

Ocean Protection Council Funding Guidelines

November 28, 2006

Objectives

The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is charged with implementing the California Ocean Protection Act (COPA), signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 23, 2004. An important tool to achieve the purposes of COPA is the funding of projects and programs that target the priorities outlined in the OPC Strategic Plan, including those that:

- Enhance the capacity of government programs to meet the goals of COPA
- Improve enforcement of California's ocean and coastal protection laws
- Develop practical approaches to implementing ecosystem-based management
- Improve the scientific understanding of our ocean resources
- Improve ocean and coastal water quality
- Improve the quantity and quality of ocean and coastal habitat
- Increase healthy ocean and coastal wildlife populations and communities
- Promote ocean and coastal awareness and stewardship

Projects found by the OPC to be of high priority for funding must:

- Directly relate to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, or coastal-draining watersheds, and address at least one of the above OPC priorities;
- Have demonstrable support from the public, as evidenced by letters of support from affected local and state-wide organizations, elected representatives, individuals, and other entities; and
- Be of greater-than-local interest.

OPC will give additional consideration to proposed projects that:

- Help resolve more than one issue;
- Include a contribution of funds or services by other entities;
- Are ready to implement (grantee or contractor will start and finish the project in a timely manner);
- Employ an innovative approach to solving a problem; or
- Involve a combination of local, state, or federal agencies or is a public/private partnership.

Funding Priorities

OPC will give high priority to directing funds to projects consistent with these guidelines and OPC's Strategic Plan (<http://resources.ca.gov/copc/>). Priorities for a particular fiscal year will depend on the source and availability of funding. The State Coastal

Conservancy will generally administer funding through, or for the purposes of, the Ocean Protection Trust Fund. Sources of funding may include state bond funds, the state general fund, the Environmental License Plate fund, and others.

Competitive Grants

In order to ensure an open process with the broadest participation possible, fairness, competition, innovation, and a broad range of projects and programs, a portion of funding available to OPC will be allocated through competitive grants. Solicitations for projects may take place several times per year and will follow the specific guidelines of the state departments administering the funding source, as well as priorities that may be adopted by OPC. Solicitations may be either broadly or narrowly focused depending on the funding source and specific needs as determined by OPC and its partner departments.

To the extent possible, OPC will announce and administer grant programs according to the following schedule:

By September 30	Announce type, priorities, and scheduling of funding
By November 30	Applications available
By January 31	Application completed
By February 15	Applications scored and recommendations made to OPC and sponsoring agencies
By April 30	OPC and sponsoring agencies approve projects
By June 30	Grant Agreement signed

For funding that is appropriated for more than one year, this schedule may be modified to include several grant cycles over the life of the appropriation.

Other competitive grant schedules may be announced from time to time.

Continuous Funding and Directed Projects

A portion of funds available to OPC will be allocated on a continuous basis for directed projects and programs that meet the purposes described above or that have been prioritized through the competitive processes of other public agencies. The purposes of directed funding include:

- Ensuring that Strategic Plan priorities are met in a timely and efficient manner;
- Supporting time-sensitive projects; and
- Ensuring that funding is available for state departments that implement high priority programs (e.g. Marine Life Management Act and Marine Life Protection Act).

The Secretary and Executive Policy Officer to OPC may jointly designate specific projects and programs to be developed, consistent with the above purposes. This may be done as directed projects carried out by the Conservancy, or through partnerships with other public agencies, NGOs, and private parties. Such projects may include capacity building and technical assistance to organizations.

The Chair and members of OPC will determine from time to time specific priority program areas, and may specify funding sources and amounts available for such efforts. Staff assigned to OPC will provide a range of services for directed projects including

contracting for studies and services, technical assistance in developing specific proposals, and facilitation services.

Developing and Submitting Project Proposals

To receive OPC funding, a written application must be submitted in hard copy and electronically, that contains the following information:

1. **Project title:** Provide the title of your project.
2. **Contact information:** Provide organization contact information including address, phone, fax, and e-mail.
3. **Mission:** State your organization's mission.
4. **Project Description:** Describe specifically what will be done with the requested funds (e.g. buy equipment, write a report, restore specific resources, monitor or manage a resource).
5. **Background and problem statement:** Describe the overall nature of your project and previous work by your organization or others to address the problem.
6. **Project goals and objectives:** Describe each of your goals and objectives, and your anticipated outcomes.
7. **Plan of work:** Describe how you plan to complete the project.
8. **Project timeline:** Explain how long the project will take to complete and what progress, if any, has been made to date, and when you expect key milestones to be completed.
9. **Project budget:** Provide a complete project budget, and the amount and source of funds received and requests pending. Describe the source, amount and purpose of any matching funds you expect to receive.
10. **Organizational budget:** Provide your organization's annual budget.
11. **Evaluation:** Explain how you will measure project success.
12. **Organization/Personnel:** Describe the organizational structure of your organization. Identify proposed project staff members and their roles.
13. **Consistency with OPC Priorities:** Describe how your project would meet the OPC Strategic Plan priorities and funding guidelines.
14. **Benefits:** Describe the benefits and beneficiaries you expect from your project.
15. **Obstacles:** List any legal, practical, financial or other obstacles to achieving your project objectives.
16. **Support:** List supporters of the project that can be expected to write letters of support, and indicate any partnerships or collaborations with other organizations.
17. **Controversy:** Describe any controversial aspects of your project.
18. **Non-profits:** If your organization is a non-profit organization, provide articles of incorporation, evidence of your charitable status, a list of board members and their biographies, and your most recent financial statement.

Submit completed application packages to:

Sam Schuchat
California Ocean Protection Council, Secretary
State Coastal Conservancy, Executive Officer
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612
E-mail: sschuchat@scc.ca.gov

Evaluation Process

OPC staff will screen all written proposals to determine if they satisfy these funding guidelines. Applicants will be notified as to whether their application is acceptable.

All accepted applications will be evaluated by a review panel established by OPC management. OPC Steering Committee members and other officials will be asked to provide guidance on some proposals.

Each member of the review panel will review each application and score it based on the following criteria:

- **Importance and Applicability of Proposal:** How well does the proposal fulfill OPC's priorities?
- **Technical/Scientific Merit:** Is the project approach technically sound? What is the likelihood the project will fulfill its stated goals and objectives? How feasible will it be to determine project effectiveness?
- **Overall Qualification of Applicants:** Has the applicant demonstrated the necessary experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project?
- **Project Costs:** Has the applicant demonstrated that the project budget is appropriate to accomplish the goals?
- **Public Support:** Does the project enjoy public support?

After individual members have scored the proposals, they will meet to compare scores, share expertise, and develop a consensus ranking for the proposals. Proposals shall be recommended to the OPC for funding in the rank order resulting from this scoring process *unless* the selection of a proposal out of rank order is justified based upon one or more of the following factors:

- Availability of funding;
- Balance/distribution of funds among funding categories;
- Duplication with other projects funded or considered for funding by OPC or other state agencies;
- OPC priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan;
- Applicant's prior award performance; or
- Participation by partners and other stakeholders in applicant's project.

Conflicts of Interest

Any person involved in the evaluation of funding requests will avoid conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest.