

## Frequently Asked Questions

The following addresses some of the frequently asked questions we have received in the past. If these do not properly or fully address your questions, please feel free to call us for further clarification.

### Applicant Eligibility

1. **We are a nonprofit that handles the operations for a City owned museum. Are we eligible to apply?**

A: Yes, so long as you meet the definition of museum. Evidence for this will be in your mission statement, your board, etc.

2. **We are a non-collecting museum. Are we eligible?**

It depends. If your institution logs, preserves, and/or cares for objects, then yes. If most of the space is to showcase only, then no.

3. **Can my museum exclusively staffed by volunteers apply for this program? Would my museum be at a disadvantage when applying under the Superior Programs category?**

A: Yes. For purposes of this grant, an institution needs to employ at least one staff member, or the full-time equivalent, *whether paid or unpaid*, primarily engaged in the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of objects owned or used by the institution. Not all museums are expected to have paid staff. Each organization will be evaluated based on its unique circumstances. A volunteer-run museum may be a superior example of a volunteer-run museum!

4. **How closely does my organization need to match the characteristics of 'superior' museums to be considered under the 'Superior Programs' category?**

A: The 38 characteristics listed in Appendix T are standards established by the American Alliance of Museums. For this program they are serving as broad guideposts for museums of all types and sizes. *Every museum will fulfill these characteristics in different ways depending on their unique circumstances.* No museum is expected to fulfill them completely. Use them as reference when preparing the application, to describe either the museum operations or the selected legislative objective.

5. **Are satellite museums eligible?**

No

6. **Does a museum meet the 2-year requirement if it has been open for a long period of time but has been closed in the last few years?**

If the museum was closed for construction, it will be considered eligible. In all other cases, it would not be eligible as capacity remains uncertain.

## **Application Process**

1. **Do my Articles of Incorporation need to be certified?**

A: No. Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporations can provide a copy of their Articles of Incorporation as they have been submitted to the Secretary of State's Office. A certified copy is not required.

2. **Can a non-profit organization and a public agency jointly apply for a grant?**

A: No. No joint applicants. One entity would be the applicant. Other organizations may contribute to your project, and be listed as a member of the project team but that organization would not be considered an applicant.

3. **How does the evaluation team determine which projects are selected for a site visit?**

A: The number of projects receiving site visits depends on scoring, number of applications received, requested funding amounts compared to funds available, etc. Only those meeting both the organizational and project criteria will be selected. Site visits clarify the project scope for the evaluation team and facilitate funding recommendations to the State Board.

4. **How detailed should my project blue prints and site plans be at the time of application?**

A: Project site plans should contain details of the property to be developed or acquired and identify each of the features and amenities identified in the application. Plans should show the larger overall project areas, but elements to be funded by the Museum Grant Program must be very clear. You don't have to spend a lot of money on site plans; however, the plan should be specific enough to allow someone unfamiliar with the project to visualize it. Blueprints and other images must fit into an 8½" x 11" format.

## **Funding**

1. **Is it better to ask for less or more?**

A: This is ultimately up to you. However, you may be asked if you can accept partial funding and should be prepared to answer this. If you ask for the full amount, you need to demonstrate significant regional impact or benefit.

2. **My organization is a public agency applying for a project. Which budget should I use to describe our annual budget?**

A: It is important to use the budget of the unit/division that will directly supervise/administer the capital assets project.

3. **Does “staff” include volunteers as well as paid personnel?**

A: Yes. Many museums use volunteers to perform the same duties and responsibilities that paid staff performs in other organizations. Therefore they are considered as staff.

4. **Can I reapply for funding next cycle if my application is not funded during this cycle of funding?**

A: Yes, if appropriate. It may be beneficial to obtain technical assistance prior to submitting the application a second time.

5. **Can a non-profit organization located outside the State of California apply for State funding?**

A: No. Only those that are incorporated in the State of California are eligible to apply.

6. **Do you only award the amount requested or will you lower the amount?**

A: The State will try to provide successful applicants the amount of funds they request. However, the State has the discretion to reduce the amount awarded, as long as it will not impact feasibility. These decisions will be made on an application-by-application basis.

