



**OCEAN  
PROTECTION  
COUNCIL**



# **Proposition 68**

## **2022 Marine Protected Areas and Climate Solicitation**

**Grant Program Funded by the California Drought, Water Parks,  
Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of  
2018**

**Grant Proposal Solicitation and Application Instructions**  
**Letters of Intent are due July 29, 2022**

## Contents

I. Introduction .....	3
A. Essential Background and Information .....	3
B. Solicitation Overview .....	4
II. Solicitation Priorities.....	5
A. California's MPA Network and Climate Change.....	5
B. Priority Project Types .....	5
C. Additional Project Characteristics.....	6
III. Application Process and Requirements.....	8
A. Grant Eligibility .....	8
B. Letter of Intent Phase .....	8
C. Solicitation Webinar and Pre-proposal Office Hours.....	9
D. Letter of Intent Screening and Review.....	9
E. Full Proposal Submission.....	10
IV. Evaluation Criteria.....	11
V. Solicitation Updates and Contacts.....	15

Contact Staff            Lindsay Bonito, Marine Protected Area Program Manager  
                                 Elyse Goin, CA Sea Grant Fellow, Biodiversity Program

Email Address            [prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov](mailto:prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov)

## I. Introduction

### A. Essential Background and Information

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) protects California's coast and ocean by advancing innovative, science-based policy and management, making strategic investments, and catalyzing action through partnerships and collaboration. OPC's vision is to ensure healthy, resilient and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. OPC is committed to ensuring that policy and management decisions affecting California's ocean and coastal resources are based on the best available science.

The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68 or "Prop 68") was approved by voters in June 2018. Funding from Prop 68 is intended to support projects that provide Californians with access to safe natural spaces and to continue investments in the state's diverse ecosystems to ensure high quality of life for all Californians. Funding is also intended to support greening urban areas to mitigate the effects of climate change and pollution, and to protect and restore the state's natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Chapter 9 of Prop 68 allocates \$35 million to OPC for grants consistent with the California Ocean Protection Act (Section 35650). Priority shall be given to projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems with a focus on the state's system of marine protected areas and sustainable fisheries. The funds in Chapter 9 may be allocated through competitive or discretionary grant programs. In addition, Prop 68 requires that at least 15 percent of the funds provided to OPC be allocated to projects that serve severely disadvantaged communities.

OPC approved the Prop 68 Grant Guidelines (Grant Guidelines) on May 23, 2019, which are available on the [OPC Prop 68 webpage](#). The Grant Guidelines establish the high-level process and criteria that OPC uses to solicit competitive applications, evaluate and select proposals, and distribute awards using Prop 68 funds. The Grant Guidelines include:

- Broad OPC Priorities for Prop 68 grant funding;
- Eligible grantee organizations;
- Eligible project types;
- Grant application review and evaluation processes;
- Scoring criteria;
- Additional grant requirements; and
- Important appendices, including Prop 68 Chapter 9 and 10 language on OPC appropriations and Prop 68 term definitions.

The [OPC Prop 68 webpage](#) includes additional important resources for applicants to use as they develop their projects.

Please review the [Grant Guidelines](#), this **Grant Proposal Solicitation**, and the [Key Documents](#) called out below very carefully and thoroughly before proceeding with the grant application process.

## B. Solicitation Overview

### **Funding Information**

The funding information for this solicitation is as follows:

- Anticipated Funding Available this round: \$2,000,000
- Minimum and Maximum Award Amounts: \$250,000- \$1,000,000
- Maximum Project Length: 2 years
- Letter of Intent Due: July 29, 2022

### **Solicitation Schedule**

The schedule for this solicitation is as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
Grant Proposal Solicitation Released	July 1, 2022
Informational Webinar	July 7 at 2:00 - 3:00pm
Office Hours (Open Q&A Session)	July 14 at 11:00 - 12:00 PM
Letter of Intent Due	July 29, 2022 at 5:00 PM PDT
Application Review and Evaluation	Aug 1 – Sept 2, 2022
Selected Applicants Invited to Submit Full Proposal	Sept 6, 2022
Full Proposal Due	October 7 at 5:00 PM PDT
Application Review and Evaluation	Oct 10 – Nov 18
Select proposals invited for interview	Nov 21 - Dec 19
OPC staff recommends selected projects to OPC for approval	February, 2022
Approved projects finalize workplans and grant agreements	Spring 2023

Grants made through this solicitation process must be approved at an OPC Council meeting. The specific meeting when a grant will be considered depends on project readiness and staff capacity. For relevant projects, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) must be complete before a project can be brought by staff to the OPC for consideration.

## II. Solicitation Priorities

### A. California's MPA Network and Climate Change

**The overall goal of this solicitation is to understand the role that California's MPA Network plays in the face of climate change, climate variability, and marine heatwaves in the lives of key species, habitats, or human activities. Projects must be research-based.** Applications submitted in response to this solicitation should advance implementation of the OPC's [Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean 2020-2025](#) (Strategic Plan). Projects should identify and demonstrate quantitative progress in implementing Strategic Plan targets. All projects must benefit California's coastal or San Francisco Bay region. OPC will fund at least one project from each of the priority project types described below.

To be competitive, applicants must demonstrate how their projects meet the evaluation criteria listed in Section IV below.

Key Documents guiding OPC priorities for this solicitation include:

- [Strategic Plan to Protect California's Coast and Ocean 2020-2025](#)
- [Climate Resilience and California's Marine Protected Network](#)
- [Scientific Guidance for Evaluating California's Marine Protected Area Network](#)
- [2018 Safeguarding California Plan](#)
- [2018 Marine Protected Area Monitoring Action Plan](#)
- [Marine Protected Area Long-term Monitoring documents](#)

### B. Priority Project Types

#### **Research-based Projects**

Research projects that are designed with scalable and replicable methods and linked with research questions or monitoring components to inform future projects will be prioritized. Projects must inform adaptive management of the MPA Network and be able to directly link research outcomes to potential management tools. Projects should also be responsive to priorities outlined in the [Climate Resilience and California's MPA Network](#) report. Projects should advance scientific understanding of the intersection of California's MPA Network and climate change, including potential areas of refuge, vulnerability, and resilience. It is anticipated that proposals will focus on one of the three project types outlined below, however proposals that include components of multiple project types will be considered.

The following three project types will be prioritized for funding. Projects that:

Characterize local vulnerability of MPAs across multiple stressors to evaluate the potential of the MPA Network to provide ecological resilience through climate refugia

Projects should investigate and identify physical, ecological, and biological characteristics of climate refugia in California coastal systems and assess whether MPAs include or promote these conditions. Projects should investigate the spatial distribution of MPAs relative to historic and current stressor exposures and how those stressors are likely to evolve in the future.

Model habitat and species distributions in current and future conditions to inform risk assessments of species, ecosystems, and habitats within MPAs

Projects should model future species and habitat distributions while considering important conditions that affect focal taxa of MPA monitoring, including but not limited to: physiological tolerances, tipping-point thresholds, species and ecological community range shifts, and genetic diversity. Projects can also feature risk assessments that focus on key managed species or culturally important species and identify those that are most at risk from climate change. Refer to the list of species targeted for long-term MPA monitoring in the [2018 MPA Monitoring Action Plan](#) (Tables 7 - 10, pages 33 - 40). Projects that propose to assess culturally important species should be able to describe how the lead investigators will engage with Tribes and other communities to determine cultural importance.

Assess social values and outcomes relating to MPAs and climate resilience in California

Projects should aim to understand social resilience outcomes of MPAs in California specifically. Proposed projects could assess the state of the knowledge to identify and assess important gaps in our understanding of the interactions between MPAs and social resilience under a changing climate. Projects should investigate the role that MPAs play in protecting or rehabilitating species or ecosystems that are considered culturally important to different societal groups, or what species or ecosystems are considered important to society (beyond economic or consumptive uses).

