

Regional Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Based on questions and discussion topics raised during the May 20 webinar, the following FAQ provides general guidance for prospective applicants and partners.

Program Overview

What is the purpose of the Regional Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Grant Program?

The program supports large-scale, collaborative projects that improve wildfire resilience, landscape health, ecological function, and community protection through regional planning and implementation.

Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible applicants may include:

- Public agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
- Federally recognized tribes
- California Native American tribes on the Tribal Consultation List

Collaborative applications involving multiple partners are encouraged.

Can multiple organizations partner on one application?

Yes. Partnerships between agencies, nonprofits, tribes, collaboratives, and other regional entities are encouraged, particularly when they demonstrate shared governance, coordination capacity, and regional prioritization.

What size projects is the program intended to fund?

The program is intended for large, regional-scale projects with significant implementation capacity and multi-partner coordination.

Eligible Activities

What types of activities are eligible for funding?

Eligible activities may include:

- Forest health and fuel reduction treatments
- Prescribed and cultural burning
- Community wildfire risk reduction
- Reforestation and revegetation

- Biomass utilization
- Pest management
- Strategic fuel modification
- Workforce development and training
- Planning and environmental compliance support
- Maintenance of previous resilience investments

Can projects include both forested and non-forested landscapes?

Yes. The program may support both forest and non-forest landscape resilience activities where they align with program objectives.

Are planning activities eligible?

Limited planning-related activities may be eligible when directly tied to implementation and regional project development.

Can workforce development or education activities be included?

Yes, when appropriately scaled and directly connected to the primary implementation goals of the project.

Would integrated restoration projects that include both forest and aquatic or meadow restoration activities be eligible?

Yes. Restoration approaches that integrate eligible forest and landscape resilience activities alongside meadow or aquatic restoration components may be eligible where they align with program priorities.

Can prescribed grazing be included as an eligible activity?

Yes. Prescribed grazing and similar vegetation management approaches may be eligible when aligned with landscape resilience and wildfire risk reduction objectives.

Project Priorities

How are projects prioritized?

Priority is generally given to projects that:

- Demonstrate regional collaboration
- Use science-based prioritization
- Provide multiple benefits
- Align with regional or statewide resilience strategies
- Benefit disadvantaged or vulnerable communities
- Leverage additional funding sources
- Include completed or advanced environmental compliance
- Demonstrate strong implementation capacity

What is meant by a “regional priority plan”?

A regional priority plan generally identifies landscape-scale priorities, partnership structures, implementation strategies, timelines, and governance processes informed by scientific data and stakeholder input.

Projects are encouraged to demonstrate alignment with existing regional planning efforts, collaboratives, or resilience strategies where applicable.

Eligibility & Project Scope

Is there a preferred regional geographic size for projects?

No specific geographic size requirement has been established. Projects may vary in size and geographic scope depending on regional needs and implementation capacity.

What is the minimum and maximum grant award amount?

The anticipated minimum award amount is \$5 million and the maximum award amount is \$20 million.

Can projects include non-forested landscapes?

Yes. The program supports both forested and non-forested landscape resilience activities where they align with program goals.

Is the Lake Tahoe Basin/Tahoe Conservancy jurisdiction eligible under this program?

Yes. The Tahoe Conservancy jurisdiction remains eligible because it is not included within the Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding boundary identified for this solicitation.

My project is located within the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) or Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) service area. Is it eligible for CAL FIRE's Regional Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Grant Program?

Projects located within the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) or Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) service areas may be eligible under the Regional Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Grant Program; however, for the current funding cycle, CAL FIRE has identified projects located within SNC and SMMC jurisdictions as a lower funding priority. This is because both conservancies received separate Climate Bond allocations to implement their own regional landscape resilience grant programs.

Applicants with projects located primarily within the SNC or SMMC service areas are encouraged to review funding opportunities offered directly through those conservancies or Dept. of Conservation's RFFC program, as they may be a better fit and provide dedicated funding for regional landscape-scale resilience projects within their respective jurisdictions.

It is important to point out that Concept Proposals are not scored against geographic criteria. Program Staff have been encouraging potential applicants in the SNC or SMMC jurisdictions to submit concepts. Applicants with projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries or are uncertain about eligibility are encouraged to schedule a Technical

Assistance Consultation with CAL FIRE to discuss the project's geographic scope and the most appropriate funding opportunity.

Environmental Compliance

Are environmental compliance requirements mandatory?

Yes. Environmental compliance must be completed before implementation activities that may affect the environment.

Who is responsible for environmental compliance?

The regional grantee—or a partnering public agency—may be responsible for carrying out environmental compliance responsibilities associated with subprojects.

Can projects move forward if environmental compliance is not yet complete?

Yes, but projects are generally expected to complete environmental compliance within required program timelines.

Does having completed environmental compliance improve competitiveness?

Projects with completed or substantially advanced environmental compliance may be more competitive due to implementation timelines.

When must environmental compliance be completed?

Environmental compliance must be completed before any ground-disturbing implementation activities begin. For subprojects requiring additional planning, environmental compliance must generally be completed within one year of subaward approval.

How far in advance should environmental compliance documents be submitted?

Applicants and regional grantees are encouraged to submit environmental compliance documentation as early as possible to allow adequate review time prior to implementation.

Can previously completed CEQA documentation be used?

Yes. Existing CEQA documentation may be used if it remains valid, covers the proposed treatment activities, and is accepted by the responsible agency as applicable to the subproject.

Does NEPA satisfy CEQA requirements for projects on tribal trust or federal lands?

