Green Schoolyards Grants Webinars Q&A

Combined Questions from February 9 & 13, 2023

Questions	Answers
Webinar recording, Q&A Sheet, Slides	
CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program Grants Webpage	https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/urban-and-community-forestry-grant-programs/
Sign up for the Urban and Community Forestry listserv for grant updates to your email:	https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001FcezdOZJGw-5_vGFclS9zLhj6OpqaiJWzgBltU7RTjLH0C3xvDenrMU7KxQk1Fej8ZXb4U2c9bCyvutxBKMOctsCbpmWq0jGMfL1hkDR5jQ%3D?u=1eab3f5545f6a6e4d33c94dcb&id=c330a569ca
Will a recording of the webinar, slides, and Q&A session be available for reference?	Yes. We will share the slides, webinar recording, and Q&A session with attendees and on our grants website for reference.
Are the final Green Schoolyards Grant Guidelines available?	Yes, the final Grant Guidelines can be found on the UCF grants website.
Application Timeline, Grant Guidelines	
What are the project end dates for both Implementation and Planning grants? When does the money need to be spent by?	All project work for Implementation Grants must be completed by March 30, 2026. Projects must be fully invoiced by April 30, 2026. All project work for Planning Grants must be completed within 12 months of project award. Projects must be fully invoiced within 30 days of completion. Only cost incurred during the project period may be billed for.
Should we assume our budgets to begin July 1, 2023 when submitting the application?	For accounting puposes, your budget will be active when you have received your executed grant agreement.
Is the application form available on the UCF website?	No, the application is being programmed in eCivis currently. When the application is ready, we will post to our website. This will happen soon, hopefully within the next week or two. Please sign up for our listserv to stay updated when the application form is available.
How likely is it that contracts will be executed on time (if there are a large number of applicants, for example)?	Projects should be designed with a contingency of time and budget.
Our school district is notoriously slow with approving and completing projects. How can the state guarantee that these projects will be fast-tracked to meet the implementation deadline?	Unfortunately, we cannot fast-track or guarantee that projects are implemented. This would depend on partnerships and communication. However, we are requiring that the school district is on board with the project; if the district would like to benefit from this funding, we would hope they would have interest in completing this project on time.
What are the consequences if an implementation grant is not completed before the deadline? There are many outside factors that can push timelines back like, the permitting process through the city and the construction of outdoor learning spaces. Will there be an opportunity to request for additional time?	The Implementation project deadline is set at March 30, 2026. Projects should be designed with a contingency of time and budget. Only costs incurred during the grant performance period are eligible for reimbursement. Post-grant maintenance can go past the project performance period for maintenance on trees planted during the project performance period if requested in the application period and approved by CAL FIRE staff.
Do you think additional grants might be available down the line for implementation later for those that get the planning grant?	We hope to receive additional green schoolyard grant funds next year as well, but it is not guaranteed. Funding is approved on an annual basis.
Will the post-project maintenance period go past the Implementation grant end date of March 30, 2026?	Yes, the post-grant maintenance period can go past the project performance period for up to two locally established maintenance cycles. Cycle length is up to the local jurisdiction to define. Often this covers 2-5 years after the grant.
Applicant or Project Eligibility/Budget Parameters	
Are rural schools eligible to apply? Does the school need to be in an urban area to be eligible?	The project area must be in an urban area or immediately adjacent to an urban area. Urban areas, for the purposes of these projects, are "urban areas" and "urban clusters" of 2,500 people or more per the United States Census Bureau's latest population data. However, applicants should check the US Department of Commerce list of "Urban Areas" to confirm if the school is located in a census designated place with a population of 2,500 people or greater.
How many applications can one applicant submit?	An applicant can submit a maximum of 3 applications per grant type.
What is the maximum amount one applicant can request?	The maximum is $30M for implementation grants ($2.5M max per school campus) and $3M for planning grants ($200,000 max per school campus). These limits refer to the total that all applications add up to (i.e. if an applicant submits 3 applications, all 3 cannot collectively total more than $30M).

