

**2021 REGIONAL FOREST AND FIRE CAPACITY PROGRAM
GRANT GUIDELINES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Conservation**



For additional information, please contact:

Department of Conservation

<http://conservation.ca.gov/>

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Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program

At-A-Glance

Program

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program is designed to support the development and implementation of regional priority plans to improve forest health and fire resiliency consistent with the recommendations of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and the Forest Carbon Plan. This program is administered by the Department of Conservation.

Critical Dates

Final Guidelines released August 2021

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Section 1: Introduction and Program Summary

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program seeks to increase regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement projects that improve forest health and fire resiliency, facilitate greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and increase carbon sequestration in forests throughout California. Block grants will be utilized by recipients to support partner capacity, project readiness, implementation of pilot projects, and regional priority planning to achieve landscape-level and community wildfire resilience consistent with the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) as well as the California Forest Carbon Plan and Executive Order B-52-18. To accomplish the program's objectives, block grant recipients will oversee regional distribution of funding and collaborative planning with local entities, including local and tribal governments, nonprofits and non-governmental organizations, land trusts, resource conservation districts, and private partners.

For the purposes of this program, a "region" is the area served by an individual block grant recipient. "Landscape-level" means a heterogeneous area within a region that contains multiple and interacting land-uses, watersheds, and ecosystems. Under this definition of "landscape-level," a landscape is not defined by its size; rather, it is defined by its structures and functions.

This round of funding builds on the 2018 Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, but will be administered directly by the Department of Conservation.

Background

Model

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program was modeled after the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Watershed Improvement Program. The Watershed Improvement Program serves as an example of a coordinated, integrated, collaborative initiative to restore the health of large watersheds. Launched in 2015, the program works to increase the pace and scale of investments in the Sierra Nevada to address critical watershed needs and has developed a regional strategy to:

- Assess restoration and climate resiliency needs
- Increase investments in the region
- Address key policy issues affecting the region
- Identify and implement projects

The Watershed Improvement Program is endorsed by over twenty-five local, regional, state, and federal organizations currently working to implement this regional strategy.

Forest Carbon Plan

In May 2018, the Forest Climate Action Team, comprised of state, local, and federal agencies released the Forest Carbon Plan, which calls for significant increases in the pace and scale of forest and watershed improvements to restore the health and resilience of California's forests by reducing conditions that lead to catastrophic wildfire and ensuring that California's forests remain net carbon sinks that provide a range of ecosystem and social benefits to the state. The Forest Carbon Plan encourages the protection of California's forested lands, reduction of conversion to non-forest uses, and the pursuit of innovations in wood products and biomass

utilization to reduce or offset GHG emissions; promotes land stewardship; and, strengthens rural economies and communities. The Forest Carbon Plan provides best available science and recommendations to achieve its goals across all forested regions of the state.

The Forest Carbon Plan emphasizes that leadership at the regional scale, built upon collaboration between diverse entities, is critical to efficiently meet the plan's goals and address variations in forest conditions throughout California. Among other things, the plan calls for:

- Expansion and improvement of forest management to enhance forest health and resilience
- Bolstering capacity for collaborative planning and implementation at the landscape or watershed level
- Coordinated and integrated management of forest health protection, management, and restoration efforts at the regional scale
- Inclusion of local actors in decisions for how to prioritize implementation of forest health protection, management, and restoration practices at the ecoregional level
- Inclusion of local actors as leaders in the collaborative process to develop regional priorities, pursue funding, and implement forest health protection, management, and restoration practices

To meet these goals, the Forest Carbon Plan recommends that, among other things, state and federal agencies:

- Provide training on methods for successful collaboration
- Provide staff or fund contractors to provide facilitation services, collect and analyze data, perform environmental review, and provide other support to collaborative efforts
- Seek support from nongovernmental organizations or other appropriate private sector entities
- Provide cost-share grants or other financial support to allow local governments and nongovernmental organizations to meaningfully participate in collaborative efforts
- Work to strengthen the social and financial connections between downstream water users and forested source watersheds through available mechanisms
- Work to conduct permitting and environmental review processes efficiently, while ensuring that the related environmental protection standards are achieved

California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan

Building from the Forest Carbon plans and lessons learned from subsequent catastrophic fire seasons, on January 8th, 2021, the Governor's task force issued a comprehensive action plan to reduce wildfire risk for vulnerable communities, improve the health of forests and wildlands and accelerate action to combat climate change.

