Navigating State Grants for Tribal Stewardship

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This one-pager summarizes tips and strategies on how to approach and understand state grant guidelines.

The State of California has priorities and goals it wishes to advance. State grant programs are one way the State invests in projects and actions to advance these priorities and goals.

State Grant Solicitations & Guidelines are <u>how</u> the State communicates <u>what</u> it is looking to fund and the conditions that come with State funding. This one-pager breaks down the lengthy and sometimes complex grant solicitation documents that describe the information the State needs to <u>determine whether your project aligns</u> with State priorities.

Assessing an Opportunity: Is this the right match?

While the State is working to advancing/improving equity and inclusiveness in our grant programs, existing law and statutory requirements may stipulate specific limits on how funding can be used.

Understanding project eligibility:
1. Review the eligible applicant criteria
2. Review eligible versus ineligible activities

Understanding project competitiveness (for competitive grants):
1. Review the competitive selection criteria
2. Review the scoring rubric

Refining and Adapting Your Project

When determining whether it is worth changing a project's scope to meet eligibility requirements, here are some questions to consider:

- What aspects of the current project **can** be changed to either **meet eligibility requirements** or to **enhance competitiveness**?
- If I edit or remove component X, does the project still meet our goals and priorities?

If your project is a match for the opportunity, you're ready to dive in!

💡 General Tips for Reading Grant Guidelines

Read the guidelines in their entirety and make notes as you go review. Make note of:
   a. Any questions you may have for grant staff
   b. Grant funding sources and conditions for accepting these funds
   c. Is a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity required? Is it negotiable?
   d. State priorities and how your project advances or addresses them
   e. How to submit an application (Email? Online Portal?)
   f. Key deadlines (Hard deadline or rolling deadline?)
   g. Points of contact for grant program staff
   h. Resources: technical assistance, office hours, webinars, example templates
   i. Any definitions/key sections impacting your project's proposed activities and scope

Anatomy of a Grant Program

The contents of a grant program application differ by program, but may include:

Grant Guidelines ⟶ ***The State's Who-What-Where-When-Why-How***

- **Who** is eligible to apply?   • **What** *projects are eligible?*
- **When** will the project need to take place and be completed?
- **Where** do the projects need to take place?
- **Why** does your project meet the program's priorities and goals?
- **How** should the projects be administered?

💡 ***Tip***: *When reading the guidelines, pay special attention to the above. If guidelines are unclear, follow-up with the grant program's point of contact.*

Project Proposal ⟶ ***The Applicant's Who-What-Where-When-Why-How***

In your proposal, be sure to describe the following:

- **You** are an eligible applicant because…
- This proposed project does **what**…
- The project will take place **when** and be completed by **when**…
- The project will take place **where**…
- The project meets the program's priorities and goals **by doing**…
- The project will be administered **by who…** and project success tracked **by doing…**

Might include...

- Project proposal questions, work plan, budget/cost estimate, and timeline
- Other: photos, site plan, evidence of willing seller), etc.

💡 ***Tip***: *If the guidelines reference specific State strategies, goals, and priorities, go to those source documents and connect your project to those sources.*

Supporting Documentation ⟶ ***These vary across programs, but may include...***

- Signed Authorizing Resolution or Certification Letter
  - From the applicant's leadership (ex: Tribal Council)
- Eligibility statements
  - For non-profit applicants this might include IRS 501c3 determination letter
- Payee Data Record/Tax ID Form
- Other (proof of ownership, appraisals, site control/land tenure, etc.)

💡 ***Tip***: *Create a checklist and map out timelines to gather required documents.*

For more information related to this tool, and to find other tools related to advancing tribal stewardship, check out the Tribal Stewardship Policy and Toolkit at:
https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/Tribalaffairs/TribalStewardshipPolicyAndToolkit