

California Resource Conservation District
Financial Assistance Program
Funding Request Instructions

State of California
Department of Conservation
Division of Land Resource Protection

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RCD Assistance Program

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**Department of Conservation
Resource Conservation District
Financial Assistance Program**

Funding Request Instructions

I. Background

Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) provide a critical link between state agency programs, federal agency programs and landowners. RCDs help implement many programs that are critical to the state's natural resources. In 2014, the California Association of RCDs (CARCD) adopted a document titled *Planning for the Future: A Statewide Pathway to Excellence in Service!* (RCD Vision and Standards). The document established a vision and set of standards developed by over 75 people including RCD district managers, RCD directors, and partners. The intent of the RCD Vision and Standards was to give RCDs a roadmap to become increasingly relevant, excellent, and visible. Many RCDs have been diligently working towards meeting these standards.

The funding available through the RCD Financial Assistance Program (Financial Assistance Program) will be available to all RCDs that are able to provide the items listed in Exhibit D. A smaller portion of funding will be available to RCDs that cannot provide the items listed in Exhibit D.

Consistent with the CARCD Vision and Standards, assistance funding will help RCDs reach the goal of becoming more relevant, excellent, and visible by building capacity. Capacity building is an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of an organization. While this funding is an initial investment in RCD capacity, the growth, effectiveness and sustainability of an RCD is ultimately the responsibility of the organization. RCDs with a higher performance capacity have a greater ability to serve their community and address local resource concerns. Increasing the effectiveness of RCDs will result in additional resource conservation and management both locally and throughout the state.

The Funding Request Instructions (FRI) are designed to provide the information necessary for RCDs to successfully complete a request for funding and for the Department of Conservation (Department) to evaluate whether the request meets the necessary requirements for the State of California (State) to enter into an interagency agreement with the RCD. The FRI includes the Narrative Work Plan Form, Work Plan Form(s), Budget Form, and REV Eligibility Form (if applicable).

II. Funding Request Submission

Funding requests can be provided in one of three ways.

1. Box.com – RCDs wishing to submit a funding request should contact Department staff. Staff will create a Box.com folder for the RCD and send the RCD representative an invitation to share the folder. Box.com is a secure file sharing website. All funding request materials should be uploaded into the RCDs folder. Please see the attached

Uploading Documents to Box.com User Guide (Exhibit H) for more information about using Box.com.

2. If Box.com will not work for your RCD, please submit all funding request materials by email to rcd@conservation.ca.gov
3. Finally, if Box.com or email will not work for your RCD, please submit all funding request materials on a CD, DVD, or USB drive by mail to:

RCD Assistance Program
Attn: Funding Request
801 K St MS 14-15
Sacramento CA 95814

All funding requests are due by **(March 28, 2017)** at 5 p.m. Early submittals are encouraged.

To be eligible, funding requests must be submitted by a RCD formed pursuant to California Public Resource Code Section 9001, et al.

RCDs must submit a resolution of the Board of Directors approving submission of the application.

III. Funding Categories

The performance measures in the RCD Vision and Standards form the basis for defining the capacity building activities funded by this program. Each RCD will have the opportunity to choose the preferred funding category under which it will apply. An RCD can only be funded in one category; provided however, an RCD acting as a Fiscal Sponsor RCD (as defined below) is eligible to request and receive REV funding.

Funding categories are:

1. Bootstrap Category
2. Relevant, Excellent and Visible (REV) Category

A. Bootstrap Category

Bootstrap RCDs are defined as RCDs that cannot provide all the items listed in Exhibit D.

Requests submitted under this category include the following limitations and requirements:

- The actual costs must not exceed \$15,000 per Bootstrap RCD. Eligible costs are listed in the Bootstrap RCD portion of the Eligible Costs and Activities section below. RCDs wishing to participate in a consolidation effort can request an additional \$5,000.

- Bootstrap RCDs must comply with Public Resource Code (PRC) Section 9084 requirements including:
 - Provide a 25% match, of which 40% must be in cash. For example, if an RCD requests \$5,000, the required match would be \$1,250 (25%) – of which at least \$500 would be cash. The remaining \$750 could be provided as in-kind match.
 - Have a long range work plan in compliance with PRC Section 9413.
 - Have an annual work plan in compliance with PRC Section 9413.
 - Convene regular meetings in accordance with the open meeting requirements of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 54950) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code (Brown Act).
- All activities and costs must be included in the “Bootstrap Category Eligible Costs and Activities” below and identified in the work plan and the budget.
- A maximum of \$200,000 will be awarded in this category. If the Department receives more than \$200,000 in requests, the funding will be distributed prorata to the Bootstrap RCDs that apply. If the Department receives less than \$200,000 of requests, funding not distributed to Bootstrap RCDs will be awarded in the REV category.