The [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) set a broadly supported strategy to increase the pace and scale of forest and wildland management to meet the state's target of completing projects on 500,000 acres annually by 2025 and expanding the use of prescribed fire, particularly on state-owned lands. The plan calls for achieving these goals largely

through regional strategies tailored to the environmental conditions, risks and priorities in each area.

The Action Plan also centers on building a large network of fuel breaks around vulnerable communities, expanding home hardening, defensible space and preparedness planning to create wildfire-adapted communities, and sustaining the economic vitality of rural forested areas. Specifically, the Action Plan focuses on the following goals:

- Scale-up forest management to meet the state and federal 1 million-acre annual restoration target by 2025
- Significantly expand the use of prescribed fire across the state
- Reforest areas burned by catastrophic fire
- Support communities, neighborhoods, and residents in increasing their resilience to wildfire
- Utilize a statewide network of regional plans to ensure coordinated, comprehensive action across the state
- Develop a comprehensive program to assist private forest landowners
- Create economic opportunities for the use of forest materials that store carbon, reduce emissions, and contribute to sustainable local economies
- Improve and align forest management regulations
- Spur innovation and better measure progress

Program Authorization and Funding

SB 85 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Budget Act of 2020), signed on April 13, 2021, includes significantly augmented funding across multiple programs to accelerate projects to protect high-risk communities from wildfires. This funding package appropriated \$50 million in General Fund monies to the Department for the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity program. This funding is available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2022, with full liquidation until June 30, 2025. Up to five percent (5%) of the appropriation may be used by the Department for administrative costs. This program will implement this appropriation.

Section 2: Scope of Work

Program goals and objectives

The principal goal of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program is to restore health and resilience to forests, other wildfire prone landscapes, and the communities within at the regional scale. This program aims to increase regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement landscape-level forest health and wildfire resiliency projects that have broad support by stakeholders in and affected by the region. To that end, block grant recipients will achieve the following objectives:

- Promote and support collaborative planning and implementation of wildfire resiliency and forest health protection, management, and restoration efforts at the landscape or watershed level
- Coordinate and integrate management of wildfire resiliency and forest health protection, management, and restoration efforts at the regional scale
- Identify, prioritize, plan, and implement forestry and wildfire protection projects that meet regional and statewide public safety, ecosystem, and public resource goals, and that are consistent with the Forest Carbon Plan

Block Grant Recipient Responsibilities

Block grant recipients shall:

- Distribute necessary funds through subgrants and/or contracts to create regional plans, develop and permit projects, and implement demonstration projects consistent with these guidelines and the Forest Carbon Plan
- Ensure execution of all project deliverables and requirements outlined in this section within the grant term
- Coordinate and integrate management of wildfire resiliency and forest health protection, management, and restoration efforts within their region
- Coordinate activities with the relevant regional groups under the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

Deliverables

Block grant recipients may include each the following activities in their scope of work:

1. Complete project development and permitting to generate implementation-ready projects that address regional forest and fire protection priorities for funding consideration by the various programs represented in the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force;
2. Implement forest and fuels management demonstration projects that showcase scalable models for management, funding, and achieving and quantifying multiple benefits; and
3. Develop outreach, education, and training as needed to facilitate and build capacity for implementing the above activities.
4. New block grant recipients may develop Regional Priority Plans for forestry, fire protection, and forested watershed improvements needed to achieve regional and

statewide public safety, climate resiliency, and ecosystem goals included in the Forest Carbon Plan and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan;

Workplans for funding appropriated by SB 85 should prioritize expenditures that have an expedient and demonstrable benefit to reducing landscape and community wildfire or post wildfire risk. Workplans should prioritize based on urgent deployment but can include expenditures that take place over the full expenditure period if there is a justification of effectiveness or equity. Program deliverables of highest priority for these funds are as follows:

1. **Project Development:** A top priority is to greatly increase the scale and speed of project development so that implementation programs have extensive statewide lists of shovel ready projects. Project development strategies should be equitable, supporting subregions with both higher and lower capacity.
2. **Demonstration Projects:** Projects that implement techniques new to the area, highlight new technology or approaches, and could be scaled up. These projects must include an outreach component that will allow the grant recipient to share results with other regions or practitioners.
3. **Critical Capacity Investments:** Capacity investments that help partners manage increases in project development and implementation workload. The Department is still determining if these can include field equipment.

