

Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant Program 2016/2017

Questions and Answers Updated 8/24/16



In response to questions raised concerning prevailing wage requirements for the Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant Program, we are providing clarification and extending the grant deadline to allow additional time for applicants to make any necessary adjustments to their applications.

The grant application deadline is extended to **4:00 pm Wednesday, August 31, 2016.**

Prevailing wage

Question: Is there anything I need to be aware of in terms of “prevailing wages” for these grants?

Answer: Prevailing wage requirements may apply to your project, depending on the nature of the work.

What is prevailing wage?

California state law requires that all workers employed on Public Works projects must be paid the prevailing wage as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, according to the type of work and location of the project. This may include a grant applicant’s staff and/or contractors. More information is available here: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/Prevailing-Wage.html>

What is a Public Works project?

Under the Labor Code, Public Works in general refers to:

- Construction, alteration, demolition, installation, maintenance, or repair work,
- Done under contract, (a grant agreement with the OSA is a contract) and
- Paid for in whole or in part out of public funds (Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant funds are public funds)

For a full definition of Public Works refer to Labor Code section 1720.

For more information, see <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html>

It is the grant applicant’s responsibility to review all applicable statutory provisions and regulations to determine its responsibilities.

FUNDING

Funding availability

Question: There is \$1 million available this year. If someone is awarded \$100,000 for a three-year grant, does that mean that all \$100,000 comes out of this year's \$1 million, or only \$33,333 (1/3 of the grant) per year?

Answer: The entire \$100,000 would be allocated from the \$1 million for this grant cycle.

Measure Q Expenditure Plan projects

Question: The Measure Q Expenditure Plan includes a list of high priority potential projects. Are those the only projects that will be funded through this grant?

Answer: No. While the Measure Q Expenditure Plan (Grant Guidelines Appendix F) includes a list of *example* high priority potential projects, they are really just examples, and are in no way meant to limit the types of projects that can be funded by the Measure Q Grant program.

Other funding from the Open Space Authority?

Question: What is the difference between 20% Funding and this grant?

Answer: The Open Space Authority has two urban open space grant programs. While both focus on urban open space projects, they have different funding sources, eligibility, requirements, and timelines. More information about both grant programs is available at <http://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban/index.html>. Perhaps the biggest difference between the grant programs is that the 20% Funding program is only open to participating jurisdictions (the cities of Campbell, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara and San Jose and Santa Clara County) while the Measure Q Urban Open Space grant program is open to those public agencies as well as to schools, school districts and nonprofits.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Location of applicant

Question: Can organizations from outside the Authority's jurisdiction apply?

Answer: Public agencies, schools, and school districts must be located within the Authority's jurisdiction in order to apply. An exception is made for 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, which can be headquartered outside of the jurisdiction as long as the project is within the Authority's boundaries.

Federal agencies

Question: Can federal agencies apply for this grant?

Answer: No, federal agencies are not eligible for the Measure Q UOS grant.

PROJECTS

Large project

Question: For a large project with several related components, does it make more sense to apply under one application, or several unique applications that complement each other?

Answer: You could do it either way, but remember that if you separate them you'll need to make sure they are stand-alone projects since they may not all be funded.

Planning

Question: Planning projects are eligible, but will they be competitive against shovel-ready projects?

Answer: Both planning and shovel-ready projects are eligible and there's isn't a scoring preference for either. All projects will be scored based on their merits.

Planning

Question: Do projects need to be shovel ready or can they include planning?

Answer: Planning work is eligible for grant funding.

Curriculum development

Question: Is curriculum development eligible for environmental education projects?

Answer: Yes, curriculum development would be eligible for grant funding.

Urban Forestry

Question: Would concrete removal or stump grinding be eligible?

Answer: Yes, in order to plant new trees.

Transportation

Question: Is transportation covered only if it is to the Authority's preserves?

Answer: Transportation projects that help connect people to Nature are eligible as long as they operate within the Authority's jurisdiction. They are not limited to providing transportation only to the Authority's preserves.

Stand-alone project?

Question: Can a grant application be for a portion of a larger project or does it need to be for a stand-alone project?

Answer: The application can be for either a stand-alone project or a portion of a larger project.

Underserved communities

Question: There are bonus points for "underserved communities." How do you define underserved communities?

Answer: For the purposes of this bonus point question, underserved communities include sensitive populations such as residents of park-poor neighborhoods, underserved or disadvantaged communities, youth, seniors, or is located within a "Deep Engagement Community (DEC)." A map of the DEC's is available here: <http://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban/index.html>. If using data

other than the DEC map linked above to make your case for why a community is underserved, please quote the source and provide a web link where possible.

Location of project

Question: Do these projects have to be on Open Space Authority properties?

Answer: No, the projects can be located throughout the eligible areas. For a detailed map of the eligible areas, see the Grant Eligibility Map listed under Grant Materials:

<http://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban/index.html>

Location of project

Question: Can the project be in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District jurisdiction?

Answer: No, the project itself needs to be within the Authority's boundaries. For a detailed map of the eligible areas, see the Grant Eligibility Map listed under Grant Materials:

<http://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban/index.html>

Location of project

Question: Is a program eligible if it serves people within the Authority's jurisdiction, but the event(s) are located outside the area?

Answer: No, the project itself needs to be within the Authority's boundaries. For a detailed map of the eligible areas, see the Grant Eligibility Map listed under Grant Materials:

<http://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban/index.html>

APPLICATION

Multi-year budget

Question: We are applying for a three-year grant and would like to present the budget for each year but the budget form does not include a multi-year option. Do we need to put all the information onto one budget sheet?

Answer: You can either put it all onto one budget sheet or you can copy the budget sheet into additional tabs so that you have a tab for each budget year.

Acquisition Budget

Question: For acquisition projects, is there any different budget template?

Answer: No, it's the same budget template for all projects.

Project categories

Question: Our environmental education project includes learning about environmental stewardship and restoration. For the Grant Category question, should we check Environmental Stewardship and Restoration?

Answer: We encourage you to discuss the curriculum and the fact that environmental stewardship and restoration is included in the environmental education portion of the project. However, for the purposes of the grant, the Grant Category question should be categories that apply specifically to the work described in the application.

Character limit

Question: Is there a character limit when answering the questions?

Answer: Yes, there is a character limit for each question. The character limit is shown beneath the text box for each question.

Financial Statements

Question: Our City's financial statement is a huge document. Can we simply include a link?

Answer: If possible, please extract the relevant sections for your Department budget and upload that as a .pdf. Alternatively, large files can be uploaded via Dropbox, etc.

Sample application

Question: Is there a sample completed application available? Ideally from a successful application.

Answer: No, since this is the first year of the grant we do not have a sample completed application to share, though the budget template does include a brief sample budget. We will review this for next year's grant cycle to include if possible.

Bonus points

Question: How do we show that we qualify for the bonus points listed in the scoring criteria?

Answer: There is a question for each of the bonus points on the application's Project Description page.

Number of applications

Question: How many applications do you expect to receive?

Answer: Since this is the first year of the grant, we don't have a good sense of how many applications we'll receive. One indicator might be that there were about 60 people signed up for the two grant workshops we offered. About 44 attended. There have been a lot of organizations that have expressed interest, though whether they choose to apply this year we won't know until the grant deadline.

Multiple applications

Question: We plan to submit multiple applications. Do we need to create separate login accounts for each application?

Answer: No, the system allows multiple applications to be submitted. Once you create your user account, you can create multiple applications and the system will copy all the basic organization information into the new application.

Multiple applications

Question: Can an organization apply for multiple grants of different sizes (e.g. one large and one small grant)?

Answer: Yes, an organization can apply for multiple grants regardless of grant size or category.

PROJECT BUDGET / GRANT AMOUNT

Grant period

Question: What if my project requires more than \$25,000.00 but plans to execute within the year?

Answer: Anything more than \$25k is what we call a "large" grant and has a three-year grant period. If awarded, you can complete the project in less than three years if you'd like.

Small grants vs large grants

Question: Are small grants less competitive than large grants?

Answer: No, both are competitive. We are aiming for a diversity of project sizes.

Ongoing projects

Question: If we were awarded a \$30,000 grant this year and it's an ongoing project, can we apply for another grant the following year? Or would it be better to apply for a larger amount up front?

Answer: It's difficult to say without knowing more about the project and whether it can be easily broken into phases, but you could do it either way. Note, however, that if you were awarded funding this year, there's no guarantee you'd receive funding next year.