Bootstrap Fiscal Sponsor RCD Option

The Bootstrap Fiscal Sponsor Option is open to REV RCDs that wish to apply for funding on behalf of Bootstrap RCDs. Bootstrap RCDs will obtain funding through their Fiscal Sponsor RCD to build capacity. The Fiscal Sponsor RCD will be responsible for providing the Bootstrap RCD with funding and will submit invoices to the Department for reimbursement on behalf of the Bootstrap RCD. Fiscal Sponsor RCDs can support up to five RCDs.

Actual costs may not exceed \$15,000 per Bootstrap RCD, with an additional \$5,000 available for consolidation efforts.

The Fiscal Sponsor RCD can request up to 10% in additional funds for administration.

The \$15,000 awarded to the Bootstrap RCDs must be spent on Bootstrap RCD eligible costs in the “Eligible Costs and Activities” section below.

Fiscal Sponsor RCDs can submit their own REV funding request in addition to acting as a Fiscal Sponsor RCD for Bootstrap RCDs.

There must be a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fiscal Sponsor RCD and the Bootstrap RCD(s). All RCDs must submit board resolutions supporting the application before funds are awarded.

B. REV Category

REV RCDs are defined as RCDs that can provide the items listed in Exhibit D. To qualify for funding in this category an RCD:

- Must comply with Public Resource Code (PRC) Section 9084 requirements including:
 - Provide a 25% match, of which 40% must be in cash.
 - Have a long range work plan in compliance with PRC Section 9413.
 - Have an annual work plan in compliance with PRC Section 9413.
 - Convene regular meetings in accordance with the open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.
- Must comply with requirements listed in Exhibit D with supporting material. The Department will not enter into interagency agreement until those items are met.
- All activities must meet objectives that are outlined in the RCD Vision and Standards. Multiple activities can be identified in the RCD's request for funding. Eligible costs and activities are described in the "Eligible Costs and Activities" section below. Examples of eligible activities and associated costs are outlined in Exhibit E.
- The maximum funding per RCD will be calculated based on the number of funding recipients. The Department has targeted \$2,000,000 to be awarded in this category. If the Department receives less than \$200,000 in requests from Bootstrap RCDs, funding not distributed to Bootstrap RCDs will be added to the REV total.
- The work plan and budget should be developed to accommodate the fluctuation in potential funding (i.e. scaled down or up dependent on number of applications received).

Consolidation Option

This option is open to RCDs applying in either the Bootstrap or REV category. This section allows for RCDs to apply for up to an additional \$5,000 per district for consolidation costs.

- The requesting RCDs must submit a board resolution from each RCD involved acknowledging that each RCD will actively participate in the consolidation process. Resolutions should be submitted with the funding request. If not immediately available, resolutions must be submitted prior to award funding.
- RCDs must provide a work plan and budget for the consolidation process.
- Eligible consolidation costs include:
 - Facilitator or staff costs for consolidation planning and implementation.
 - Other fees and expenses associated with consolidation, including LAFCO fees.

IV. Eligible Costs and Activities

Eligible costs outlined in the approved work plan and budget will be reimbursed up to actual incurred costs.

A. Bootstrap Category Eligible Activities (limited to items listed below):

This funding will help RCDs build capacity to operate transparently. Activities eligible for funding in this category include:

Creating and adopting:

- Conflict of Interest Code
- Reimbursement Policy
- Non-discrimination Policy
- Public Records Request Policy
- Updated Long Range Work Plan
- Updated Annual Work Plan
- Annual Budget
- SB 272 Enterprise Systems Catalog

If applicable to RCD, creating and adopting:

- Associate Director Policy
- Bidding Policy
- Fee for Service Policy
- Investment Policy
- Reserve Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Personnel Policy
- Vehicle Use Policy

Participating in:

- Sexual harassment training for board and staff.

B. Bootstrap Category Eligible Costs (limited to items listed below):

- Costs associated with the preparation of an RCD financial audit in compliance with PRC Section 9528.
- Staff or consultant cost associated with the development of the policies and legal requirements listed above. Staff costs include: (i) actual salary and (ii) benefits up to 32% of salary.

- In-direct Costs: Indirect costs can be included in the project budget, not to exceed 15% of the total budget. The budget must include a narrative description of all indirect costs.