Regional Priority Plans

Each new block grant recipient must use a portion of this funding to develop a Regional Priority Plan that identifies and prioritizes projects at the landscape or watershed-level to address forest health and wildfire risks within their region. Existing block grantees should use prior funding for these activities. Projects should be prioritized by type, resource, watershed, implementation strategy, or other logical division. Block grant recipients must consider each of the following when prioritizing projects:

- Areas that contribute to high wildfire risk faced by adjacent or nearby communities
- Forests projected to be at risk due to climatically driven stressors
- Forests at greatest risk to high-severity mortality events (e.g., fire, insect outbreak)
- Forests at high risk of type-conversion (e.g., forest to shrub or grass vegetation)
- Areas with high habitat values at risk, such as spotted owl activity centers
- Headwater areas that provide significant water supply
- Areas that need to be reforested after high mortality events
- Forests at risk of conversion to other uses, including development and agriculture
- Opportunities for follow-up “maintenance” treatments via prescribed fire or other fuels reduction techniques
- Availability of adequate workforce and infrastructure to complete projects

Block grant recipients should integrate the above priorities into their plans as appropriate for their region.

Each Regional Priority Plan must be developed in coordination with efforts to identify forest and fire prevention priorities of Governor Newsom’s Administration. To do this, block grant recipients should review and consider incorporating projects highlighted in the CAL FIRE

project prioritization mandated through Executive Order N-05-19 that fall within each block grant region's jurisdiction into their Regional Prioritization Plan. Further, Regional Priority Plan development must be conducted in coordination with the relevant Regional Prioritization Group of the Governor's Forest Management Task Force. Coordination with the Regional Prioritization Groups is intended to ensure that priorities within each Regional Priority Plan are aligned, where appropriate, with priorities of all state and non-state member agencies of the Task Force and their respective project-funding programs, or identify additional needs not presently funded. The Forest Management Taskforce Science Advisory Panel should be consulted with to provide scientific expertise and input as feasible to develop each Regional Priority Plan.

Further, block grant recipients should consider information available from Cal-Adapt, California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, the Adaptation Clearinghouse, and other applicable and available resources in the development of their Regional Plan in order to ensure that their plan is consistent with the best available state, regional, and local data. Block grant recipients should work with their respective regional collaborative for climate adaptation to understand and integrate information from the above sources into their Regional Priority Plan.

Regional Priority Plans must be developed with broad participation of regional residents, tribes, state/local/federal governments, landowners, and other organizations. Block grant recipients will lead the development of the Regional Priority Plan for their region, partnering directly with organizations in their region throughout the process. Each block grant recipient should engage priority populations and other stakeholders within their jurisdiction in the development of their Regional Priority Plan. The plan should incorporate actionable components that reduce risk to priority populations from wildfire and other climate-related disasters. Each plan should also increase the ability of priority populations to access statewide public and other grant moneys for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

To ensure appropriate consistency across regions in the development of each Regional Priority Plan, block grant recipients and partnering entities will work in coordination with the Department and the Statewide Support Entity block grant recipient, who will support the implementation of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program statewide.

Desired outcomes from the development of each Regional Priority Plan include:

- Increased capacity of block grant recipients and their partners to identify, prioritize, and plan for wildfire and forest health needs within their region
- Coordinated fire planning and management efforts across land ownerships
- Development and management of a broad collaborative structure and effective networks of partners and stakeholders
- Attainment of strong regional support for the Regional Priority Plan and identified projects through broad inclusion of stakeholders and partners

Desired outcomes from the priority projects identified in each Regional Priority Plan include:

- Reduced wildfire severity

- Improved forested ecosystem health
- Increased fire recovery efforts
- Improved ecosystem services provided by forested watersheds
- Increased ecosystem service resilience
- Protected cultural resources
- Improved water quality
- Increased water retention in the ecosystem
- Identified material management and labor needs to accomplish prioritized opportunities
- Identified land use agreements and planning needs to accomplish prioritized opportunities
- Attainment of broad regional support and funding for projects
- Increased permitting efficiency to meet scale of need
- Increased regional workforce development opportunities

Where available, block grant recipients will use a measurement tool to assess desired outcomes. If not available, the block grant recipient shall work with the Department to develop methods to assess desired outcomes.

Project Development and Permitting

Block grant recipients must use a portion of this funding to support preliminary project development and permitting activities for the priority projects identified in their Regional Priority Plan or previously contemplated projects that were identified prior to development of the Regional Priority Plan and already have regional support. Developing and completing permitting for these projects should ensure that projects are ready to receive implementation funding from state and non-state programs. These projects should contribute to the desired outcomes for priority projects identified in each Regional Priority Plan and increase ecosystem and adaptive capacities, fire resilience, health, and, and human safety. Block grant recipients must work in collaboration with their Regional Priority Plan partners to develop and permit projects. Project development and permitting may occur in parallel with the development of the Regional Priority Plan pursuant to consultation with the Department.

Desired outcomes for project development and permitting include:

- Completed project design and permitting
- Established non-state partnerships, support, and funding, as well as broad partnerships with regional stakeholders
- Developed pipeline of multiple years of implementation-ready projects that meet the goals of the Regional Priority Plan available for funding consideration

Demonstration Projects

Block grant recipients must use a portion of their grant to fund at least one demonstration project. The demonstration project may be one identified in the Regional Priority Plan or a pre-identified, shovel-ready project. The demonstration project(s) should maximize(s) desired outcomes of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program and should serve as a model for meeting regional and statewide goals.

Desired outcomes for demonstration projects include:

- Quantified achievement of multiple desired benefits of the program
- Incorporated participation from multiple partners and funding sources
- Replicability and scalability
- Support for regional workforce development opportunities
- Integrated benefits to priority populations
- Increased community outreach, involvement, and education

Demonstration projects will be carried out with the approval of or under the supervision of licensed forester.

Outreach, Education, and Training

Critical to all the above activities, the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program intends to achieve outreach to a broad and diverse range of communities within each region to develop a comprehensive understanding of and support for the program. This includes performing outreach to and engaging priority populations in the development of Regional Priority Plans. Further, the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program intends to strengthen practitioners' forest health and resilience skills by developing region-wide peer-to-peer training opportunities. Block grant recipients must use funds from this program to further the above goals.

Desired outcomes of outreach, education, and training efforts associated with Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program block grants include:

- Community-level engagement and education on regional priority planning for forest health and resilience projects.
- Targeted outreach to and engagement of priority populations
- Practitioner-level education and regional coordination
- Regional understanding of the benefits of forest health and resilience projects identified in the Regional Priority Plan
- Broad regional support for Regional Priority Plan
- A collaborative stakeholder structure that can implement the Regional Priority Plan in the long-term

Distribution of Block Grant Funds to Third Parties

As the fiscal administrators of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, block grant recipients will award subgrants funding or enter into contracts to fulfill the scope of work of this program. Subgrantees maybe selected to engage in completion of all the deliverables or for discrete tasks. Block grant recipients may award subgrants via competitive or non-competitive processes and may engage subgrantees and contractors to fulfill individual deliverables or multiple deliverables, at their discretion and consistent with their policies.

Eligible subgrantees include federal, tribal, state and local government agencies; resource conservation districts; special districts; universities, colleges, and research institutions; and, California 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

Contracts maybe entered in to with qualified entities in accordance with block grant recipients' internal contracting policies and procedures.

Administrative Activities

Additionally, block grant recipients must participate in all of the following activities:

- An orientation
- Meetings with the relevant Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Regional Groups
- Regular update meetings with Department
- Monthly Webinars
- Creation of statewide RFFC program reports
- Coordination with local and regional CALFIRE representatives

Reporting

Each block grant recipient will be required to participate in regular meetings with the Department. The meetings are intended to update the Department and address any issues in a timely fashion to help ensure that success of each block grant. In addition, each block grant recipient must participate in the appropriate Regional Prioritization Group of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

Block grant recipients receiving advanced funds must provide a fiscal report detailing how those funds have been expended on a quarterly basis and along with each subsequent request for an advance. Block grant recipients that receive funding on a reimbursement basis must provide a fiscal report detailing how funds have been expended along with each invoice.