7. **How much funding is available in this round?**

A: Approximately \$1.33 million in Fiscal Year 2014/2015. There is \$4 million available from Prop 40 funds over the next 3 years and then snoopy license plate sales may fund the program after this.

8. **At the time of application, does the applicant need to have matching funds secured?**

A: Yes. Funds do not need to be in the applicant’s possession but we need to see commitment letters or other evidence that the appropriate amount of matching funds have been secured. If a fundraising or capital campaign is being used for the match, the applicant would need to demonstrate past success and possibly state previous amounts raised.

**Matching Funds**

1. **Are matching funds required?**

A: Yes. Matching funds are required for this program. At least 50% of the match must be in cash and up to 50% can be from in-kind donations.

2. **Can I use match funds for items that are not allowable costs?**

In-kind match is restricted to allowable costs under the Guidelines. However, cash match may be used for a portion of an infrastructure project if it is necessary and reasonable to complete the project.

3. **Can I use other governmental funds as my match? What about internal funds?**

A: Yes, government and/or internal resources can be used as match. However, no other programs that the Natural Resources Agency administers can be used.

4. **Can labor and items received at a discounted rate count as In-Kind contributions?**

A: Yes, the difference between the current market value of the labor or items integrated into the capital project and the amount charged can be counted as In-Kind contribution if properly supported with documentation.

5. **My museum has a very small annual budget. Can we request a reduced match?**

A: At the discretion of the State, only for **small nonprofit and Tribal museums with annual budgets of less than \$500,000**, a lower than usual match may be requested if necessary to make a project realistic for underserved communities. An underserved community is defined as a “community that has a clear lack of historical and cultural resources” per statute. However, the applicant must still assure the State that they have the means to complete the project as proposed.

6. **We are expecting significant In-Kind contributions for the project. Do we need to complete a separate In-Kind Contribution Form for each contributor? Is any other documentation required?**

A: Yes. A separate form must be signed and submitted for each In-Kind contributor. No additional documentation is required for the application.

7. **For matches that are contingent on receiving the grant from the State, what must be submitted with the application?**

A: Letters from potential funders indicating their contingent support may be used to document the match.

8. **Can contributions (cash and materials) that go directly from the contributing partner to project contractors be considered allowable as match?**

A: No, all in-kind and matching funds, materials, and work must be donated directly to the legal applicant/grantee. The grantee is the entity responsible for meeting the matching requirement.

9. **How do we calculate non-cash match involving the donation of services?**

A: Applicant must identify the donated labor costs, and the source of each donation, in the Cost Estimate. Applicant will be asked to demonstrate that donated labor costs will directly benefit the capital assets project. Applicant will be asked to identify the individual performing the labor, what type of labor was performed, when the labor was performed, the number of hours expended, and the normal hourly rate for that labor (or a corresponding rate using State of California civil service pay scales.). Volunteer time above and beyond the regular course of employment by applicant staff, and time spent by Board Members who provide a particular

service to the project, may be counted using the normal hourly rate for that labor (or a corresponding rate using State of California civil service pay scales.)

**10. Can my museum use donated property to meet the match requirement?**

A: It depends. Existing facilities may not be used to meet the match requirement. However, donated space may be used to meet the match requirement when donated within the project performance period. Applicant must provide a letter of commitment from the donor. Applicant will also be responsible for obtaining the appraised fair market value of the space. This information should be submitted as part of the application.

**11. We have already started to perform work on the project. Can the work already performed be counted as part of the match requirement?**

A: No. Work performed PRIOR to a signed Grant Agreement cannot be counted as part of the match requirement. **EXCEPTION:** An applicant that can document that architectural plans, and/or drawings **solely** for the capital asset project were created **within one year prior to the application submission** deadline can credit these costs toward their match requirement. This can also include CEQA.

**12. Is a planned gift, which may not be received at the time of submitting the application acceptable to fulfill the matching fund requirement?**

A: Yes. If relying on a confirmed gift to fulfill the match requirement, the applicant can document this source of funding in their application with the understanding that the gift must materialize into a cash asset within the project performance period.