### C. Additional Project Characteristics

#### **Environmental Documents and Permitting**

OPC is required to comply with CEQA. Applicants must consider whether their proposed project will require an environmental impact report, negative declaration, or whether a CEQA exemption applies. How CEQA applies to the proposed project and the status of CEQA compliance must be addressed in the application. The project must also comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other environmental permitting requirements. Applicants are solely responsible for receiving and fulfilling all permitting requirements. Most research projects are exempt from CEQA and not subject to review, but all projects must have CEQA status solidified prior to project start date.

Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 155, on September 23, 2021, adding Section 21080.56 to the California Public Resources Code. This section provides a new CEQA



statutory exemption for fish and wildlife restoration projects that meet certain requirements. For more information on the new Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) process, please see the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Cutting the Green Tape SERP webpage](#) or email CDFW staff at [RestorationPermitting@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:RestorationPermitting@wildlife.ca.gov) for questions.

### **Research projects**

All projects funded through this solicitation must provide long-term benefits to the state; "long-term benefits" are generally considered to be a minimum of 15 to 30 years. Pilot projects or scientific research projects should provide information, data, and lessons learned that would be valuable to the state over the long term.

Applications for projects that generate data should include in their application any statewide data management system(s) that data from their project may be integrated into, and how this integration will occur. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) [Open Data Platform](#) will serve as the formal vehicle for delivery of all data associated with OPC-funded projects. For more information on project data sharing requirements, please see the [Prop 68 Grant Guidelines, section 7.4](#).

### **Projects that Benefit Diverse Populations<sup>1</sup>**

OPC prioritizes projects that demonstrate meaningful and direct benefits to diverse populations, particularly minority, low-income, and disabled populations, and tribal communities. OPC also prioritizes projects that demonstrate significant benefits to communities disproportionately burdened by environmental injustice and those historically excluded from decision-making processes.

Prop 68 specifically requires OPC to spend 15% of Prop 68 funds on projects that directly benefit severely disadvantaged communities, defined as a community with a median household income less than 60% of the statewide average. A disadvantaged community is defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income. To determine whether a project is located within or near a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community, please use the California State Parks Community FactFinder map viewer: <https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>. Applicants should provide a map and written description of the project's geographical proximity to specific disadvantaged communities; a screenshot of the project location on the FactFinder map viewer will satisfy this requirement. Generally, OPC considers projects that are within a ½ mile of a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community to be "near" the community.

OPC will use its discretion to determine whether proposed projects benefit communities and expects applicants to describe and justify how the community is served by the proposed project. Projects can demonstrate intentional community benefits through

---

<sup>1</sup> Prop 68 is intended to promote diversity and inclusion, and thus, encourages OPC to give favorable consideration to projects that provide benefits to diverse populations, particularly minority, low-income, and disabled populations, and Tribal communities.

describing community partnerships and collaboration, community workforce employment, and other forms of [meaningful community engagement](#).

### III. Application Process and Requirements

#### A. Grant Eligibility

##### **Eligible Grantees**

Applicants that are eligible to apply for Prop 68 funding from OPC consist of:

- Local, state, and federal agencies;
- Public or private universities;
- Nonprofit organizations (must be a 501(c)(3) as verified by the Internal Revenue Service)
- Private entities
- California Native American Tribes, including federally recognized Native American Tribes and non-federally recognized Native American Tribes included on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission

Please be aware that OPC cannot enter into a grant agreement without governing board approval or other verification that applicant can accept funding from the state. Applicants will be expected to submit this verification before grant execution.