Environmental Compliance

Activities funded under this program must comply with applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other environmental permitting requirements. Block grant recipients are responsible for project compliance and grant agreement budgets may include the funding necessary for compliance-related tasks.

Section 3: Grant Awards

Focus Regions and Available Funding

Ten (10) regional block grants will be awarded on a noncompetitive basis to support implementation of landscape or watershed-level forest health projects in North Coast-Inland, Coastal-Inland, Sierra-Cascade-Inyo, and Southern California, as shown in Appendix A. To best ensure efficient planning and strategic inter-agency coordination, the geographic extent of these regions may shift slightly as the regional focus of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force develops and Executive Order N-05-19 is implemented. Regional block grant recipients will distribute funds to subgrantees and work to ensure coordinated and integrated management of forest health and resilience activities throughout their region. Block grants will be disbursed regionally as follows:

North Coast-Inland, \$8.88 Million, 3 grants

Sierra-Cascade-Inyo, \$8.88 Million, 2 grants

Coastal-Inland, \$8.88 Million, 1 grant

Southern, \$8.88 Million, 4 grants

In addition to the 10 regional block grants, block grants will be awarded in the amount of \$3 million to fund statewide coordination of and technical assistance to regional block grant recipients, as well as to support forest health and resilience efforts in communities and priority areas not covered by the regional block grant recipients.

At the Department's discretion, an additional \$5 million will be allocated on an as-needed basis for statewide or regional block grant recipients.

Additional funding for special projects will be awarded for statewide support as follows: \$3 million to support Prescribed Burn Associations, \$1 million to support the Indigenous Stewardship Project, and \$1 million to support capacity building grants for disadvantaged communities.

Should additional funding consistent with the purposes of this program become available in future years, Department may, at its discretion, make new grants or allocate funding to increase grants funded under these Guidelines.

Block Grant Recipient Selection

11 entities have been identified to serve as the fiscal administrators of Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program block grants.

Statewide and regional entities eligible to receive block grants are: local and tribal governments, state conservancies, joint powers authorities, public agencies, resource conservation districts, special districts, and California 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

Factors considered when selecting regional block grant recipients include:

- Demonstrated ability to coordinate the many entities across their region necessary to meet program goals
- Existing strong regional partnerships and support and capacity to expand these partnerships
- Demonstrated ability to conduct regional planning efforts
- Fiscal and administrative control systems to adequately oversee the expenditure of block grant awards
- Policy and program expertise relevant to meeting program goals

Factors considered when selecting the statewide block grant recipient include:

- Experience and expertise in developing forest health and wildfire protection planning statewide
- Experience and expertise in conducting effective and inclusive outreach across diverse communities
- Experience and expertise in developing peer-to-peer and inter-regional sharing of project implementation strategies and skills
- Strong relationships with primary actors in forest health and wildfire protection planning statewide
- Fiscal and administrative control systems to adequately oversee the expenditure of block grant awards
- Policy and program expertise relevant to meeting program goals

Proposal Development

Selected entities collaborated with the Department to develop grant proposals consistent with the goals and objectives of this program.

Section 4: Grant Agreement and Administration

Overview of grant execution

1. The Department will announce awards.
2. Each block grant recipient must enter into a grant agreement with the Department. The block grant recipient must sign and return the grant agreement to the Department, within three months of the award date or risk forfeiting their award.
3. The grant agreement is considered fully executed once the Department's authorized signatory has signed the grant agreement.
4. Once the Department notifies the block grant recipient that the agreement has been fully executed, the grant recipient should promptly commence work.

Performance Period and Grant Term

Block grant recipients need to complete all tasks and deliverables by March 30, 2025, to ensure payment by the termination of the grant agreement term. The grant term will continue until June 30, 2025. The grant may be extended for an additional time at the Department's discretion and with appropriate budget authorization.