Can only one school campus be included per application? Can applications include more than one school district?	An applicant can submit 3 applications and each application can include multiple campuses and school districts per application. However, no school campus or childcare facility can be included in more than one application. Applicants would need an MOU or resolution with each district.
Is it better to apply for a specific school district or an individual school most in need?	Only cities, counties, qualifying districts, and nonprofits are eligible applicants, so this precludes us from offering grants to single K-12 school sites. The district is the applicant but "in need" status applies to each campus selected for the project. Overall, at least 70% of funds will be made available to projects that focus on in-need education facilities. So while the majority of projects should be focused on in-need facilities, some sites do not have to fit this requirement.
Is there a database that includes all eligible districts? Should we send you the District's name to determine if a district is eligible?	No, school districts K-12 are eligible applicants. Eligibility status can be verified on request.
Are there other parameters used to determine eligible schools besides free/reduced lunch? What if the school district is the least funded district in a county? What about campuses that have low tree canopy cover and a high percentage of impervious surfaces or will it solely be based on demographic poverty metrics?	With justification, other tools or indices may be used to identify disadvantaged status, such as the California Heat Assessment Tool or Healthy Places Index. Proof will be required at the application submittal stage and any application not meeting the claimed status will be rejected. Funding recipients will need to report on how the project benefits have addressed the identified community need. Currently, low tree canopy cover and high percentage of impervious surfaces would not be sufficient.
For disadvantaged communities, you list two different ways of providing evidence (free/reduced meals and CalEnviroScreen). Do you need to provide proof from both of these?	We share two examples in our guidelines but other tools may be used with justification. An applicant needs to determine the appropriate tool for each school included in the application and share proof for how they came to that conclusion. Only one index or measure is required to be cited.
Is there a threshold for what disadvantaged means through CalEnviroScreen (i.e. 70 or more)?	Yes, an aggregate score of above 75%.
Can you review the CalEnviroScreen score requirements or other methods that will meet those requirements?	It is the applicant's responsibility to determine eligibility and whether the school campuses they are applying for meets the definition of "in-need educational facility". A justification for this determination, including which tool was used, and supporting documents have to be submitted with the grant application.
According to the Grant Guidelines, overall, at least 70% of funds will be made available to projects that focus on in-need education facilities. Does this mean that some funds do not need to meet in-need education facilities requirements?	The goals is to award funds to projects with the greatest needs. Applications will be selected through a competitive award process. Some projects may not meet the definition of "in-need" but still selected because of the quality of the project and population it serves.
Can these grants be used to help pay for regional park enhancements (i.e. adjacent park enhancements) or in a public park used by the youth within the city? Can a municipality apply for funding if the school uses the park for the students during school hours?	The Green Schoolyards grant type aims at increasing nature and tree cover on K-12 public schools and non-profit childcare facilities. If a park district has jurisdiction over or has an established joint use agreement with a school, they may be able to apply for a Green Schoolyards grant for the respective school(s). One of the other CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry grant types may be more suitable for this project, depending on project specifics.
If a single school campus is an independent Local Education Agency (LEA), are they eligible to apply?	Only cities, counties, qualifying districts, and nonprofits are eligible applicants. If the LEA falls into these categories, then they are an eligible applicant.
Is a County Office of Education an acceptable applicant or MOU partner?	Only cities, counties, qualifying districts, and nonprofits are eligible applicants so a County office of Ed would be an eligible applicant. If they are not the applicant but have jurisdiction over the respective school, they would need to submit an MOU to show their commitment to the project.
Are SOLEs (Sustainable Outdoor Learning Environments) eligible as a fundable project?	Probably yes. See eligible costs in the grant guidelines.
Can a school district apply to plant trees on land that it owns that does not have a school on it? They are building an environmental center there.	It is possible though the focus is on greening student-accessible/utilized spaces. Please contact us for more information.
Does the school and land need to be owned to qualify?	No.

Application Requirements

Do the guidelines specifiy all the required materials for the application?	Yes, if you cannot find a specific required form, or document, please reach out to your Regional Urban Forester.
Are there required approvals to request Implementation funds or do applicants just need a plan?	Applicants should submit all required information on the application form and required documents, including appropriate agreements between partners. Implementation grants require a lot more information and more work up front to ensure a proper scope of work. If the applicant is not quite sure about the scope, a planning grant may be more appropriate.

