

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 10, 2020

TO: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

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

SUBJECT: Authorization to Release the 2020 Grant Program Materials

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) authorize the release of the 2020 Request for Proposals (RFP, formerly called the Proposal Solicitation), which now incorporates all information previously included in the Grant Program Guidelines; revised Grant Application; and new Pre-Application. These documents include the proposed edits that were discussed in draft form at the May 8, 2020 meeting of the Authority's Governing Board, plus a few additional minor changes. The revisions reflect feedback from the Authority's Advisory Committee (AC) at its June 4, 2020 meeting. The May and July 2020 Governing Board meetings, along with the AC public meeting, constitute three public opportunities for comment over two months of review of the coming year of grantmaking activities.

Background

For the first three years of the Measure AA grant program, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) released Grant Program Guidelines along with the Proposal Solicitation and the Grant Application. 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. As described in the staff memo of May 1, 2020, "Proposed Changes to the 2020 Grant Program Materials," there was an extensive process involving the development of a consultant's report based on focus group meetings with community members, as well as vetting of proposed recommendations by the subcommittee. The subcommittee completed a report that

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 and adopted the Short-Term and Long-Term Recommendations in June 2020. 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.

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 revised 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.
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 will release this document when 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.
Begin simplifying language and phrasing in Measure AA grant program materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Program Guidelines and RFP were combined into a single document. • Language in RFP and application was simplified and clarified. • Questions that resulted in repetitive answers were combined.
Require or encourage project applicants to engage communities, with a focus on	The grant application was revised to ask how the project will seek community involvement and what community benefits it is expected to provide. The application checklist

disadvantaged communities during or prior to the design process.	includes the option to include support letters from community representatives.
--	--

At the June 5, 2020 AC meeting, AC members expressed varying opinions regarding whether 20 points for community involvement or innovative partnerships was appropriate or excessive. Those who thought 20 points was excessive expressed concern that this would result in low scores for projects in rural areas. Those who thought that 20 points was appropriate noted that it is important to reach out to the surrounding community and to engage people, especially youth, in order to encourage stewardship. It was also noted that proponents of projects in more rural areas or that are not directly adjacent or within EDCs have the option to bring community members to the restoration site to add a community involvement component. In addition, staff notes that there are other ways to earn points in this categories through innovative partnerships. As defined in the RFP, for the purposes of this grant program, an innovative partnership is defined as two or more stakeholder groups working together creatively to develop and implement a multi-benefit project. Innovative partnerships could be collaboration between community-based non-profit organizations; environmental non-profit organizations; federal, state, local, and tribal governments; health care providers; faith-based organizations; philanthropies; civic organizations; educational institutions; arts organizations, local businesses, or others.

Summary of Proposed Edits

In addition to the changes described above, the following edits are proposed. Compared to the May 8, 2020 version of the grant program materials, there are three new proposed edits, indicated as “**NEW:** below: two new edits to the RFP and one new edit to the application.

Proposed Edits to the RFP:

- **NEW:** Add definition of “innovative partnerships.”
- **NEW:** Add dates for the release of the RFP and deadline for submission of applications.
- 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.
 - **NEW:** Change 15% limit on indirect cost from a strict rule to a guideline.
- Prioritization Criteria section:
 - Clarify instructions and footnote.
- Update Grant Application Checklist. Add checkbox for optional support letters form community representatives.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Authority adopt Resolution 68, authorizing the release of the 2020 RFP, Grant Pre-Application Form, and 2020 Grant Application Form.