In some cases, completed NEPA documentation may support a CEQA statutory exemption for qualifying activities occurring on federal or tribal trust lands, consistent with applicable California Public Resources Code provisions.

Does a Governor's Executive Order eliminate the need for CEQA compliance?

Not automatically. Some prior executive actions created limited pathways for temporary

environmental review suspensions, but those required separate approvals and may no longer be available. Applicants should assume environmental compliance remains necessary unless otherwise authorized.

Grant Administration & Reporting

Are grant funds provided upfront or reimbursed?

Funding is generally reimbursement-based, though some eligible entities may qualify for advance payments.

Will subawards be allowed?

Yes. Regional grantees may issue subawards to partner organizations and project implementers.

What reporting requirements should applicants expect?

Awardees should expect reports related to:

- Project accomplishments
- Acres treated or restored
- Spatial data and mapping
- Climate benefits
- Community benefits
- Financial tracking
- Final project outcomes

Will spatial or GIS data be required?

Yes. Spatial treatment data and mapping information are expected for tracking and reporting purposes.

Can project scopes or budgets change after award?

Potentially. Certain changes may require formal or informal grant amendments depending on the nature and scale of the modification.

Application Process

How are proposals evaluated?

Applications are reviewed against published scoring criteria focused on project readiness, regional collaboration, implementation capacity, climate and community benefits, and alignment with program priorities.

Where are applications submitted?

Applications are submitted through the designated online grants management portal.

Where can applicants get technical assistance?

Applicants may request technical assistance consultations through the program's [booking system](#) or RegionalGrants@fire.ca.gov. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the [grant guidelines](#) before requesting technical assistance or submitting questions.

Partnerships & Capacity**What level of organizational capacity is expected?**

Applicants should have a high level of capacity and be able to demonstrate they have sufficient administrative, technical, operational, and financial capacity to manage large, multi-partner projects and subawards.

Can smaller organizations participate?

Yes. Smaller organizations may participate as partners or subawardees within a larger regional structure.

Why is technical assistance important for these projects?

Regional projects often involve complex coordination, contracting, environmental compliance, and reporting requirements that may require dedicated technical support.

Lessons Learned from Pilot Projects

What have previous regional pilot projects demonstrated?

Pilot projects highlighted the importance of:

- Strong coordination structures
- Clear subaward agreements
- Early environmental compliance planning
- Technical assistance support
- Strong communication among partners
- Realistic timelines for implementation

What makes regional projects successful?

Successful regional projects typically combine:

- Clear governance
 - Defined partner roles
 - Shared priorities
 - Strong project management
 - Regional collaboration
 - Implementation readiness
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Match Funding & Leveraging Resources

Is matching funding required?

No. Matching funds are not required.

Will projects that leverage additional funding receive priority consideration?

Yes. Projects that leverage state, federal, local, tribal, or philanthropic funding sources may be more competitive during scoring.

Can federal funds be used as match or leveraged funding?

Yes. Existing federal funding sources may be used as leveraged funding within a project portfolio.

Should leveraged funding be identified in the application?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to identify anticipated leveraged funding sources and explain how they support the regional project strategy.

If previous work has already occurred in the project area, can it count as match or improve project scoring?

Previously completed work is generally not eligible as match funding. While there are no specific scoring points assigned for prior investments, applicants may strengthen their

proposal by demonstrating how previous work contributes to a broader regional strategy and landscape-scale outcomes.

Disadvantaged Communities & Tribal Considerations

Are projects required to benefit disadvantaged communities?

Projects that provide meaningful and direct benefits to disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, or vulnerable populations may receive priority consideration.

Are tribal lands automatically considered disadvantaged communities?

Not necessarily. Definitions of disadvantaged communities under the Climate Bond are based primarily on income criteria. However, tribal communities may qualify as vulnerable populations and may still receive priority consideration under program goals.

Are tribal communities considered vulnerable populations under the program?

Yes. Tribal communities are recognized as vulnerable populations for purposes of program prioritization and community benefit considerations.

Partnerships & Subawards

Can organizations participate as subgrantees instead of lead applicants?

Yes. Organizations that may not be positioned to serve as regional grantees may still participate as subgrantees or implementation partners within a larger regional effort.

Can applicants identify subaward partners and projects before applying?

Yes. Applicants may identify proposed subawardees and projects in advance. However, project selection and prioritization processes should be transparent, science-based, and informed by stakeholder and community input.

My organization may be a better fit as a subgrantee rather than a lead applicant. Is there a teaming mechanism to identify partnership opportunities?

There is not currently a formal teaming mechanism for this program. Applicants are encouraged to connect with existing regional entities and partners, including Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) grantees, local CAL FIRE units, Fire Safe Councils, and Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), to explore partnership opportunities.

Are partnerships required for this grant opportunity?

A formal partnership is not strictly required; however, the program emphasizes collaborative, regional approaches involving forest collaboratives, regional entities, tribes, and other stakeholders. Projects should demonstrate broad regional involvement and alignment with the program's funding priorities.

Can a regional entity already have subaward partners and projects identified before applying?

Yes. Applicants are not required to conduct a competitive RFP process for subawardees or subprojects. Different pilot efforts used different prioritization approaches. However, applicants should ensure that project selection is transparent, science-based, data-driven, and informed by practitioner expertise and community input.

Consultants & Administrative Costs

Can grant funds be used for consultants or grant administration support?

Yes. Grant funds may generally be used for consultants, contractors, and administrative support services related to grant management, reporting, environmental compliance, and project coordination.

Can pre-award consultant costs be reimbursed?

No. Costs incurred prior to execution of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.