Is it true that all CAL FIRE grants require a Board Resolution prior to submitting an application?	Applicants shall obtain a memorandum of understanding (MOU), resolution, or certified letter from the respective district, local educational or child services agency supporting the project before being awarded a grant to show support of project. Some forms such as the resolution or MOU (if applicable) may be submitted as drafts pending signatures by authorized officers prior to a grant award.
Are letters of commitment required from community partners or just letters of support? Do we need an MOU from a project partner?	It is the responsibility of the applicant to properly communicate to all entities who have an influence on project success, including a resolution to implement and maintain the proposed project. Applicants should have all appropriate agreements in place before implementing the project. Some forms such as the resolution or MOU (if applicable) may be submitted as drafts pending signatures by authorized officers prior to a grant award. Letters of support from individuals who are not listed partners should not be submitted.
Can letters of commitment from School Districts be used in lieu of an MOU or resolution?	A legal opinion may be required for submissions other than those specifically identified in the grant guidelines. The purpose of a resolution by a Grantee's governing body is to allow the entity to sign agreements and amendments for a specific project; i.e., it allows the designated entity to enter an agreement with the State of California, and it designates someone to sign on behalf of the Grantee's governing board. We want the agreement to include official buy-in from the school district via an MOU or resolution, not just the letter of commitment.
Does the school district resolution need to be specific to the projects we're applying for or can it be a more general resolution for increased school greening in high need areas?	For our grant pupuses, the resolution must be specific to the project you are applying for.
If the district is the applicant, no MOU or resolution is needed, right?	Correct. Unless there is an MOU for a joint-use agreement with another entity that will provide maintenance or installation in return for public access to certain areas of the project site.
Are letters of support encouraged for the planning grant?	Instead, we would like letters of commitment from project partners, which are more than letters of support. Letters of commitment are very specific in what partners will contribute to the project.
If projects include only trees and irrigation, who is required to approve the plan?	It is likely that fewer approvals are required for a project with a limited scope as you're describing. Please contact us if we can provide more specific information about your concept. It is the responsibility of the applicant to properly communicate to all entities who have an influence on project success, including a resolution to implement and maintain the proposed project.
Is an Environmental Assessment (EA) required for the project? Is the cost for an EA covered by grant funds?	For our grant purposes, we require an environmental checklist to be completed with the application. If we determine that the project is not exempt, we will contact the applicant for further instructions. The grant can cover environmental review costs as long as they're incurred during the grant performance period. An EA applies to NEPA which is federal law. Our environmental review will be done to meet CEQA requirements.
For the Environmental Checklist: would an asphalt-covered school yard count as '"existing landscaped school grounds" or "public building grounds"?	Public building grounds.
What tree information is required for the application? Is a tree survey or a tree planting plan required?	No survey or inventory is required. Tree information can include number of trees, type of trees, example species etc. related to the goal this project aims at accomplishing.
For Implementation grants, do applicants need to submit drawings of the project created by a landscape architect?	Probably yes, but not as part of the application. Plans or designs would be submitted when they are drafted (after award of the grant).
It seems like the planning and design should already be prepared before applying for the planning grant. Is this accurate?	It is the intent of the planning grant to fund planning and design. An initial concept and identified needs are useful to initiate planning and design.
The implementation grant does not require that application include design concepts for the schools, correct?	Applicants should have conceptual design ideas but design drawings are not required.
How do you provide bids or quotes if you have not completed the planning process?	This is a challenge that all applicants face. We suggest you do your best to work with a consultant or get reasonable quotes or costs from entities that do similar work to the work you are trying to implement. We recommend adding about 5-10% to include increases due to inflation, labor costs, import taxes, or any other costs that may be unanticipated.
If students are to be involved in meaningful design for their campus, how can this happen if the designs are all preapproved and prebudgeted?	Designs or design drawings are not required at the time of application. Conceptual design ideas should be included in the application.
How can site plans be developed with community engagement involved if a site concept is expected with the submission of the implementation grant	Designs or design drawings are not required at the time of application. Conceptual design ideas should be included in the application.