Funding and accounting

Payment of grant funds

- Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis.
- The Department may distribute up to 25% of the original grant amount to a block grant recipient in advance at a time per Agency protocols.
- Except for permitted advance payments, payments will be made in arrears.
- Grantees may invoice not more than monthly, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.
- Funds cannot be disbursed until there is a fully executed Grant Agreement between the Department and the Grantee.
- Only those eligible costs incurred as outlined in these Guidelines and in accordance with the Grant Agreement will be eligible for reimbursement.

Accounting of grant funds

It is essential that complete and accurate records be maintained. Grant recipients must maintain an accounting and record keeping system that reflects sound fiscal controls and safeguards. The accounting information must be sufficient so that the total cost of each aspect of the project can be readily determined and records are readily available upon demand. Grant recipients must retain all grant transaction records for a period of four years after final payment.

Any advanced funds must be kept separate in accounting records from block grant recipient's other funds. Interest earnings shall be allocated to the block grant's advanced funds for use on the project or returned to the Department. Advanced funds that are unused shall be returned to the Department promptly upon completion of the project or termination of the grant agreement, whichever occurs first.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs must be incurred during the Grant Term. All costs must be reasonable, as defined in Section 5 of these Guidelines. Eligible costs are:

Staff costs

Block grant recipient, subgrantee, and their contractors' staff costs, including salary at an hourly rate, benefits, taxes, and leave. Administrative costs should not be included in the staff rate or salary. Administrative costs should be budgeted separately and must comply with the requirements outlined below.

Travel costs

In-state travel for block grant recipient, subgrantee and their contractors' staff as necessary to fulfill the deliverables of the program. Costs must meet the requirements outlined below and in the Grant Agreement:

- Accommodation-related travel costs: maximum reimbursement rates based on county as shown here: <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/Pages/travel-lodging-reimbursement.aspx>, with no option for approval of an "excess lodging rate."
- Rental car or mileage for travel directly related to execution of scope of work will be reimbursed at the rental car or Reimbursement Rate Per Mile for Personal Vehicle as shown here: <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/Pages/travel-personal-vehicle.aspx>.
- Rental car, train, or airfare will only be reimbursed to attend those meetings outlined in the Administrative Activities section, and then only if it is the typical method used to get from one location to the other
- No other travel-related costs will be reimbursed through this grant program

Administrative costs

Administrative costs may account for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the total block grant award and may include those costs incurred by the block grant recipient to administer the grant, or costs by subgrantees to perform those tasks necessary to fulfill the deliverables outlined in these guidelines. Administrative costs include:

- Office space
- Supplies
- Legal or management oversight
- Prorated general liability, Workers' Compensation (may be included in payroll), and automotive insurance
- Equipment costs not included as direct costs in the budget.

Project development costs and permitting fees

Block grant funding may be used for project development costs:

- Preparing project plans, specifications and cost estimates that will result in a specific project
- Acquiring permits for specific, future on-the-ground projects
- Analysis required to support complete CEQA and or NEPA documentation

- Performing necessary cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys and/or developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project

Demonstration project implementation costs

Block grant funding may be used for demonstration project implementation costs including:

- Preparation of bid packages and contractor documents
- Performance costs within the scope of the demonstration project including materials, supplies, and equipment
- Labor and other costs necessary for the physical implementation of the project
- Pre- and post-project monitoring and adaptive management, including preparation of long-term management plan

Outreach, Education, and Training

Block grant funding may be used for Outreach, Education, and Training activities including:

- Meeting space
- Materials
- Facilitation

Equipment

Block grant funding may be used for Equipment purchases that will build capacity within the region to meet the goals of the program.

For any equipment purchased or built with funds that are reimbursable as a direct cost of the RFFC project, as determined by DOC, the Grantee, Partner, or Subcontractor, as applicable, must be the sole owner on title. During the Project Completion Period, equipment must be dedicated to the described use in the same proportion and scope as was in the Grant Agreement, unless DOC agrees otherwise in writing. On completion or early termination of the Grant Agreement, the State will either require that the equipment be returned or authorize the continued use of such equipment at the Project Area; in making that determination, the State will consider the useful life of the equipment, and the Grantee may be required to refund the State for the fair market value of equipment that continues to have a usable life, but is no longer required for Project implementation. Grantee will be required to maintain an inventory record for each piece of non-expendable equipment purchased or built with funds provided under the terms of a Grant Agreement.

