter that is not specific to the work plan or the WC's watershed work, then the cost of that newsletter cannot be covered by the grant or used as match. You are correct; non-allowable expenditures cannot be used as match.

26) QUESTION: I just want to make sure that since our organization will be housing and supporting this position that we can use the rent, office supplies, computer equipment etc. as match towards this grant.

RESPONSE: Because your organization will be housing and supporting the WC, you may use rent, office supplies, computer equipment etc. as match towards this grant.

27) QUESTION: If part of what a coordinator is doing includes running stakeholder groups that include technical experts, could the technical expert's time be counted as match?

RESPONSE: The time spent by the technical experts attending stakeholder group meetings cannot be used as match. Individual efforts by experts can be used as match. However, the expert's efforts must support the goals and objectives included in the work plan. This must be supported in the application with letters of intent from the partnering organization or the individual stating their commitment and indicating the amount of time that will be provided along with an hourly rate.

Partnering and Cooperating

28) QUESTION: Is there a preferred format for Evidence of Support and how these should be included? It was clear from the RFP that letters of general support should NOT be included.

RESPONSE: There is no preferred format for evidence of support. Letters of support will not be counted toward the eight page narrative limit and will be accepted as attachments.

29) QUESTION: General letters of support cannot be submitted with the application. Partnership letters must be submitted. Cooperation may be evidenced by "letters of support." Please confirm that BOTH partnership letters AND Cooperator letters of support will not be counted against the 8 page limit and will be accepted as attachments.

RESPONSE: Letters of support will not be counted toward the eight page narrative limit and will be accepted as attachments.

30) QUESTION: I noticed that there is not a section for including letters of support, without a financial or in-kind contribution. Is this correct?

RESPONSE: Please refer to Section IX, part G on page 10 of the RFP, which states that general letters of support will not be part of the scoring selection, so it will not help to include them.

31) QUESTION: We have a technical advisory committee that meets monthly to review and guide (among other things) the plans of the watershed coordinator. Can this be used as match?

RESPONSE: No. Specific, individual technical assistance to the watershed coordinator to assist items in the watershed coordinator workplan is allowable as match. It is not allowable to use semi-regular or regular strategic or technical advisory group meeting time as match.

32) QUESTION: If administrative cost is used as a cash match, can it exceed the 15% cap?

RESPONSE: No. Administrative costs are capped at 15% of the DOC share, whether it is listed as a reimbursable or match. Administrative costs can be reimbursable, match, or both; however, the overall total (match + reimbursable) cannot exceed 15%.

Mapping / Location

33) QUESTION: My fiscal sponsor is in the next county over from the area in which the watershed coordinator will be working. Can we still be counted as local?

RESPONSE: DOC recognizes that in rural areas, community partners and support may not be geographically close. The "local" component of the grant program is to prevent regional, state or even national approaches to the grant.

34) QUESTION: Can three (3) naturally connected HUC's be considered a single watercourse for this proposal? The RFP reads like only two connected HUC's can be considered as a single watercourse.

RESPONSE: The RFP states that proposals should address no more than one watershed (HUC); however, the language does allow for additional adjacent HUC's to be addressed if the natural watercourse crosses HUC boundaries. Keep in mind that if a proposal addresses more than one HUC, that natural watercourse will be considered a single watershed and therefore be eligible for a maximum of two full-time coordinator positions. It is up to the applicant to decide how to best configure their proposal(s).

35) QUESTION: Based on the map included in the RFP, I can't determine which HUC code applicable to me. Please check on which is the appropriate number to submit under and let me know.

RESPONSE: It is up to the applicant to determine which HUC code to address. Please refer to Section B. Watershed Location on page 20 of the RFP for instructions on how to locate your watershed.

36) QUESTION: I am writing to ask for a list and/or map of approved watersheds in the City of _____.

RESPONSE: There is no list of approved watersheds for this grant program. Proposals must identify the watershed to be worked on based on the U.S. Geological Survey 8-digit Hydrological Unit Catalog delineation. Please refer to page 2 of the RFP which can be found at: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/rcd/Pages/Index.aspx>.

37) QUESTION: How should we identify our watershed if it has been broken down into an A and B?

RESPONSE: Add an A or a B to the 8-digit USGS HUC, depending on the portion you are working in. You will also need to provide a location map as explained on page 20 of the RFP. Circle the portion of the watershed that you will be working in.

Workplan

38) QUESTION: Can there be more than one goal per proposal?

RESPONSE: Yes.

39) QUESTION: If one organization undertakes a program in one watershed under one grant application and a second organization undertakes a program for a separate watershed under a second/separate grant application—and the two indicate that they are cooperators for the others' program on their applications, if one of the two grants is denied, does that jeopardize the other grant? Question assumes that either proposal can be implemented independently of the other.

RESPONSE: If the programs can operate independently of one another, then the answer to your question is no, the other grant is not jeopardized.

40) QUESTION: For the implementation schedule, since we don't know the exact start date, can we put "3 months from start date" etc?

RESPONSE: Yes. However, DOC recommends that applicants be as accurate as possible when developing their work plan. For planning purposes, applicants may use March 17, 2008 as the grant start date.

41) QUESTION: Is there a page limit to the work plans?

RESPONSE: No. Applicants may submit as many pages as necessary. A separate work plan should be submitted for each objective.

42) QUESTION: Our region comprises two watersheds and corresponding HUC units. Our work is not relegated to one more than the other yet our office is based in the first watershed so I was initially inclined list only that one. I referred back to the last submittal and it seems we applied using both HUC units. Complicating the matter, it seems there are going to be two additional proposals coming from the second watershed and only one from the first. Would my chances at funding be better if I were only to state the first or do you suggest stating both HUC units?

RESPONSE: Those really are two separate HUCs and don't seem to meet the exclusion we made in the RFP. If there are going to be competing applications in the

same watershed, both or all will have reduced chances compared to others that are cooperating. Although proposals may have been funded differently in the previous cycle, we have revised the RFP this time to address multiple HUCs.