

**CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY-BASED WATER QUALITY GRANTS PROGRAM  
GRANT PROJECT SOLICITATION  
DRAFT PROJECT RANKING AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

**March 25, 2022**

**A. Introduction**

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) is allocating \$1.2 million of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) settlement funds towards the Central Coast Community-Based Water Quality Grants Program to implement individual grant projects that will benefit water quality and the environment on the Central Coast. The purpose of this document is to provide potential grant applicants with preliminary information on the funding opportunity and grant project ranking and selection criteria.

**B. Two-Track Grant Application and Award Structure**

Applicants have the option to apply for one of two grant track tiers to accommodate applicants and projects of various sizes, types, and capacity.

1. Large Grant Track: is for funding requests of up to \$200K, and most grants will be in the \$100K - \$200K range. Applicants for this tier will submit a more detailed application form and awarded grants will require comprehensive interim and final reporting. Grant applicants in this category are likely small to medium municipalities or agencies/organizations.
2. Small Grant Track: is for funding requests of up to \$50K, and most grant awards will be in the \$20-\$50K range. Applicants in this tier will submit a more streamlined application form and awarded grants will be subject to reduced reporting (e.g., grant of 12 months or less will only require a single final report at the end of the grant period, while grants longer than 12 months will require interim reports). Grant applicants in this category are likely community-based organizations.

**C. Project Threshold Criteria**

All projects, regardless of tier, must meet the eligibility, geographic focus, and issue focus requirements of the program.

**Eligible Applicants:** The applicant must be one of the following:

- Public agencies (e.g., counties, cities, districts), including agencies having jurisdiction over water resources management, drinking water, or treatment and disposal/reuse of municipal wastewater or other wastes;
- 501(c)(3) Nonprofit organizations; Non-governmental organizations
- Federally recognized Indian tribes; or

- State Indian tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's Tribal Consultation List.

**Geographic Focus:** Projects must take place within the Central Coast Water Board's jurisdiction, including southern Santa Clara (south of Morgan Hill), Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties, and small portions of Ventura, Kern, and San Mateo Counties.<sup>1</sup>

**Issue Focus:** Projects must address the criteria as outlined below, and projects must be consistent with [the State Water Board's Policy on Supplemental Environmental Projects](#).<sup>2</sup>

- **Priority Criteria:** projects that address the human right to water, environmental justice and local environmental justice capacity, water quality impacts of climate change, drought related water supply resiliency projects, climate adaptation and mitigation projects, sustainable drinking water or wastewater treatment solutions, sustainable groundwater management strategies, and providing benefits to Underrepresented Communities. Underrepresented Communities include but are not limited to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs), Tribes, Environmentally Disadvantaged Communities (EnvDACs), and members of Fringe Communities<sup>3</sup>. Although a project must meet the basic eligibility criteria of addressing water quality within the Central Coast Region, it is not expected that a project will meet all the priority criteria. Reflecting the Central Coast Water Board's commitment to environmental justice, the human right to water, climate change adaptation and supporting underrepresented communities, projects that address one or more of these criteria are among the highest priority. Table 1 illustrates how projects will be ranked.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards\\_map.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards_map.html)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/seps/20180503\\_sep\\_policy\\_amd.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/seps/20180503_sep_policy_amd.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Disadvantaged Community: a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income (Public Resources Code section 80002(e)); Severely Disadvantaged Community: a community with a median household income of less than 60% of the statewide average. (Public Resources Code section 80002(n)); Economically Distressed Area: a municipality with a population of 20,000 persons or less, a rural county, or a reasonably isolated and divisible segment of a larger municipality where the segment of the population is 20,000 persons or less with an annual median household income that is less than 85% of the statewide median household income and with one or more of the following conditions as determined by the department: (1) financial hardship, (2) unemployment rate at least 2% higher than the statewide average, or (3) low population density. (Water Code section 79702(k)); Tribes: federally recognized Indian Tribes and California State Indian Tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's California Tribal Consultation List; EnvDACs: CalEPA designates the top 25 percent scoring census tracts as DACs. Census tracts that score the highest five percent of pollution burden scores but do not have an overall CalEnviroScreen score because of unreliable socioeconomic or health data are also designated as DACs (refer to the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Mapping Tool or Results Excel Sheet); Fringe Community: communities that do not meet the established DAC, SDAC, and EDA definitions but can show that they score in the top 25 percent of either the Pollution Burden or Population Characteristics score using the CalEnviroScreen 3.0.