##### **Project Eligibility**

To be eligible for this round of Prop 68 funding, projects must advance at least one of the purposes of Chapter 9 of Prop 68. Additionally, Prop 68 funds must be spent consistent with the General Obligation Bond Law, Government Code §16727. This means projects must provide long-term benefits to the state; "long-term benefits" are generally considered to be a minimum of 15 to 30 years. OPC [Prop 68 Grant Guidelines](#) do not allow funding for costs associated with environmental permitting. OPC has additional information on eligible and ineligible projects in the [Prop 68 Grant Guidelines](#) under section 2.4 and 2.5.

#### B. Letter of Intent Phase

Applicants must submit a completed Letter of Intent (LOI) package in response to this solicitation. The deadline for submission is **July 29, 2022 by 5:00pm PDT**. The LOI is the first phase of the grant application process describing the project proposal and will only be accepted during the solicitation period. Applicants should use the templates, forms and instructions provided on the [OPC Prop 68 webpage](#) for their submission. The LOI is intended to provide a **brief** summary of the proposed project and should be no more than **8 pages total**, including responses to questions, text, a preliminary budget table and one table for the project timeline (all included within the LOI template).



Please note that although OPC's Prop 68 Grant Guidelines state that applications should be submitted online through the System for Online Application Review (SOAR), OPC is not requiring the use of SOAR for this solicitation in order to increase accessibility and ease of submittal for applicants.

**Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent by 5:00 PM PDT on July 29, 2022, to be eligible to submit a full proposal.**

Applicants must complete the following steps:

- Carefully review the OPC Prop 68 Grant Guidelines and this entire Grant Proposal Solicitation.
- Download Letter of Intent template from the [OPC Prop 68 webpage](#) and complete per instructions (no other forms from the Prop 68 webpage are needed at this stage).
- Submit Letter of Intent (including any maps/photos/attachments) to [prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov](mailto:prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov) with the subject "Prop 68 Application – [Your Organization]".

### C. Solicitation Webinar and Pre-proposal Office Hours

OPC will hold an informational webinar on July 7, 2022, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM. The webinar will discuss the solicitation process and receive questions from prospective applicants. If you want to attend the webinar, please register here: <https://ca-water.gov.zoom.us/j/85977308682?pwd=UjdtUdGU1YyUXINaGkzV056bVVtQT09>

OPC staff will also be available for "office hours" on a webinar format to answer questions and provide technical assistance on July 14, 2022, from 11:00 – 12:00 PM. Registration will be made available a week prior. For further questions, please contact: [prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov](mailto:prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov).

### D. Letter of Intent Screening and Review

OPC staff will screen LOIs for completeness and project eligibility. If the LOI is incomplete, OPC has discretion to either return the LOI to the applicant or assist the applicant with gathering additional information and modifying the proposal to enable the application to pass the completeness screening. Eligibility screening will ensure:

- The applicant is an eligible entity;
- The project can be complete within the funding timeframe;
- The project addresses at least one of the Chapter 9 Purposes of Prop 68;
- The project consists of work that is eligible for bond funds under the General Obligation Bond Law, in terms of both project activities and long-term benefits; and
- The project does not have any planning component to be funded

LOIs that do not pass the completeness and eligibility screening process will not

proceed to the scoring process. OPC expects that it will take a few weeks to review LOIs and anticipates inviting selected applicants to submit full proposals in September 2022. (Refer to the above **Solicitation Schedule** in Section [B. Solicitation Overview](#) for specific dates).

### E. Full Proposal Phase

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be provided with a Full Proposal template, specific instructions, and required forms to be completed at that time. Full proposals must include a detailed scope of work, schedule, and budget for the project. Applicants are required to use the provided application template, which will be made available only to applicants invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal will require a complete description of the project including, but not limited to:

- Detailed description of the proposed scope of work, including long-term results and outcomes.
- Project schedule with explicit task completion dates, including a clear depiction of timing of project phases and components
- Budget that is tied directly to the explicit task list that includes estimated rates, hours, equipment, and potential sub-contractors.
- Resumes or Curriculum Vitae of principal investigators or contractors, including previous projects that reflect sufficient aptitude in the project's focal area.
- Proof that all environmental compliance and permitting requirements will be met before the OPC Council considers approval of the project.
- Letters of support both from within and outside of the community where the project will take place.
- A completed Corps Consultation Review Document or other evidence of consultation with the California Conservation Corps and Local Certified Community Conservation Corps.
- Consistency with, and a description of, how the proposed project aligns with the intent behind Prop 68 and OPC's priorities.