What community engagement is required, if any, before submitting the application?	None is required before the grant application is submitted. The application should include how and who will be engaged to authentically develop/inform the project.
If we are applying for an implementation grant, may we include planning for other, future projects into this application? Or should we also apply for a planning grant for other schools?	It is better to divide planning from implementation into seperate applications. Implementation applications include planning but planning does not include implementation activities.,Separate the two projects.,If you are anticipating that you will have multiple projects, that necessitate seperate planning grant applications, please apply for each project seperately. Applicants are eligible to submit up to 3 grant applications for each, planning and implementation.

DSA Questions

What does the acronym DSA stand for?	Division of the State Architect
What is the best way to get in touch with DSA reps to request the DSA pre-applicaiton meeting and campus site drawings?	Links can be found in the grant guidelines. Identify the regional office in your area, reach out to them directly to request the site drawings for each campus, and then submit the respective forms to that office to schedule the pre-application meeting.
If an applicant submits an implementation grant for 15 schools do all the campuses need separate DSA meetings?	To be effective/informative, DSA meetings will only include 1-2 campuses. Multiple meetings would be needed to cover 15 campuses. Please note that a relevant district representative (e.g. from facilities) need to be present in meetings with DSA.
Is a DSA pre-application meeting always required to apply for an implementation grant?	For implementation grants, a DSA pre-application meeting is required for public K-12 schools. But project design approval by DSA is not required for the application. Childcare facilities are not required to meet with DSA unless they are located on a public school campus.
If DSA approval isn't required, is a pre-application meeting required? Is the DSA pre-application meeting required even if a project will not trigger DSA? Our district has a financial threshold as well as scope that if you stay within, you do not need any approval from DSA. If DSA approval isn't required, is a DSA 7 required?	The pre-application meeting with DSA is not to approve the plans. It is to determine additional needs you might not be aware of like path-of-travel improvement or additional site improvements this project might trigger to be in alignment with the building code. Proof of this meeting is required for the application.
If DSA isn't required, who is required to approve plan?	If the site design has been finalized, it has to be approved by DSA before being implemented. We do not require it to be approved before the application.
What is the process for scheduling a pre-application meeting with DSA? How long should applicants budget into their schedule to complete this process?	The process is described in our grant guidelines. It is strongly advised to schedule the meeting with the regional DSA office as soon as possible.
Could you clarify where to request the site drawings? On the DSA pre-application form, it asks us to include site drawings, so it seems they com from somewhere else?	Please reach out to the respective school district for site drawings. They help inform the pre-application meeting with DSA but are not required. The more good information an applicant can share about the campus and project with DSA, the more useful the information will be the applicant receives.
Are site drawings the same thing as "as builts"?	"As built" plans may be sufficient if they include the entire proposed project area. Site drawings may be needed to provide adequate information for areas or features not contained in the "as built" plan.
Will CAL FIRE take any steps to expedite approvals for the state architect who must approve school designs?	Unfortunately, no we do not have the ability to do this. We strongly recommend scheduling a meeting as soon as possible to ensure enough time to meet the application deadline.
Does DSA have enough staff capacity in order to not hinder the applications process with the pre-meeting form requirement?	There should be no delay. DSA's normal application process has quick response and turn-around time at a schedule that works best for the applicant as soon as all required forms and documents have been received. Applications can usually be reviewed within a day or 2. There may be complexity in the site drawings requested, depending on the information provided and available, or depending on the complexity of the project.
Will implementation grants cover the cost of ADA required upgrades once the project cost surpasses the threshold of roughly $175k for projects on public schools?	Those costs may be eligible. Note the focus is on necessary improvements to achieve greening goals.
If DSA requires so much ADA work that the dollar amount required to complete that work is higher than the greening portion of the project, will the project receive a lower score?	The cap for site improvements related to path-of-travel/accessibility is 20% of the budget per campus.