**13. For an acquisition, can my museum include the cost of an appraisal conducted on the property as a planning cost to fulfill the matching fund requirement?**

A: Yes. An applicant that can document that documents developed solely for the capital assets project that were created within one year prior to the date of the State Grant Application deadline can credit these costs toward their matching fund requirement as an in-kind contribution.

**14. Can permanent staff working on the project during traditional hours be used as an in-kind contribution of funding toward the match?**

A: No. It is important to carefully read the requirements under In-Kind donations for labor in Appendix K of the grant application. Only volunteer time above and beyond the regular course of employment by applicant staff may be counted as an in-kind donation of labor.

**15. Can we use a capital campaign drive to fulfill our matching fund requirement?**

A: Yes. However, applicant must document sufficient matching funds at the time of application. These funds must be confirmed, but are not required to be in the possession of the applicant until after the grant agreement is executed.

**16. How do we document pledges for our project to fulfill the matching fund requirement?**

A: Can be documented by letters of commitment, awards and other communications may be used as documentation.

**17. Can we use a loan or line of credit to fulfill the match requirement?**

A: No.

**Eligible Projects and Costs**

**1. What constitutes a project? When does it become more than one project?**

Usually one discreet project will have one CEQA, one set of construction bid documents, and be tied to one legislative objective.

**2. Can we purchase equipment with State funds?**

A: Yes. Equipment may be leased, rented, or purchased, whichever is most economical. If equipment is purchased, its residual market value must be credited to the project costs upon completion of the Project.

**3. Is an exhibit considered a capital asset project?**

A: Yes, construction and installation of permanent exhibits are eligible as long as they are maintained and operated for at least 15 years.

**4. Can we apply for funds for a portion of a larger capital project?**

Yes. State funds are available to applicants who wish to complete a distinct phase of a larger capital project, or for an entire project.

**5. We are renovating our city park, including improvements to our museum. What constitutes the project to be funded, under these circumstances?**

A: Depending on the project, a distinction needs to be made between a larger overall project and the elements to be funded with Museum Grant Program funds. It will be up to the applicant to use the narrative, budget, and site plans to make each of these very clear to the review committee.

**6. Are outdoor public spaces and structures, such as an amphitheater, considered a capital assets project?**

A: Yes. All of the above are considered capital assets, as are permanent elements in exterior landscapes, gardens and outdoor plazas.

**7. Must my project elements all be unmovable fixed structures?**

A: No. Capital are *required* to be ‘permanent’, that is, meet the 15 year lifespan required by California law. However, permanent does not mean *fixed*. Movable elements may be part of the proposed project, as long as they have a 15 year lifespan, *and* will be in use for the purpose stated in the application during that time.

**8. Can the applicant acquire or restore items in their collection?**

A: No. Acquisition or restoration of objects for display such as collections, specimens, artifacts, animals, and plants are ineligible. The MGP program is focused on improvements to *infrastructure* which will enhance display, access and storage of the collections.

**9. Are computers, computer programs, and/or digital displays eligible?**

A: No. Due to the rapid nature of technological change, it is unlikely that these elements will meet the 15 year lifespan required.

**Administration**

**1. What is a bond acknowledgement sign and why should the applicant put it in the budget?**

A: All Grantees are required to post a sign at the project site with specific language and the CCHE/MGP logo. Since this is required, the applicant will want to make sure to budget for it accordingly.

**2. Are there bonding requirements for State projects?**

A: It is the grantee’s responsibility to be informed and to comply with and to require its contractors and subcontractors to comply with all applicable laws, rules, guidelines, and regulations.

**3. What is a civil service pay scale?**

A: If the applicant is planning to use donated labor as a method to fulfill the matching fund requirement, it cannot exceed the hourly rate affiliated with the relevant professional using the State of California civil service pay scale. This information can be obtained by visiting the Department of Personnel Administration’s website at [www.dpa.ca.gov](http://www.dpa.ca.gov).

**4. Do you require prevailing wage?**

A: The applicant can contact the department of industrial relations or its own legal counsel to obtain more information.