## IV. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria provided here will be used to score full proposal applications. The total points available for any application is 100. These criteria were included in the grant guidelines, and any sections referenced in the criteria refer to sections of the grant guidelines.

<b>SCORING CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b><u>Clarity and Articulation, Sound Approach</u></b> Includes complete, reasonable and well thought out proposal elements, including proposed scope of work (3 points), budget (3 points), and schedule (3 points).</p>	9
<p><b><u>Project Management and Readiness</u></b> Applicant demonstrates capacity to execute project, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant demonstrates appropriate and necessary partnerships to complete the project. The applicant shows that it can hire or contract with experienced scientific staff in an area of specialty that would improve the potential success of the underlying proposal. (2 points)</li> <li>• Applicant has existing infrastructure or administrative capacity, either in-house or through partnerships, to develop, manage and implement the project successfully. (2 points)</li> <li>• Applicant has identified any permits or CEQA review that may be necessary to complete the project, provides proof that those permits and CEQA documents are already obtained/complete, and lays out a clear and reasonable approach and timeline to receive permits and complete CEQA if they are not already acquired. If the project does not require permits or CEQA review, the applicant must provide sound reasoning to support the assertion that no permits are needed. (2 points)</li> </ul>	6
<p><b><u>Alignment with Prop 68</u></b> Applicant demonstrates how the project will advance the intent behind Prop 68, as described in the findings and declarations in <a href="#">PRC §80001(a)</a>, including, but not limited to, how the project will connect Californians with natural coastal landscapes.</p>	8
<p><b><u>Alignment with California's Climate Policies</u></b> Climate change is affecting the coast of California and has the potential to limit the success of projects funded by OPC, if not taken into consideration. Applicant describes how they have considered climate impacts and risks in the design or development of their project, and how their project is resilient to those impacts. For example, applicant identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific adaptation strategies and specific actions to remedy identified climate-related vulnerabilities and impacts.</li> </ul>	3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the project may provide or inform resilience benefits, or help ocean and coastal ecosystems to adapt to climate change, including which recommendations from the 2018 Safeguarding California Plan the project works to implement</li> <li>• How the project may generate Green House Gas (GHG) emission reductions or carbon sequestration benefits</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Multi-benefits</u></b>          Applicant demonstrates how the proposed project addresses multiple issues of priority to OPC, as described in Section 1.4. (6 points)</p>	6
<p><b><u>Informing Management</u></b>          Applicant identifies how any research or project proposed would inform or enable the state to better manage ocean and coastal ecosystems and resources, including whether the project would develop innovative technology and tools and/or provide needed monitoring or scientific data (6 points)</p>	6
<p><b><u>Disadvantaged Communities</u></b>          Applicant clearly explains how the project serves disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities, as described in Section 2.7. Applicant provides the distance between the project and a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community and describes and justifies how the community is served by the proposed project, including any opportunities the project provides for workforce education and training, or contractor or job opportunities (8 points max).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project serves a disadvantaged community (6 points)</li> <li>• Project serves a severely disadvantaged community (8 points)</li> </ul>	8
<p><b><u>Alignment with OPC's Technical Assistance Requirements</u></b>          Applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will provide a disadvantaged community with technical assistance as described in the solicitation, (3 points) which includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building to complete OPC's Prop 68 grant applications;</li> <li>• Technical expertise to support project planning and implementation;</li> <li>• Education for disadvantaged communities consistent with the purposes of OPC's Prop 68 funding.</li> </ul>	3
<p><b><u>Effectiveness and Innovation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a clear and reasonable method for measuring and reporting project effectiveness (3 points)</li> <li>• Employs innovative methods or technologies or improves upon proven methods or technologies to improve how the state manages ocean and coastal resources. (2 points)</li> </ul>	5