- **Additional Eligible Project Criteria:** Given the nature of the Consent Judgement, the project solicitation will also consider projects which include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Projects that provide water quality benefits to marine habitats and associated beneficial uses in San Luis Obispo County.
  - Implementation of activities that will reduce pollutant loading and make measurable progress toward meeting water quality objectives established in the Central Coast Basin Plan.
  - Water quality improvement or restoration projects that preserve and restore watershed functions and support healthy ecosystems, especially in impaired waterbodies identified on the 303(d) List and associated Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).
  - On-farm Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation projects that demonstrate reductions in salt and nitrate loading, especially projects that assist limited resource farmers.
  - Projects that prevent or address Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).
  
- **Not Eligible:** Projects not eligible for funding include those where the applicant, project beneficiary, or the project itself is associated with an enforcement action. Additionally, entities identified on the [System for Awards Management \(SAM\)](#)<sup>4</sup> Excluded Parties List are not eligible for funding. Private, for-profit entities are not eligible to receive a funding award but may apply for or implement projects as a sub-grantee or sub-contractor of the eligible organizations identified above. Expenses related to long-term operations and maintenance are not eligible. Planning grants are not eligible in the Large Grant Track but may be considered for Small Grant Track proposals.

Table 1 reflects how projects will be scored based on eligibility and priority criteria.

TABLE 1: PROJECT ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA	Available Points
<p><b>Is the project located within the jurisdiction of the Central Coast Water Board?</b>  <u>Note:</u> If the answer to this question is NO, the project is not eligible for this grants program.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>A. Project advances the human right to water, consistent with Central Coast Water Board <a href="#">Resolution R3-2017-0004</a><sup>5</sup>, including projects that:</p>	<p><b>10 points</b></p>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sam.gov/content/home>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/hr2w/docs/r3\\_hr2w\\_res.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/hr2w/docs/r3_hr2w_res.pdf)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide safe, clean, affordable, and accessible drinking water.</li> <li>b. Resolve water quality issues that impact drinking water.</li> <li>c. Reduce or remediate sources of pollution that threaten sources of drinking water, especially projects that address basin-scale pollution (e.g., nitrate contamination and salts loading).</li> </ul>	
<p>B. Projects advance environmental justice (EJ), including projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Build local environmental justice capacity.</li> <li>b. Conduct outreach and education in areas of the central coast region that lack community engagement.</li> </ul>	<b>10 points</b>
<p>C. Projects provide water quality benefits to underrepresented communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Disadvantaged communities (DACs)</li> <li>b. Severely disadvantaged communities (SDACs)</li> <li>c. Economically distressed areas (EDAs)</li> <li>d. Environmentally Disadvantaged Communities (EnvDACs)</li> <li>e. California Native American Tribes</li> <li>f. Individuals with a demonstrated financial need</li> </ul>	<b>10 points</b>
<p>D. Project implements climate change mitigation or climate change adaptation strategies, consistent with State Water Resources Control Board <a href="https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/rs2017_0012.pdf">Resolution 2017-0012</a><sup>6</sup>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Projects that identify and assess risks to water quality associated with climate change and implement solutions.</li> <li>b. Climate adaptation planning and implementation projects for facilities to identify, assess and address climate change hazards and vulnerabilities (e.g., sea level rise, flooding, precipitation pattern changes, temperature fluctuations and extremes, increased wildfires, increased power outages, changes in flow)</li> <li>c. Drought resiliency projects that help communities prepare for and respond to drought, including providing benefits to ecosystem health.</li> <li>d. Best management plan (BMP) implementation projects that reduce pollutant loading to surface water and groundwater used for drinking water supply.</li> <li>e. Restoration projects that improve watershed functions and pollutant loading to high priority groundwater basins.</li> </ul>	<b>10 points</b>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/resolutions/2017/rs2017\\_0012.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2017/rs2017_0012.pdf)

<p>E. Project promotes sustainable drinking water and wastewater treatment solutions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Water supply resiliency and augmentation projects to achieve recycled water benefits and diversify community water supplies. (e.g., recycling, consolidation, groundwater recharge, conjunctive use, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 points</b></p>
<p>F. Project promotes groundwater data/information sharing and public availability among stakeholders using the State Water Board’s Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Geographic Information System (GAMA GIS) or GeoTracker online databases, including water quality and well location data.</p>	<p><b>10 points</b></p>
<p><b>Table 1: Total Possible Points</b></p>	<p><b>60 points</b></p>

**D. Project Strength Criteria**

In addition to the possible points available for projects which address one or more of the priority criteria expressed in Table 1, all projects will be ranked in accordance with the following project strength criteria identified in Table 2.

