

Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Draft Grant Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions

Detailed explanations of the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions (TNBS) draft grant guidelines and the application process, materials required, and definitions can be found in the complete draft grant guidelines document found at <https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/tribalaffairs>.

- **What is the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Grant?**

- This program is a competitive grant program to support California Native American tribes located within the State in advancing multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects.

- **Who can apply for the grant?**

- Eligible applicants include California Native American tribes and tribally led entities located in California.
 - Applications can be submitted on behalf of inter-tribal consortium, tribal conservation districts, or partnerships, but the application must show California Native American tribe(s) is actively partnering with and supporting the application through a signed letter or resolution from the chairperson of the tribe(s) and describe how the project will serve the supporting tribe(s) and community.
- Non-tribal entities may support California Native American tribes in applying for the program, but the application must show a California Native American tribe(s) is actively partnering with and supporting the application through a signed letter or resolution from the chairperson of the tribe(s) and describe how the project will serve the supporting tribe(s) and community.

- **What are Time Sensitive Shovel Ready Ancestral Land Return Projects?**

- In tribal consultations and workshops, tribal representatives have expressed the need to have quick funding available for time sensitive ancestral land return projects that are partially funded and need additional financial support to close. Many other state programs under CNRA have multi-benefit nature-based solutions funding and have already reviewed and approved partial funding for tribes' ancestral land return projects. To help coordinate state funding programs and to meet this need heard from tribes, CNRA reserves up to \$25 million for time sensitive shovel ready multi-benefit nature-based solutions ancestral land return projects that are partially funded by another State of California grant program(s). These projects will be on accelerated timelines.

- **How does the application process work?**

- Time Sensitive Shovel Ready Ancestral Land Return Projects will have a separate application process on an accelerated timeline.



- For the competitive grant program, there are 4 steps:
 1. Applicants submit a Preliminary Project Proposal. During this stage, applicants will be asked to provide a project summary and public point of contact that will be posted on the TNBS website for other tribes and members of the public to coordinate with applicants on feedback, comments, concerns, and/or requests for collaboration or coordination.
 2. Upon review, competitive applications will be invited to submit a full Project Proposal.
 3. On a case-by-case basis, visits, presentations, and other supporting documents may be requested from applicants.
 4. Finally, there will be final call for any supplemental or additional information before grant evaluation and award decisions.
- **How much can a grant request?**
 - For Planning grants, the minimum award amount is \$50,000 and the maximum is \$1,000,000.
 - For Implementation grants, the minimum award amount is \$200,000 and the maximum award amount is \$5,000,000.
 - For Ancestral Land Return grants, the minimum is \$200,000 and the maximum award amount is \$10,000,000.
- **What types of projects qualify for this grant?**
 - Eligible projects will focus on the following categories:
 - Planning for multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects
 - Implementation of multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects
 - Return of ancestral lands for the purpose of advancing multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects.
 - Applicants may submit multiple applications for unique projects across the categories but cannot include aspects of the same project in multiple applications.
- **What documents does the preliminary grant proposal require?**
 - All project types will require Project Proposal Form, Project Summary, Project Questions, and Location Map. Template/instructions can be found in the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions draft grant guidelines document.
 - Please note that qualifying/final proposals will be asked to submit additional supporting documentation. More detailed information can be found at in the draft grant guidelines.



- **How will the grant be evaluated and scored?**

- Information provided in the proposal will be evaluated on how effectively the proposed project meets statutory requirements, funding priorities, and program objectives. Each project will be evaluated for eligibility utilizing answers to the questions in the Requirements and Project Need section. Points will be attributed to the answers to the questions within the Funding Priorities sections (Planning OR Implementation OR Return of Ancestral Lands) and the Organizational Capacity section and not to individual questions.
- Please note that to achieve equitable distribution of funds, the State may consider additional factors including, but not limited to best value, regional distribution, type, and likelihood of success of projects.

- **What is the application timeline?**

- The application timeline will be posted with the final grant guidelines. CNRA anticipates final grant guidelines to be published in early August.

