

# CAL FIRE TWR 2025 Grant Guidelines

## Public Comment Period: Summary of Changes

January 29, 2025

### Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity:

#### Comments:

During the 2025 Tribal Wildfire Resilience (TWR) public comment period, CAL FIRE received several comments in opposition to the limited waiver of sovereign immunity requirement.

Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants appreciates the comments describing these concerns, potential impacts, and how limited waivers of sovereign immunity can be problematic for many tribes and values.

#### Not changed – clarifications only, will be considered in future:

CAL FIRE is unable to change this requirement prior to opening the 2025 solicitation. The grant guidelines address these concerns by requiring limited waivers of sovereign immunity on a case-by-case basis and being as up-front as possible about CAL FIRE's approach.

Tribal Wildfire Resilience is currently working with CAL FIRE Leadership to research other avenues that may be available. These comments will be considered by CAL FIRE in the process of developing a department-wide policy on limited waivers of sovereign immunity.

### Eligible Tribes

#### Comments:

Comments described concern about reliability of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) contact list, lack of place-based association and accepted self-identification of tribal status, non-profits on NAHC list who are not tribally affiliated or others that have self-identified /Tribes on the NAHC contact list are eligible.

#### Changes:

Added application questions requesting descriptions of participation or support from other indigenous groups from the project area.

Added a place in the application to upload letters of participation from current landowner of project areas.

Added place in application to upload letters of support from other tribes in the area (optional).

Not Changed:

Eligibility for California Native Nations that are not federally recognized will still be confirmed by the tribal government being listed on the NAHC contact list. CAL FIRE does not have the expertise or authority to conduct detailed assessments of the legitimacy of tribal governments.

## Eligible Tribally Led Non-profits

Comments:

Multiple comments expressed concerns that expanding eligibility to tribally led non-profits increases the pool of applicants, could crowd out federally recognized tribes, non-profits that have no tribal affiliation might be able to apply, non-profits were not included in the 2023 solicitation.

Changes:

Clarified that tribally led non-profits are *required* to provide additional documentation. This includes the support of a tribal government in the form of a signed letter, Tribal Council resolution, or similar. CAL FIRE will review these materials as due diligence to check the eligibility of non-profit applicants.

Not Changed:

CAL FIRE appreciates the comments with several different perspectives on this topic. Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants program will continue to consider this for future solicitations.

## What about planning projects without a specific location?

Changes:

Added eligibility option for planning projects that do not have a specific land-based location. This could include regional coordination, training, statewide projects, or other creative ideas.

Added that long-term access may not be needed for planning projects that do not have a specific location. This depends on the situation. Contact TWR team to determine eligibility.

## Are current grantees eligible to apply?

### Changes:

Yes, current grantees are eligible. Added line stating eligibility of current grantees.

The application will include questions describing how current projects fit with the proposed project.

## Ineligible Activities

### Changes:

Added to list of ineligible activities: Roads, bridges, culverts, buildings, fundraising, endowments, cash reserves, payment of a debt of mortgage, lobbying or lawsuits, sub-granting or re-granting, and hazardous debris removal.

## Organizations outside of California

### Clarification:

The applicant must be a tribal government or tribally led non-profit with ancestral homelands in California. Non-profits must be registered in California. Out of state organizations may be partners (subcontractors) on the projects.

## Long-term access

### Change:

Added definition: access to land at minimum throughout the entire project performance period (grant contract period) and preference given to projects with up to 10 years of access through a written agreement.

## Environmental Compliance

### Comments:

How will CEQA compliance be carried out?

### Clarifications:

This is a reimbursement grant program. Grant funds cannot be reimbursed on any project until Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants Program has approved in writing that CEQA requirements have been met for the grant project. The length and complexity of this environmental review varies widely depending on project activities.

## Other Changes:

Minor clarifications throughout grant guidelines.

## Additional Public Comments

### Clarification:

Public comments for **Timber Harvest Plans** or other **Forest Practice Documents** are submitted online via [CalTREES](#). More information is available on [CAL FIRE's Forest Practice Website](#); see the video on "Submission of Public Comment."

Feedback about other Tribal Wildfire Resilience grant projects may be emailed to [TribalWildfireResilienceGrants@fire.ca.gov](mailto:TribalWildfireResilienceGrants@fire.ca.gov).