Vehicles

For any vehicles acquired with funds that are reimbursable as a direct cost of the RFFC Project, the Grantee, Lead Entity, or Subcontractor, as applicable, must be the sole owner on title. Vehicles acquired – including, but not limited to, cars, trucks, vans – must be maintained in a state of good repair and dedicated to the described use during the grant term and to public use for their full useful life.

Ineligible costs

Ineligible costs are:

- Costs that are not related to the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program
- Costs that occur outside of the Grant Agreement term
- Meals, incidentals, tips, per diems, or refreshments for meetings or travel
- Incentive/participation gifts
- Out-of-state travel and activities
- Equipment purchases must be identified in the budget/work plan or approved by the grant manager prior to purchase.

Auditing of fund expenditures

All expenditures of public funds under this program are subject to audit by the State of California. All grant recipients shall maintain books, records, documents and other evidence sufficient to properly reflect the amount, receipt, and disposition of all project funds (including state funds, interest earned, and matching funds by the grant recipient) and the total cost of the project.

Purchasing

Grant recipients are expected to adhere to their competitive bid, internal contracting, and purchasing guidelines. Documentation of the grantee's contracting or purchasing guidelines, processes, and project-specific approvals may be requested in the event of an audit by the State of California.

Loss of Funding

Work performed under the grant agreement is subject to availability of funds through the state's budget process. If funding for the grant agreement is reduced, eliminated, or delayed by the Budget Act or through other budget control actions, the Department will have the option to cancel the grant agreement, offer to the grantee a grant agreement amendment reflecting the reduced amount, or suspend work.

In the event of cancellation of the grant agreement or suspension of work, the Department will provide written notice to the grantee and be liable only for payment for any work completed pursuant to the grant agreement up to the date of the written notice. The Department will have no liability for payment for work carried out or undertaken after the date of written notice of cancellation or suspension. In the event of a suspension of work, the Department may remove the suspension of work by written notice to the grantee. The Department will be liable for payment for work completed from the date of written notice of the removal of the suspension of work, consistent with other terms of the grant agreement. In no event will the Department be liable to the grantee for any costs or damages associated with any period of suspension, nor will the Department be liable for any costs if, after a suspension, no funds are available and the grant agreement is then cancelled based on budget actions.

Actions of the grantee that may lead to suspension or cancellation of the grant agreement include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to execute an agreement within three months of receiving an official funding notification
- Failure to submit required documentation within the time periods specified in the grant agreement

- Change in project scope, schedule, or budget without prior approval
- Failure to complete the project
- Failure to demonstrate sufficient progress
- Failure to submit evidence of environmental or permit compliance as specified by the grant agreement
- Failure to comply with applicable laws or grant requirements

Confidentiality and Publicity

Details, documents, and any other materials related to this program, such as applications, grant agreements, reports, expenditures, photos, etc., are public records that may be publicly released in accordance with the California Public Records Act (Cal. Gov. Code §§ 6250 et seq.).

Section 5: Definitions and Reference Material

Definitions

Collaboration: Partnership or cooperation involving multiple and diverse stakeholders (including agencies, as appropriate) to improve natural resource conditions within the same watershed in ways that do not duplicate efforts.

Department: California Department of Conservation.

Reasonable costs: A cost that, in its nature and amount, does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. In determining reasonableness of a given cost, consideration must be given to:

- Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the entity or the proper and efficient performance of the project.
- The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; federal, state, local, tribal, and other laws and regulations; and terms and conditions of this project.
- Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
- Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to its employees, the public at large, and the state.
- Whether the cost significantly deviates from the acquiring entity's established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs.

Watershed: All land enclosed by a continuous hydrologic drainage divide and lying upslope from a specified point on a stream, river, lake, or other waterbody. Total land areas draining to any point in a stream.

Reference material

- *California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, January 2021, California Forest Management Task Force*
- *California Forest Carbon Plan: Managing our Forest Landscapes in a Changing Landscape, May 2018, California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*

Appendix A: Regions Map

The following map is a general representation of the 4 geographic regions that guide funding allocations. Specific regional block grantee jurisdictions within these regions are not identified.