<p><b><u>Methodology</u></b>                  Is consistent with best available science. Applicant demonstrates how relevant science used is up-to-date and appropriate for projects for the specific topic, as well as the feasibility of proposed work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains technical/scientific merit (2 points)</li> <li>• Project completion is feasible in the timeframe and with the budget requested (2 points)</li> <li>• Determining project effectiveness is feasible and project has a high likelihood to fulfill its stated goals and objectives (2 points)</li> </ul>	6
<p><b><u>Community Support</u></b>                  Has both local community support and greater than local interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project has local community support, as demonstrated by the submittal of letters of support with the application (2 points)</li> <li>• Project also has support from outside of the project area, as demonstrated by submittal of letters of support with the application (2 points)</li> <li>• Applicants submit a community engagement plan that includes how applicants and partner organizations have worked with community stakeholders to design the project, communicate about the project's results, or ensure long-term maintenance of the project. The community engagement plan should provide the information described in section 2.12 (4 points)</li> </ul>	8
<p><b><u>Partnerships</u></b>                  Applicant clearly identifies collaboration opportunities with government agencies, either in project implementation or to inform the state's ocean management, including Tribal Governments, the California Conservation Corps or Local Conservation Corps. (2 points)</p> <p>Applicant clearly identifies collaboration opportunities with conservation, science, or fishing organizations, and other partners. (2 points)</p>	4
<p><b><u>Leverage</u></b>                  Project leverages private, federal or local funding sources.<sup>2</sup></p>	3
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>75</b>

<b>ADDITIONAL SCORING CRITERIA FOR MARINE ECOSYSTEM PROPOSALS (CHAPTER 9 FUNDING)</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b><u>Alignment with OPC Priorities for Chapter 9 funding</u></b>                      Applicant demonstrates how the proposed project advances OPC's priorities for its Chapter 9 funding, as described in Section 1.4, and the</p>	18

<sup>2</sup> Funds for completing an environmental review process such as CEQA are not considered matching funds.

<p>specific priorities outlined in the solicitation. Applicants should include how the project conserves, protects, or restores marine wildlife and health ocean and coastal ecosystems with a focus on the states' system of marine protected areas and sustainable fisheries. Proposals receive up to 18 points for the project's direct relevance to the priorities of OPC program areas listed below, and the specific priorities outlined in the solicitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine protected areas</li> <li>• Marine pollution</li> <li>• Sustainable fisheries</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Alignment with OPC Program Key Documents</u></b>                  Applicant demonstrates how the project aligns with the relevant key documents of the appropriate OPC program, as applicable. (7 points)                  A list of relevant key documents will be included in the solicitation.<sup>3</sup></p>	7
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	25

<sup>3</sup> For potential applicants' reference, a list of key documents with links is available in Appendix C of the grant guidelines.



## V. Solicitation Updates and Contacts

Please check the [OPC Prop 68 webpage](#) regularly, subscribe to our listserv, and follow our social media for the most recent updates on this solicitation process.

Subscribe to the OPC listserv: Sign up to be notified of scheduled grant rounds and updates on this solicitation by registering for our mailing list at [this link](#).



[California Ocean Protection Council](#)



[@OPC\\_California](#)



[@OPC\\_California](#)



[@California Ocean Protection Council](#)

### **Contact Information**

If you have further questions about this solicitation and application process, please contact:

Lindsay Bonito, OPC Marine Protected Areas Program Manager  
Elyse Goin, California Sea Grant Fellow, OPC Biodiversity Program  
Email: [prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov](mailto:prop68ch9@resources.ca.gov).