Partial funding

Question: Will the grant awards be for the full grant request or is partial funding possible?

Answer: We expect the grant awards to be for the full grant request, though it is possible that partial funding will be awarded.

Indirect cost limits

Question: Are there limits to indirect costs like overhead/rent?

Answer: Yes, indirect costs (administrative overhead) is only eligible for non-profits and is limited to 5% of the grant award. Appendix C of the Grant Guidelines includes more information about direct and indirect costs.

Up front money

Question: For expensive projects such as building structures, it would be difficult to pay for the construction up front. Is there a way to have the money up front or put into a trust account?

Answer: The grant is generally on reimbursement basis, though note that the reimbursement can be requested up to monthly so you don't have to wait for a project to be completed before receiving

funds. There may be some exceptions to this, particularly for land acquisition projects or for organizations with demonstrated financial hardship.

Maintenance funding

Question: Should maintenance funding be included in the grant since we need to show plans for operating and maintenance for a project over a 10 year period.

Answer: Yes, we'd like to see that included in the budget as well as Question #18 of the application. We want to see that you have maintenance resources in place for planting projects in particular. If you are requesting the additional one-year plant establishment period with funding, make sure that is in the budget as well. Note that maintenance funding or support may vary depending on the organization and the project. For example, a city may have a maintenance budget while other projects rely on a committed volunteer program.

Match requirement

Question: How does the timing work for the 25% match requirement? Is there a minimum match required per year or can it be anytime within the three years? Also, how does it affect the reimbursement process? Does all of the match have to be done before we can seek reimbursement?

Answer: There is no minimum match required per year since the source and timing of matching funds will vary. The matching funds can support work anytime during the grant period (e.g. three years).

Reimbursement of project expenses is done as work is satisfactorily completed. Reimbursement is not generally dependent on matching funds. However, if matching funds are delayed, you will need explain the delay in the quarterly reports. Remember that the Authority's approval is required for any major changes to the project, including the budget.

REVIEW PROCESS & TIMELINE

Timing of funds

Question: If we are awarded a grant, when can we expect to begin receiving funds?

Answer: We anticipate that the agency's Board of Directors will make the final funding decisions at the October 13, 2016 meeting. After the final Board decisions, we expect that the funding agreements will take up to a month to complete, so funding would be available after the agreements are fully executed. Note that this timeline may be pushed back if there are a large number of grant applications or other delays to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) or Board meetings.

Invoicing for reimbursement

Question: If awarded, what is the process for reimbursement requests?

Answer: At the time of the grant award, grantees will be given information about reporting and invoicing. Invoices can be submitted monthly and reimbursement typically occurs within one month.

Grant period

Question: If awarded, when would the grant funds need to be spent?

Answer: This depends on the size of the grant. For the smaller grants (\$2,500 - \$25,000), the grant period is one year. Larger grants (\$25,001 - \$250,000) have a three year grant period. Note that both grant sizes can be extended by one year for plant establishment, making the small grants up to two year grant period and the large grants up to a four year grant period. Grant funds would need to be spent by the end of the grant period.

Timing of meetings

Question: If the Board doesn't make the decision on October 13, when is the next Board meeting?

Answer: The Authority's Board meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month.

CAC Meetings

Question: The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting where the applications will be discussed – is it open to the public?

Answer: The CAC meeting meetings are held at the Authority's offices (6980 Santa Teresa Blvd, Suite 100, San Jose, CA 95119) at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of each Month. The meetings are open to the public and the public is invited to speak, though there will be a strictly enforced time limit in order to ensure the meeting stays on schedule, and everyone has an equal chance to speak.

CAC and Board Meetings

Question: Will the applicants receive feedback on their applications if they don't attend the CAC and/or Board meetings?

Answer: The materials presented at the meetings, including the summaries of projects and the staff recommendations, will be available on our website at least 72 hours before the meeting. There are minutes for the Board meeting available after the meeting as well. Once the Board has made award decisions, all applicants will be notified of their status. In addition, we plan to provide feedback to applicants that were not selected for a grant award.

CAC and Board Meetings

Question: Will the CAC and the Board get to view all the applications or just the staff recommended ones?

Answer: The CAC and the Board will see all applications.