- **Where can I submit the grant?**

- All materials should be submitted by email or mail. Email submissions are preferred.

tribalaffairs@resources.ca.gov or
California Natural Resources Agency
Attn: Tribal Nature-Based Solutions 715 P
Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

- **Can I still apply if I don't have access to the internet?**

- If you have barriers to accessing the internet, mail submissions are available at:

California Natural Resources Agency
Attn: Tribal Nature-Based Solutions 715 P
Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

- **Where can I get assistance for this grant program?**

- The California Natural Resources Agency will conduct online workshops and host office hours for technical assistance for applying for this program.
- A list of office hours, workshop dates and times will be posted on the California Natural Resources Agency website at <https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/tribalaffairs>.

- **Can one apply for this grant even if they have other funding or plan to apply for other funding resources (ex: federal grants...)?**

- Yes. In fact, priority will be given to planning projects that already have state or federal funds for some component of the applicant's project.
- Priority will be given to planning projects that can show which specific state



or federal grant program the applicant is planning to apply to, and how state funding will make them a competitive or prepared applicant for that funding.

- Priority will be given to ancestral land return projects that have partial state, federal, tribal, or other funding for the purchase and maintenance of the property.
- **How much funding is available for each project category?**
 - There is \$71 million dollars total available for the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions program. CNRA reserves the right to modify these allocations based on the types of funding sought.
- **What is encumbrance?**
 - Encumbrance refers to the State having committed the funding at issue via a grant or contract. Funds are available for encumbrance until June 30, 2027, and all relevant costs associated with maintenance must be spent by January 1, 2029. Final invoices must be received no later than March 31, 2029 to meet year-end accounting deadlines or funds may be forfeited.
 - The \$1 million associated with OPC's Tribal Small Grants Program are available for encumbrance by June 30, 2025, with final invoices due by March 31, 2027.
- **Is match funding required to be eligible for this grant?**
 - There is no match requirement to participate.
- **What is CEQA and Will My Project Trigger it for State or Local Agencies?**
 - The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires government agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their actions (including their funding decisions related to certain projects) before approving those actions or approving such funding. The CEQA Guidelines explain how to determine whether a decision to approve a project will trigger environmental review, what steps are involved in the environmental review process, and the required content of environmental documents.
 - CNRA requires its grantees to help it identify required environmental review and undertake that review on its behalf as part of any funding decision or approval. CNRA will independently evaluate that environmental analysis and evidence supporting it when determining whether and to what extent CEQA is triggered.
 - Generally, even if a funding decision could trigger CEQA, CNRA will consider whether the decision is exempt from CEQA as a first step. There are two types of CEQA exemptions: (1) statutory exemptions and (2) categorical exemptions. CNRA encourages all applicants to review the Governor's "cutting green tape" initiative, Public Resources Code section 21080.56, and CEQA 202 Webinar Series: Exemptions. This will help applicants propose [draft notice of exemptions with their projects where applicable as a way to streamline this process.](#)



- Please refer to the resources below to learn more about CEQA. If you have questions about whether funding a particular project or plan would be exempt, you are encouraged to reach out to CNRA grant managers.
- Resources:
 - [Complete CEQA Guidelines Handbook](#)
 - [Getting Started with CEQA](#) by Office of Planning and Research
 - [Cutting the Green Tape: CEQA and Restoration Permitting Tools](#)
 - [CEQA 101](#)
 - [CEQA 202 Series Webinar: What is a "Project" Under CEQA](#)
 - [CEQA 202 Webinar Series: Exemptions](#)
- **Will my project require a limited waiver of sovereignty?**
 - Projects may require limited waivers of sovereign immunity and post project monitoring and reporting, which will be determined on a case-by-case basis and dependent on the type and scope of the project. CNRA will avoid seeking a limited waiver of sovereign immunity when possible and will strive to notify applicants early in the grant application review process if it is anticipated a limited waiver of sovereign immunity will be necessary. CNRA is committed to working collaboratively with California Native American tribes on tailoring limited waiver of sovereign immunity terms and conservation and public access agreements or deed restrictions to support tribal priorities while also meeting the state's obligations under the law.

