

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITITES
PLANNING GRANT AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

**PROPOSITION 84
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
(Revised 6/9/2010)**

Funding Specifics:

Q How much of the total bond allocation is available for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants?

A \$66,945,000 million, but the amount can change pending Council appropriation for additional program improvements, i.e. data and outreach.

Q How many cycles will there be?

A The Council is currently planning three (3) funding cycles.

Q How much is available for the grant program this cycle?

A \$22 million

Q What are the minimum and maximum amounts that will be awarded per individual grant?

A The minimum amount that will be awarded to a proposal is \$100,000. The maximum amount is \$1,000,000. The Council may consider higher grant awards for a joint proposal, an application submitted by one lead applicant with one or more eligible partner entities, coordinated by a planning activity(s) with defined shared outcomes. Partial funding may be considered to fully maximize grant awards.

Q When must the funds be expended?

A Currently, appropriation of the funds is pending so there is only a tentative timeline. In the past, the timeline for bond funds has been three years to encumber the funds (via the execution of the grant agreement) and an additional two years to fully expend.

Q Are matching funds required?

A No. Matching funds are not required for this program. However, leveraging other resources is encouraged in the guidelines. Other resources would include other sources of funds, staff, or "in-kind" services.

Q At the time of application, does the proposal need to be completely funded other than the funds requested through the grant process?

A No. However, if other funding sources have not been secured at the time of the application, a contingency plan should be provided describing how the applicant will proceed with the proposal if all necessary funds to complete the proposal are not secured during the grant process.

Q Will application be ranked and funded based on the applicable Focus Area?

A Yes. Proposals will compete for funding within an applicable Focus Area or economically disadvantaged (or severely) community (EDC) set aside. The Council has established the following goal: Focus # 1 will receive a minimum of 25% of funds; Focus Area # 2 will receive a minimum of 25% of funds; Focus Area # 3 will receive a minimum of 10% of funds; and the EDC set aside will receive a minimum of 20% of funds. Thus the minimum goals for the above categories would be: \$5.5 million; \$5.5 million; \$2.2 million and \$4.4 million respectively.

Eligible Applicants

Q What types of organizations are eligible for this grant?

A SB 732 defines eligible applicants as cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), joint powers authorities (JPAs), regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs), councils of governments (COGs), or combination thereof.

Q Is there a way for an organization that is not deemed “eligible” to apply for a grant opportunity?

A Not under current law. Entities not eligible to apply for a grant are able to partner with eligible entities as a sub-recipient. Collaboration, including partnerships, is highlighted in the guidelines as a priority.

Q Are Federal Agencies eligible to apply for a grant?

A No. Federal Agencies are not eligible applicants.

Q Are special districts eligible to apply?

A No. They can participate as a sub-recipient or participate a partner.

Q Are non-profits eligible to apply?

A Non-profits are not eligible to apply. They may partner with eligible entities as a sub-recipient or participate as a partner.

Q Can eligible applicants be changed for future cycles?

A Yes, but only if the statute, SB 732, is changed by the Legislature.

Eligible Costs:

Q If planning grant proposal costs (directly related) are incurred prior to the project award date or after the end of the grant performance period are they eligible for reimbursement?

A No. Costs must be incurred during the grant performance period to be eligible. The grant performance period is the beginning and end dates of the grant agreement.

Q If awarded a grant, will the applicant be able to use an overhead rate for personnel and/or employee serves?

A No. All eligible costs must be tracked (e.g., employee timesheets, invoices).

Q Can awards be made in advance rather than on a reimbursement process?

A Payments will be made only on a reimbursement basis. Advanced payments for proposal are not allowed.

Q Is CEQA or an EIR considered an eligible cost?

A No. But, costs incurred from CEQA may be considered “matching funds.”

Application & Grant Selection Process:

Q When are grant applications due and when will awards be announced?

A A tentative schedule has been posted on the Council's website: www.sgc.ca.gov. Grant applications are due August 31, 2010 and anticipated to be awarded in November 2010. However, actual funds for grant award will not be available until the 2010/2011 State Budget has been approved by the Legislature and Proposition 84 bonds are sold to fund the grant program.

Q Is there a limit on the number of applications each applicant can submit?

A Yes. A lead applicant may only submit one application per cycle. However a lead applicant may also: 1) submit a second application if it is for the EDC set aside and does not duplicate its first proposal and 2) be a sub-recipient in a joint proposal submitted by another lead applicant. The activities of each application cannot duplicate any other application.

Q Can an applicant request funding for the same activity under different focus areas?

A An applicant cannot request funding for the same activity twice or for an activity that is already funded by another grant program.

Q Can multiple entities submit an application for multiple similar activities?

A Yes. Joint proposals allow for an application to be submitted by one lead applicant with one or more eligible partner entities, coordinated by a planning activity(s) with defined shared outcomes. This type of proposal may be considered for grants awards greater than \$1,000,000.

Q How will grants be selected?

A If deemed eligible, a grant application proposal will be reviewed and ranked. The Council must approve the awarding of the ranked grants.

Q What if a grantee wishes to make changes or amendments to an awarded (approved) grant proposal?

The grantee must first obtain approval from the State. The grantee jeopardizes funding if changes are made without State approval.

Economically Disadvantaged Communities (Set Aside and Points)

Q Must the proposal be located within the geographic boundaries of an Economically Disadvantaged Community (EDC) to be eligible for the EDC Set Aside?

A Yes. To qualify for the 20% EDC set aside, projects must show that the planning to be funded would be *primarily or substantially* within the geographic boundaries of an EDC.

Q Must the proposal be located within the geographic boundaries of an Economically Disadvantaged Community (EDC) to be eligible to receive points under the EDC Priority Considerations?

A No. To receive points, a grant proposal must adequately explain how it will specifically benefit an EDC.

Q If the applicant is applying for the Economically Disadvantaged Community (EDC) set aside, is

the applicant eligible to submit an additional proposal?

A Yes. An applicant of an EDC set aside may also submit one additional non-EDC application.

Joint Proposals

Q What is the maximum amount of funding that a Joint Proposal may receive?

A The amount of funding awarded is at the discretion of the Council.

Q In a joint proposal, do the lead applicant's sub-recipients submit individual budget forms?

A No. A single budget must be submitted by the lead applicant. The budget must describe the funds that will be distributed to partners and specifically identify activities which the sub-recipient will be paid..

Q Must partners within a joint proposal be located adjacent to, or within, the lead applicant's jurisdiction?

A No. There is no location requirement. Rather, eligible partners must be coordinated by a planning activity(s) with defined shared outcomes.

Types of Proposals/ Competitiveness:

Q Will a Sustainable Community Strategy, as defined in SB 375, that meets the goals of SB 375 and AB 32 be competitive?

A To be competitive proposals should address the additional Council objectives, i.e. public health, economic development and natural resource protection, etc.

Q Will a General Plan Update that seeks to include sustainability elements be competitive?

A General Plan updates must be targeted and not business as usual. To increase competitiveness, targeted general plan updates should include implementation activities (e.g., updating zoning ordinances and building codes) and other requirements (see guidelines for complete list).

Q Can an applicant submit multiple plans under one proposal?

A If a proposal has multiple plans, they must be closely related (e.g. Targeted General Plan Update with a Zoning Ordinance), specific plan.

Q Must a grant proposal address all of the priority considerations to be eligible?

A If a grant application does *not* address priority considerations it will not be disqualified. However, a grant application that *does* address priority considerations will be more competitive; the more considerations it addresses would increase the potential for scoring more points.