<p><b>TABLE 2: PROJECT STRENGTH</b></p>	<p><b>Available Points</b></p>
<p><b>A. Strategic Value:</b> Is the project important or strategically valuable and will it produce significant benefits to water quality in the central coast region (per the criteria in Table 1)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the project goals clear and tactical?</li> <li>• Why is this project timely and why is this organization well positioned to undertake these activities?</li> <li>• Can this serve as a model or benefit for other areas?</li> </ul>	<p><b>30 Points</b></p>
<p><b>B. Project Feasibility:</b> Is the proposed work clear and achievable by the applicant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there clear project benchmarks, deliverables, and outcomes?</li> <li>• Does the scope of work have reasonable tasks and activities, especially considering proposed timeline?</li> <li>• Does the applicant understand possible challenges to the project and have plans to mitigate them?</li> <li>• Is there demonstrated organizational expertise and a track record to suggest that the applicant can conduct this project?</li> <li>• Please also consider current and reasonably foreseeable COVID-induced public health restrictions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 Points</b></p>

<p>Note: Larger organizations seeking significant grants should offer a more sophisticated workplan and will be held to a considerably higher standard, compared to smaller volunteer-based organizations.</p>	
<p><b>C. Equitable Outcomes:</b> Will the project produce just, equitable, impactful community outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project serve vulnerable or underserved populations, including low-income communities, people of color, students, seniors, veterans, immigrants, and non-English speakers?</li> <li>• Is the organization led by, or have a demonstrated track record of working with the communities they serve?</li> </ul>	<p><b>30 Points</b></p>
<p><b>D. Organizational Financial and Operational Capacity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the requested funds right sized to the project?</li> <li>• Is the organization capable of handling the size of the grant?</li> <li>• Does this organization need our support, or do they have access to other support?</li> <li>• Has the organization secured other support for the project?</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 Points</b></p>
<p><b>Table 2: Total Possible Points</b></p>	<p><b>100 Points</b></p>

**E. Required Application Components**

Applications for large and small grant projects will be subject to the same priority and selection criteria identified in Tables 1 and 2, however the small grant projects will use a more streamlined application. All applications will be ranked in accordance with the following application requirement components described in Table 3.

<b>TABLE 3: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>Available Points</b>
<b>Narrative</b>	<p>Description of project with deliverables, and why the project will benefit water quality in the central coast region. Include discussion of anticipated benefits of the project and possible challenges to implementing the project, and how the team will mitigate the obstacles to be successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the water quality issue to be addressed, especially as it relates to Grant Program priorities in Table 1. If applicable, describe why this high priority project is not eligible or easily funded through other state and federal funding sources and how these funds fill the funding gap. Describe how project funding is urgent and/or is immediately ready to proceed.</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the specific goal(s) and outcome(s) that will be achieved upon project completion.</li> <li>Describe how the project may serve as a model and benefits can be transferred to other areas.</li> </ul>	
<b>Summary of Applicant (Org and Team)</b>	<p>Description of the applicant organization, including how long the organization has been in existence, and describe how the organization has been successful in the past with activities similar to the proposed project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include names of project team members and their roles in the project, including relevant credentials and qualifications necessary to complete the project.</li> <li>If applicable to the project, identify contractors or consultants. If contractors, consultants, or staff members for the project have not yet been identified, describe what qualifications and specific expertise is necessary to implement the proposal.</li> <li><u>Please note:</u> Applicants seeking grants over \$100,000 are encouraged to participate in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program.</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>
<b>Scope of Work</b>	<p>Provide an outline of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specific activities you will undertake with the grant funds</li> <li>The timeline for doing the work.</li> <li>The primary deliverables that will be produced by the project.</li> </ul> <p>Please be as clear and specific as possible. The details of the Scope of Work will vary based on the nature of the project, but should include (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location of sites. If specific locations have not been chosen, describe how they will be chosen, and include land access agreements, if applicable.</li> <li>Number of meetings and expected participants.</li> </ul>	<b>15</b>
<b>Outcomes and Evaluation</b>	<p>Description of what specific information will be submitted as performance metrics, and/or how the project will evaluate the measures of success for meeting the project's stated goal(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If water quality sampling and/or photo documentation is included, provide links to protocols that will be followed.</li> <li>Describe how the project will be evaluated to quantify the benefits of the implemented project.</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe any unquantifiable or longer-term benefits and indicate how progress towards these longer objectives can be assessed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Budget and Financials</b>	<p>Provide Budget Table figures/projections including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Itemized line-item cost breakdown by personnel, subcontractors, operating expenses, including major tasks, e.g., construction.</li> <li>Include amount of grant requested and match, cash or in-kind and amount of funding leveraged.</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>
<b>Letter(s) of Community Support</b>	<p>Provide at least 1 and no more than 3 letters of support from community-based organizations supporting the project. Projects that include the active involvement of underrepresented communities will be scored more highly than projects which do not involve these communities.</p>	<b>10</b>
<b>Funding Match / References</b>	<p><u>Large Grants Track</u>: Submit documentation of at least 25% match funding, including dollar amount, from all partnering organization(s).</p> <p><u>Small Grants Grant</u>: Match funding is encouraged, but not required. If the project does not include match funding for completion, submit at least 1 and no more than 3 letters of reference from a current or previous funding source, public official, or key stakeholder that has worked closely with or has a first-hand knowledge of the applicant's performance on implementing similar project(s). Each letter of reference should include a description of the relationship to the applicant and a statement of the applicant's track record of successful project implementation.</p>	<b>10</b>
<b>Table 3: Total Possible Points</b>		<b>140</b>

**APPLICATION: TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 300**

**F. Project Awards and Match Requirements**

To facilitate proposals from smaller community-based organizations as well as larger applicants, there will be two grant project application tracks:

- Large Grant Track: The Large Grants Track will accept proposals in the \$100,000 - \$200,000 range. A total of approximately \$600,000 is available for this track.

- Small Grant Track: The Small Grants Track will accept proposals in the \$20,000 - \$50,000 range. A Total of approximately \$420,000 is available for this track.

**Grow Your Roots Technical Assistance Mini-Grants:**

Grantees who are awarded small project grant funding are also eligible to participate in a capacity-building “Grow Your Roots Technical Assistance Mini-Grant”. This program provides the opportunity for the grantee to conduct an organizational capacity assessment to identify needs and receive up to \$1,000 in additional grant funding targeted to help increase their capacity in a specific area. This program is designed to help smaller organizations build administrative and technical capacity to promote long-term success after the original grant dollars have been expended. Grow Your Roots awards are provided up front and no additional reporting is required. Based on available funding prospective grant applicants that are not awarded a small project grant but show promise and need capacity assistance may be awarded a Grow Your Roots Technical Assistance Mini-Grant.

**Matching Funds Requirements:**

- Large Grant Track: A match of at least 25 percent (%) of the total project (grant plus match) will be required for the Large Grants Track. Match may include, but is not limited to, federal, state, and local funding. Additionally, donated, and in-kind services directly related to the scope of work presented in the proposal are eligible as match. Projects that have a direct benefit to Underrepresented Communities, households with a documented financial need, or entity implementing a project on behalf of, or directly benefitting one of these groups may request to waive the match requirement. However, such waivers are not guaranteed.
- Small Grant Track: Matching funds are encouraged for projects in the Small Grants Track, but not required. In lieu of matching funds, applicants in the Small Grants Track may submit letters of reference from funders, public officials or other related stakeholders which meet the criteria specified in Table 3.

All applicants are also encouraged to pursue relevant financial assistance programs administered by the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board), including loan and grant funding for safe drinking water, groundwater treatment and remediation, construction of municipal wastewater and water recycling facilities, watershed protection projects, nonpoint source pollution control projects, etc.<sup>7</sup>

**G. Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs must be limited to no more than 10% of the modified total direct costs unless the grantee has a federally recognized indirect cost rate. Expenses include, but are not limited to administrative costs, rent, utilities, insurance, accounting and legal fees, repairs, supplies, interest, and taxes. Projects that have a direct benefit to underrepresented communities may request to waive the indirect cost requirement. However, such waivers are not guaranteed.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/)

## **H. Tentative Grant Project Timeline**

A grant project solicitation is tentatively planned for late 2022 / early 2023. All eligible applicants with projects that meet the criteria defined in this document are invited to submit proposals. The list of projects awarded for funding will be posted on the Central Coast Water Board's website and annual updates will be provided to the Central Coast Water Board at a public meeting, describing the status of the grant project solicitation process and the projects selected to receive funding awards.

## **I. Reporting and Invoicing**

Large Grant Track: Applicants must submit interim, draft, and final reports with invoices per the schedule in the grant agreement scope of work (SOW). Invoices and reports must be submitted together as a package. Separate invoices will not be accepted.

Small Grant Track: Applicants will receive an initial payment upon execution of the grant contract, and then subsequent installments upon acceptance of interim reports. Grantees in this track with projects of 12 months or less and whose total project does not exceed \$30,000 may request that the entire amount be advanced at the start of the project.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program: Applicants are encouraged to participate in the DBE Program, a program designed to increase the participation of DBEs.

## **J. Other Considerations**

Project applications will be evaluated and grant award agreements structured to ensure that the information, products, services, processes, technologies, materials, software, data, and other innovations resulting from the grant project will be made broadly available and accessible to the public. Projects that control or limit access to these resources for the purposes of financial benefit, economic, business or market advantage to any individual or entity are not eligible.