



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
RESTORATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 2020

TO: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

FROM: Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager
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San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to the 2020 Grant Program Materials

Staff requests feedback from the Governing Board on proposed changes to the Measure AA grant program materials, including revisions to the Request for Proposals (RFP, formerly called the Proposal Solicitation), which now incorporates all information previously included in the Grant Program Guidelines; revisions to the Grant Application; and creation of a Pre-Application. The proposed changes will be presented to the Governing Board for adoption at the Authority's July 2020 meeting, which, along with this meeting and the June 2020 Advisory Committee (AC) public meeting, will constitute three opportunities for public comment.

Background

The Measure AA grant program has now gone through three grant cycles. Staff recommendations for grant Round 3 are being brought to the Governing Board for approval from June through December of 2020.

For the first three years of the Measure AA grant program, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) released Grant Program Guidelines. The Grant Program Guidelines were a summary of the requirements of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act (Restoration Act) and the language included in the San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention, and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA), as well as some explanation of how the Authority expects to apply them. In the interest of simplification, all information previously included in the Grant Program Guidelines has been incorporated into the RFP so that applicants will have one less document to review. The RFP and Application now contain all the necessary guidance on project eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Equity Improvements

Measure AA states, “The Authority shall give priority to projects that... Benefit economically disadvantaged communities,” (EDCs). The Governing Board and the Advisory Committee (AC) have both expressed a strong commitment to achieving this goal.

The AC formed an ad hoc subcommittee to explore how best to engage with and provide benefits to EDCs in October 2018. To support this work, the Authority hired an equity consultant in February 2019 to develop recommendations for the grant program. The consultant’s report, *Establishing an Equity and Community Engagement Program that Benefits Economically Disadvantaged Communities*, released in September 2019, was based on input obtained through interviews and focus group discussions with community leaders and equity experts. In addition to reviewing the equity consultant’s report, the subcommittee reviewed best practices from others, including the Greenlining Institute, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and Portland Metro Parks. The subcommittee screened the equity consultant’s recommendations for consistency with the Authority’s mission, prioritized the recommendations based on feasibility and expected impact, and identified gaps. The report categorized recommendations as “Near-Term – 6-12 Months”, “Short-Term – 1-2 Years”, and “Long-Term – 3-5 Years”. The AC adopted the Near-Term Recommendations in October 2019. They intend to discuss the Short-Term and Long-Term Recommendations at future meetings.

The proposed changes to the grant program materials are primarily focused on responding to the AC’s Near-Term Recommendations on improving equity in the grant program. The following is a list of the recommendations relevant to the grant program materials and how staff has addressed them in the draft materials.

AC Recommendation	Staff Response
Request a Letter of Inquiry prior to submitting grant application.	Staff has drafted a Pre-Application (Attachment 1). Use of the Pre-Application is optional, but strongly recommended, and it will help inform staff’s consultation with the project proponent. In the consultation, staff will provide an assessment of whether the project is eligible for Authority funding. If so, staff will provide advice on whether to submit a full application for the grant round or work collaboratively with staff on a full project proposal for the Community Grants Program. If the project is not eligible for Authority funding, staff will provide suggestions on how it could be modified to become eligible.
Amend scoring criteria to show stronger nexus/relationships with EDCs.	Staff has proposed revising the scoring criteria to set aside 20 points out of 40 in the “Likelihood of Success” section for the project’s level of meaningful community involvement and benefits and/or innovative partnerships. As in previous RFPs, 40 points can be earned in the Prioritization Criteria

	section. One out of nine of the priorities of Measure AA are projects that benefit economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs).
Create a document with a basic template of what's expected of applicants with examples of what a competitive proposal looks like and how to implement the scoring criteria in order to help clarify eligibility requirements.	Staff has not completed this task yet, but will do so before releasing the RFP.
Create an application checklist for the applicants with a roadmap/blueprint of what they need to have ready in order to fulfill the grant criteria written in plain and accessible language.	The grant application has always included a checklist. The checklist has been edited to improve clarity.

Summary of Proposed Edits

In addition to the changes described above, the following edits are proposed.

Proposed Edits to the RFP:

- Adjust release date from September to July to match the Governing Board's schedule for potential approval.
- I. Introduction: Condense to only contain information applicants need. Include mention of Grant Round vs. Community Grants Program.
- II. Eligibility and Required Criteria: Clarify wording, simplify footnotes, and move detailed information to Appendix.
- III. Solicitation Priorities: Remove footnote on geographic distribution of projects since this information does not determine whether an applicant should apply.
- IV. Grant Application Process and Timeline: Update schedule and add section on Optional Pre-Application. Under Grant Application add that applicants may include support letters to demonstrate community support for their project.
- V. Application Review and Evaluation: Clarify and condense language. Modify Scoring Criteria table based on updated Grant Application questions and on updated criteria for Project's Likelihood of Success.
 - 20 points: Applicant's capacity and resources to complete and maintain project
 - 20 points: Project's level of community involvement and benefits, and/or innovative partnerships
- VI. Additional Information: Condense language.
- Appendices: Update info in San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and San Francisco Bay Joint Venture sections and add Appendix D for definitions and clarification of Eligibility Criteria.

Proposed Edits to the Grant Application:

- Adjust application period from September through December to July through October.
- Project Description section:
 - Clarify project eligibility. Condense several application questions into Project and Site Description question with sub-bullets.

- Add Work Products and Schedule table to clarify timeline of project tasks.
- Add question on Project Partners and modify question on Community Support, Involvement and Benefits.
- Remove footnote on monitoring and reporting – the information is in the RFP.
- Clarify CEQA questions and footnote.
- Add specificity to Acquisitions question.
- Preliminary Budget section:
 - Condense instructions. Clarify rules on direct project management, contingency, and overhead costs.
- Prioritization Criteria section:
 - Clarify instructions and footnote.
- Update Grant Application Checklist. Add checkbox for optional support letters form community representatives.

Next Steps

Staff expects to further refine these proposed amendments based on Governing Board and Advisory Committee input and present a proposed final version for adoption at the Authority's July meeting.

Attachments

1. Draft Pre-Application 2020
2. Draft Request for Proposals 2020 (Redline Version)
3. Draft Request for Proposals 2020 (Clean Version)
4. Draft Cover Sheet for Application 2020
5. Draft Grant Application 2020 (Redline Version)
6. Draft Grant Application 2020 (Clean Version)
7. Draft Budget Template 2020