C. REV Capacity Building Eligible Activities:

This funding will help RCDs develop and support projects and programs that build RCD capacity and improve performance as outlined in RCD Visions and Standards. Multiple activities can be identified in the RCD's work plan and budget.

A regional or multiple RCD collaboration may apply, as long as all activities are identified as an eligible activity. RCDs must identify the regional activities in each participating RCDs individual work plans. If a regional or multiple RCD activity is included in the work plan, each individual RCD must apply for funding and have a separate interagency agreement with the Department. Such regional efforts must demonstrate that the funding necessary to complete the project has been obtained.

D. REV Capacity Building Eligible Costs (Examples provided in Exhibit E):

- Staff or consultant costs associated with work plan implementation. Staff costs include: (i) actual salary, and (ii) benefits up to 32% of salary.
- Equipment that will be used in program development, including:
 - Equipment such as a no-till drill or chipper, that will be used to create an agricultural or natural resource based fee-for-service program.
 - Equipment such as plotters or GIS software, that will expand the district's ability to meet community resource needs.
- In-direct costs: In-direct costs can be included in the project budget, not to exceed 15% of the total budget. The budget must include a narrative description of all in-direct costs.

E. Ineligible Costs:

- Vehicles
- Furniture
- Real estate
- Construction materials
- Heavy equipment rental
- Food and beverages
- Rent

V. Funding Request Requirements:

To be considered for financial assistance, an RCD must fully complete and submit the following items:

- ✓ Cover Page (must be signed by Board President or authorized designee). (Exhibit F)

- ✓ Checklist. (Exhibit G)
- ✓ Work Plan Narrative Form. (Exhibit A)
- ✓ Work Plan Form. (Exhibit B)
- ✓ Budget Form including identification of match amounts and sources. (Exhibit C)
- ✓ Board resolution approving application. If not immediately available, resolutions must be submitted prior to award.
- ✓ Match commitment letter(s) from RCD and contributing partners.
- ✓ MOUs/board resolutions when applicable.

If RCD is applying for funding under the Bootstrap category:

- ✓ Meeting agendas from six most recent RCD board meetings.
- ✓ Certification of Long Range Plan and Annual Plan created in compliance with PRC Section 9314 pursuant to Funding Checklist. (Exhibit G)

If RCD is applying for funding under the REV category:

- ✓ Exhibit D checklist including all support documentation.

All funding recipients are required to have liability insurance at the time the grant agreement is signed.

VI. Work Plan

The work plan consists of the work plan narrative and work plan form(s). The narrative provides an overview of the proposed objectives and activities and the work plan provides the details of how objectives will be achieved.

Work Plan Narrative

The work plan narrative consists of four parts:

1. Executive Summary – The executive summary must include a description of the work for which financial assistance is sought. The summary should briefly highlight the major components of the work plan including a description of the objective(s) accomplished by the work plan. Smaller efforts may have only one objective, while more complex efforts could have more.
2. Capacity Building – The capacity building section must include a description of how the funding will build the capacity of the RCD. The section must identify any bootstrap eligible activities or REV activities from Exhibit E that are included in the work plan.
3. Benefits – The benefits section must include a description of how the proposed activities will benefit California's working lands, natural resources, and the local community. This section must provide an explanation of the public or private need for the work, including, but not limited to, any information demonstrating the urgency of these activities.

4. Performance Measures – The performance measures section must describe a performance measure for each objective. Performance measures are generally reported as numbers, ratios, or percentages. They should show how actions will directly benefit RCD capacity, agriculture, working lands, or natural resources. A performance measure should not be a list of completed tasks. Performance measures should go beyond counting numbers of meetings held, numbers of attendees, numbers of mailings, etc.
5. Sustainability – The sustainability section must describe how the RCD plans to sustain the efforts initiated with this funding.

Work Plan Forms

Each funding request must include completed work plan form(s) (Exhibit B). The work plan form will incorporate the objective(s) discussed in the narrative and outline the critical tasks necessary to accomplish the objective. Critical tasks are incremental steps that must be completed to accomplish the objective. Successful completion of tasks in the work plan should lead to the accomplishment of the objective. In addition, the work plan must identify performance measures and an implementation schedule. Exhibit B provides a sample work plan.

VII. Budget

Each funding request must include a detailed budget (Exhibit C). In compliance with Public Resource Code Section 9084, ***RCDs must provide a minimum of a 25% local match, with 40% of the match consisting of cash.*** RCDs may provide a cash match of more than 40%, which would then reduce the required in-kind contribution. Exhibit C provides a sample budget.

The budget must include:

- An itemized summary of the projected cost of the work.
- An estimate of the amount of the projected costs of the work that will be covered by local support funding, including funding from in-kind contributions or services.

Match requirements:

- Match must come from a non-state source such as private, city, county, or federal contributions of time or money. State pass-through grants of federal monies, such as Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants [319(h) grants] are eligible as match.
- Only allowable costs are eligible to be used as cash match. If a cost is ineligible for reimbursement, it is ineligible as cash match.
- Cash match includes available money in a checking or savings account, or guaranteed cash contributions from a federal grant or other non-state source committed to funding the work plan. It may include city, county, water district, private foundation or other contributions. It must be a liquid asset and available for the express purpose of supporting the activities outlined in the work plan.

In-kind specifications:

- In-kind contributions include staff time, expenditures or volunteer efforts that support the work plan activities. It may include the use of non-state or third party-contributed services, real or personal property or equipment.
- In-kind and cash contributions provided by a partner must be documented in a letter of intent, grant agreement, letter of commitment or a memorandum of understanding. It must identify the amount of the commitment and be signed by an individual authorized to financially bind the partner organization.
- All matching funds provided by the RCD must be documented in a commitment letter authorized by the RCD Board of Directors and signed by the Board President. The letter must specifically describe the amount of cash match and certify that the money is from a non-state source. The letter must also describe the in-kind contributions and assign a monetary value to each contribution. The Department can not anticipate funding constraints and criteria associated with other grant programs. It is the responsibility of the RCD to consult with other grantors and funding sources to ensure that the use of their funds as match is acceptable and consistent with other funding requirements.

The funding will pay for in-direct costs of up to 15% of the total requested amount. These costs must be listed clearly in the budget.

VIII. Reporting and Invoicing

A. Contract Administration

Projects awarded under this program are administered through interagency agreements. The Department will prepare the agreement once a completed funding request has been submitted, reviewed and accepted by Department staff.

All payments are paid in arrears and are based on actual incurred costs. Advance payments will not be authorized. Eligible costs must be listed on the invoice submitted to the Department and compatible with work plan set forth in the interagency agreement. Only expenses identified in the budget will be reimbursed. Expenses incurred prior to the effective date of the agreement and after the closing date of the agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

B. Reporting

RCDs must submit written reports to the Department that show compliance with the agreement. Interim verbal or written reports may be required to supplement the more formal status reports listed below.

- Quarterly Report: The report will primarily focus on the tasks completed over the prior three-month period. Reports must provide evidence that shows objectives and tasks are being completed. If not, justification must be provided.

- Final Report: In addition to detailing the accomplishments for the final three months of the agreement, a final report must summarize the overall results and outcomes of the project. RCDs will be required to provide a detailed written report. Items included will be:
 - The impact on the RCD's capacity.
 - The demonstration of completion of tasks and objectives on the work plan.
 - Results of the performance measures.
 - An accounting summary that describes how the money was spent in accordance with the purposes and conditions of the agreement.

C. Invoicing

RCDs will be allowed to submit quarterly invoices with the quarterly reports. Invoices must be sequentially numbered, signed with an original signature by the District Manager or President, and prepared in triplicate with all supporting documents (receipts, cancelled checks, payroll stubs, etc.). All submitted documents require annotations that links the expenditure directly to the approved work plan. The Department is the final approving authority on reimbursement of expenditures.

IX. Schedule

- All grant funds must be expended by February 28, 2019
- February 28, 2017 – FRI released
- March 28, 2017 – Funding Request Deadline. All materials must be submitted electronically no later than 5:00 pm on March 28, 2017
- May 2017 – Interagency agreements finalized and executed

Email Address: rcd@conservation.ca.gov

Mailing Address: Department of Conservation
 Division of Land Resource Protection
 RCD Assistance Program
 801 K Street, MS 14-15
 Sacramento, CA 95814

FRI Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Work Plan Narrative Form.
 Exhibit B: Work Plan Form, Instructions for Preparing Work Plan, Sample Work Plan.
 Exhibit C: Budget Form, Instructions for Preparing Budget, Sample Budget.
 Exhibit D: REV Eligibility Form.
 Exhibit E: REV Capacity Building Category Examples of Eligible Activities and Costs.
 Exhibit F: Funding Request Cover Page.
 Exhibit G: Funding Request Checklist.
 Exhibit H: Uploading Documents to Box.com User Guide.
 Exhibit I: Glossary of Terms.
 Exhibit J: Public Resources Code Sections 9084 and 9413.