Waive Match/Match Requirements

May other grant funds be used for matching funds?	Yes, as long as the matching funds are of a different funding source.
Can Salary and Benefits be used as match?	Yes
Do in-kind services count as a match?	Yes

Can Green Schoolyards grants through the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program be used as match/cost-chare for federal grants?	No, Green Schoolyards grants through the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program may not be used as match/cost-share for federal grants
Could students or staff working on a project during school hours qualify for the national $29.95 volunteer matching funds rate?	Yes, except if students are younger than the legal working age of 14. Students younger than 14 should be accounted for at a discounted rate to be determined in conjuction with CAL FIRE.
Guidelines say that "matching … may be met with … any State funding source … that is not the same as the State source of funding awarded by CAL FIRE." Is the funding source for this grant the General Fund (and would a DWR Proposition 1 match)?	Probably yes, as long as the matching funds are of a different funding source. Green Schoolyards grants are funded by California General Fund which would differ from Bond funds. Please contact us for a definitive answer.
If CalFire requires prevailing wage, can we use Tree Labor rates?	If the Tree Labor rates match the prevailing State Labor rates, then yes. If the rates are not consistent, please justify why you are asking for the difference in your budget. Please consider that the requested amount for your project application should be comparable to your deliverables.
What are the Youth Labor rates?	We use the same volunteer rate for everyone https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/
Does requesting reduction or waiving of match reduce the competitiveness of the application?	No, we will not consider the reduction, or waiving of the matching requirement as a negative compenent of an application.
What is the likelihood that disadvantaged applicants will have the matching requirement waived? Can CAL FIRE guarantee that if you meet all 3 metrics for "in-need educational facility" then you will receive the 25% match waived? It is hard for a non-profit to invest significant time and resources into a grant if you don't know if the match will be waived or not.	Each request for match waiver or reduction will be individually considered. Authority to reduce or waive matching is defined in the Urban Forestry Act. Justification is required, though CAL FIRE staff may engage with the applicant to inform decisions. It is likely that match reduction or waiver can be approved with justification that meets the grant guidelines. Many such requests have been approved in past grant programs.
Can match waiver be request for a low income community or 70% reduced lunch campus (as opposed to a DAC)?	Yes, one qualifying aspect we consider for serving a DAC, is that 70% of the students are receiving reduced lunch. Authority to reduce or waive matching is defined in the Urban Forestry Act. Justification is required, though CAL FIRE staff may engage with the applicant to inform decisions.
If we anticipate having the matching funds requirement waived, should we submit a budget in the application that does not indicate a matching budget?	Yes. Be sure that justification is provided for the match waiver.
Is the match waiver for disadvantaged applicants or disadvantaged recipients? Can a district applicant request match to be waived, or only non-profit applicants?	It can be waived if the project is in or benefitting a disadvantaged community. Justification from the applicant for waiver is needed.
Will you use OPSC's financial hardship guidelines to determine if a District qualifies for CAL FIRE to waive their 25% match requirement?	With justification, other tools or indices may be used to identify disadvantaged status. Match reduction or waiver will be considered as allowed by the Urban Forestry Act.

Does the UCF Program have a rubric for scoring applications? Will you show how each of the priorities are weighed when scoring?	We do have a scoring rubric, but we do not share it publically. We highlight the main aspects of applications that we pay attention to in the grant guidelines. Grants are awarded solely based on their competitiveness against other grants. Each project is unique. Multiple factors may be compared during the review and scoring of applications, and we want projects to be designed to provide the best outcome for the community and the highest likelihood of success. See project scoring explanations in each grant type.
How influential is community engagement in scoring projects?	All projects should have a community engagement component.
Does including indirect/overhead in budget impact competitiveness?	No, as long as the indirect/overhead does not exceed the maximum 12% indirect cost.

How is funding determined?	Funding is determined by the applicant, within specified limits in the grant guidelines, and with a reasonable budget, informed by professional bids or quotes.
Can indirect costs be charged to the grant? If so, is there a set amount?	Yes, the maximum rate for indirect costs are 12%, as specified in the grant guidelines.
Can budgets be submitted with indirect cost rates?	Yes, but please note, indirect costs include items such as payroll administration, human resources, computer support, minor equipment, financing, and office support that are not directly related to the implementation of the project to be funded.
Is there a list of eligibile and ineligible costs?	Yes, this can all be found in the grant guidelines.
Are consultant fees or any other costs to assist with preparing the application eligible costs?	No, only costs incurred during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement (i.e. after the grant agreement has been executed).
How detailed will the budget need to be for the planning grant? As in, can we provide rough estimate quotes?	Verbal or informal quotes are sufficient to compose your budget.

In doing the application budget it is difficult to say what the installation will cost until we have designed the Green Schoolyard. How do you recommend we deal with that?	We suggest you acquire estimates from contractors/schools ahead of time. Do your best to estimate your costs. If necessary, changes to your budget may occur if you are awarded the grant. However, your total grant award cannot change.
Can our grant be reduced if we asked for too much money to spend?	Usually, unspent funds can be used for unexpected expenses or can be shifted to post-grant maintenance. There are also other options that can be discussed with your grant administrator. Please note, if the applicant requests too much for the scope of work in their application, the budget will be scrutinized in the scoring process. However, the final budget amount cannot be increased.
How should "Contractual" and "Supplies" be broken up? If, e.g., an irrigation contractor is hired, do we separate out the irrigation supplies in the budget?	It's up to you. If the supplies are included in the contract, then you can keep them under contractual.
Are there limitations on what is considered a travel cost? Hotel, airfare? Or just mileage?	Yes, this can all be found in the grant guidelines.
Can we pay existing staff additional funds for their involvement in after-school, weekend, and summer involvement in programming and curriculum development?	Yes, as long as they're necessary for the successful completion of the project.
Can a garden shed and tools be included in the implementation grants?	Yes, as long as they're necessary for the successful completion of the project.
Are recreational fields an eligible cost?	Please contact us for more information. We will probably not cover the cost to install turf. We would be more likely to cover the cost of the removal of turf for the installment of a pocket forest.
Will the grant fund things like shade strutures and play structures, if they are part of an overall greening plan that includes trees and hardscape removal?	We may fund play structures and other hardscapes. We do cover temporary shade structures. All of this depends on the overall project goals and what the project is intending to accomplish and how they are changing the way that children experience their outdoor space. If a permanent shade structure is a minor component, we may consider it. However, our program focus is on trees and we caution applicants to avoid costly hardscape choices.
Are tree re-location costs eligible?	They wouldn't disqualify the project but may reduce competetiveness.
Is the post-grant maintenance funding included in the maximum grant award?	Yes
Does the planning grant cover a landscape architect to design a site plan?	Yes, the cost of professional services may be eligible.
In other capital grants that we have applied for there was a maximum of 30% to be allocated for soft costs. What is the maximum soft costs for these grants (permitting, soils testing, engineering etc.)?	Budget allocations can be found in the grant guidelines.
If another public entity has to be involved in a school project, such as the city regarding stormwater, or the water district for installing recycled water, would grants cover some of their labor too?	Yes, the grant would cover costs that the grantee incurs to get the necessary approvals such as permit costs. We support partnerships that advance the success of these projects.
Are there guidelines relating to reimbursement to a specialist or an organization who assists in this process?	Yes, the cost of professional services may be eligible as contractual costs. This can all be found in the grant guidelines.
How much contingency can be budgeted for in implementation grants?	There is no "contingency" line item.
Is a 25% advance available to School district applicants in disadvantaged communities? Is it available for non-profit applicants, in disadvantaged communities?	Only non-profits are eligible for advances.
For non-profits, payment is not on a reimbursement, correct?	No, it is usually on a reimbursement basis, however, non-profits can also request advance payments in cases of grantee hardship and where the project is serving disadvantaged or low-income communities. More information can be found in the grant guidelines.
How likely can a nonprofit get continuous advanced payments if working in low income communities?	It is commonly approved.
Is there guidance on how general the budgeting can be to accommodate the as-yet-undetermined designs? There is a tension between the need for robust budgeting and the need for a community-driven design that can't have happened yet.	We understand that creating a reasonable accurate budget is a challenge. We recommend speaking to other entities or with a consultant to get reasonable quotes or costs from entities that do similar work to the work you are trying to implement. We recommend adding about 5-10% to include increases due to inflation, labor costs, import taxes, or any other costs that may be unanticipated.
Eligible Activities	
What activities can the planning grant pay for?	All planning aspects of the grant project are included in this option following the eligible practices and costs section in the grant guidelines for the implementation grants. The goal of this option is to complete the plan for implementation of a Green Schoolyards project including preliminary site designs, environmental assessments (e.g., HazMat identification and plan for remediation), CEQA, stakeholder engagement, any permitting, and other steps required for the implementation of the project. The goal of this grant type, grantees are able to have a shovel-ready project including the associated project budget estimate.,Review the grant guidelines for a full description of eligible costs. Broadly, the intent is to complete planning, design, stakeholder engagement, environmental review, and preliminary permitting. More information can be found in the grant guidelines.

Can the planning grant develop a pilot program?	We might fund the pilot program, but not the implementation of the pilot program.
How would you describe a natural playground (which is eligible)? Would recreational equipment fit into this category and be eligible for funding?	Potentially. It would depend on the specifics.
Is there a number of features within the green schoolyard project that are required? For instance, if the schoolyard already has features but you are only interested in adding two or three additional features such as an edible food garden or trees.	There are no required features other than trees, and increasing shade and learning opportunities. Each project should be designed to optimize greening the campus for the benefit of students.
During the planning stage, may trees still be planted?	No, planning grants do not include any implementation activities such as planting trees.
Since the removal of asphalt is listed as an eligible item, can we add turf for recreational activities as well as areas with trees?	Please contact us for more information. We will probably not cover the cost to install turf. We would be more likely to cover the cost of the removal of turf for the installment of a pocket forest.
Will this grant fund a project to transition to organic natural field maintenance and take out plastic turf?	We support the removal of artificial turf and turning it into nature or more natural areas. But we will probably not cover the cost to install turf. Please contact us for more information.
Can we use grant funds for the demolition of a facility to expand greenspace? We have a dilapidated property we're looking to demolish to expand this project further	It depends. We could fund for the removal of asphalt, but it depends on what the facility is and what the cost of the demolition is.
Can we use grant funds to add trees and enlarge projects being pursued through other grants (ie, stormwater projects through PUC). Can funds from this grant be used to supplement other grants geared at co-benefits like stormwater management?	Yes, tree plantings will be funded.
Can new staff can be hired with grant funds? For what length of time?	Activities such as hiring staff may be funded for the term of the grant. No costs incurred after project end date (March 30, 2026) may be included in this grant.
What about installing recycled water infrastructure that would also involve the city's water district?	Yes, costs related to irrigation, stormwater management, recycled water, etc. could potentially be part of this project. It depends on a case-by-case basis depending on the details and cost associated with the activities.
Can the project budget include xeriscape landscaping around the trees?	Yes, as long as that landscape complements the growth and health of the trees. Please provide an explanation of how the xeriscape will reduce the amount of irrigation required for the surrounding trees.
Miscellaneous Questions	
What is a maintenance cycle? How long can one account for post-grant funding to cover the maintenance once the grant has been deemed successful?	In urban forestry, oftentimes, a maintenance cycle is about 3 years or shorter to maintain younger trees to set them up for success when it comes to a healthy structure, but it depends on the maintenance plan for the site. Cycle length is up to the local jurisdiction to define. Post-grant maintenance covers two maintenance cycles (locally determined). Often this covers 2-5 years after the grant.
Do you have sample maintenance plans for us to see?	No. Each organization and their resources is different and maintenance plans need to be practical and effective for the respective needs.
Is there easier guidance on the MWELO?	We do not regulate the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. Please contact your local regulator or the California Department of Water Resources.
How is the program measuring success as it relates to heat reduction on school grounds?	Performance metrics are listed in the grant guidelines.
Has the size of trees to be installed been increased beyond 15 gallons?	15 gallons is our standard size for a few reasons 1) the cost goes up significantly as the tree gets bigger, and 2) there is more effort needed to ensure that larger sizes are successful with transplanting stress and needed maintenance. The smaller the tree, the easier it is to adjust to the new site. However, larger trees can be covered by this grant on a case-by-case basis with justification.
What is typical turnaround between submittal of invoice and payment?	No longer than 45 days unless the invoice, reporting, or activities needs to be corrected.
In this schoolyard photo, what would the Grow Space be considered to determine the distance between trees? ie, tree lawn, open space...	"Unrestricted" for most of the trees.
What happens if the the kids will not be involved in design of the project?	Ideally, we would like every demographic of the school to be involved in the design and maintenance of the project i.e. staff, grounds/maintenance staff, and students.
Can we only include one campus per grant application?	No. You can include multiple campuses in one application, however, a given (specific) campus cannot be included in more than one one grant application.