

2020 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How many applications do you typically receive? In the last several years, CalEPA has received about 100 applications per cycle, translating to around \$4.5 M in requested funding per solicitation.

How many grants are typically awarded? The number of grants awarded varies and varied by funding available, grant program project priorities, and number of competitive projects. In the recent grant cycles, CalEPA has had approximately \$1.5 M dollars available per cycle to award and has awarded approximately 25 to 30 projects per cycle.

Will the EJ Small Grants Informational Webinar presentation be available online? Yes, it is posted on the EJ Small Grants Program website.

Why was the application deadline extended to August 13, 2021 (formerly the deadline was June 30, 2021)? Due to the pandemic, the CalEPA EJ Grant Program wanted to allow grant applicants more time to develop their applications. CalEPA anticipates scheduling at least one more informational webinar in July 2021, once the budget is finalized.

Federally Recognized Tribal Government Applicants: Also, please note that with the application deadline extension; tribal government resolutions (only applicable to tribal government applicants) will now be due by October 15, 2021 (formerly August 13, 2021).

With the updated application due date, what is a reasonable project start date? Projects are expected to start in the fall of 2021.

Does the project need to be 18 months in length? Grant applicants may choose a grant term of up to 18 months that will allow for successful implementation of the proposed project. The applicant is free to determine, but must justify, the project duration. CalEPA has provided 12-month grant performance terms in the past; however, CalEPA has extended the grant performance term to 18 months to allow for more project implementation flexibility. Whatever duration you as the applicant choose, please be sure to make a justification (provide a scope of work) in the work plan narrative for the project performance term selected.

Who is Eligible to Apply for the CalEPA EJ Grants? Eligible applicants are the following:

- Designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations designated by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or
- State of California recognized non-profit entity that operates primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or other similar purposes in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit, or
- Federally-recognized tribal government in California.

Organizations who do not have the IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation may apply under a California based Fiscal Sponsor who does have the IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization designation.

Must the applicant be based in California in order to be eligible? Yes.

Do you accept projects based outside of the state of California? No.

Can a project be geared towards small businesses? No, projects must focus on EJ communities.

Is there a cap or maximum on indirect expenses/overhead? Yes. The maximum on indirect expenses is 20 percent.

Must the 15-page Project Narrative be double-spaced? No, the 15-page Project Narrative can be single-spaced.

Is it okay to include live links in the 15-page narrative? Yes, so long as the narrative still falls within the 15-page limit.

Can we include images to better explain the project? Yes, so long as the narrative still falls within the 15-page limit.

Is it acceptable to collaborate with another party to apply for the grant? Yes, as long as the lead applicant is a IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, collaboration within the project can be with non-501(c)(3) nonprofit partners or sub-contractors.

Should Letters of Support be included with the application package submission? Or do attachments need to be submitted separately, directly from the support organization? Either is acceptable however, CalEPA prefers receiving whole application packages that include all attachments including the letters of support. It is generally best to submit Letters of Support and/or Letters of Commitment with the application package. If your project partner or supporting organization sends us the letter separately, be sure they clearly identify which application they are supporting. Both Letters of Support and Letters of Commitment are optional, but if you have partners who will be working on the project with you, we recommend including a Letter of Support.

When during the fall of 2021 will CalEPA announce the awards? Once the budget is finalized, anticipated in late June or early July 2021, we should have a better picture of how much funding is available for the EJ Small Grants Program.

Can more than one application be submitted by a given group? Yes, but the proposals submitted must be separate and distinct. The proposals cannot be linked or expand on one another. The grant reviewers must not see a relationship between the applications. As long as the project proposals are separate and distinct, you may submit as many applications as you like.

Can sub-applicant, partner organizations be named on more than one application? If the partner organization is named on multiple applications, the applications cannot be similar to one another; they must be separate and distinct. If they are similar, only one application will be considered.

How should we notify the EJ Small Grants Program if we have another grant proposal submitted to another funding organization, and what if that proposal is funded while the EJ Small Grants application is pending? The proposal you submit to CalEPA should be a standalone project. Leveraging project resources is encouraged and acceptable but keep in mind that the information in the work plan table and budget table should only include activities, products and services to be funded by the CalEPA EJ Small Grant. You can certainly tell us about your leveraged project in the project narrative, but just ensure that your project proposal is unique to the EJ Small Grants Program. CalEPA cannot award money to the project if you submitted the exact same application elsewhere and received funds from another organization.

Can we reference in the application certain activities, products or services that are part of our project, but that will be paid for by another source? Yes, reference in-kind or other provider supported services and materials, but be sure that in the budget table submitted, you only include costs that are eligible and will be paid for by the CalEPA EJ Small Grant.

Can you please go over reimbursement payment process? CalEPA work with each grantee to go over the documentation that is required for all payments including reimbursements. Please see details in the Payment Request section of the Draft Exhibit A of the Procedures and Requirements document which can be downloaded on the CalEPA EJ Grant Program website for an idea of what will be required.

Is it permissible to use funds to pay a lab for sample analyses? We have allowed this type of costs in the past however please keep in mind that any analysis or testing supporting by grant funding must be approved by CalEPA prior to analysis or testing to be supported by the grant.

Is Honoraria an allowable expense? No. Please read the list of ineligible costs on pages 6, 7 and 8 of the Application and Instructions document.

What is the distinction between small monetary stipends and honoraria? Stipends are for money paid to trainees, interns, or students to help cover basic costs while they receive or conduct work training. Stipends paid must have a paper trail (e.g., receipt of payment). Honoraria are ineligible costs under this grant, known as gifts to bestow recognition to an individual for which payment is not required.

Can EJ Small Grants funds be used as matching dollars for other grants? No, you may not use EJ Small Grants monies as matching dollars for other grants.

Can grant funds be used to buy food and drinks? No, grant funds cannot be used to purchase any food, beverages, utensils, plates, drinkware, etc.

Is it permissible to use the grant money to hire someone to help with the project? If we do not have their resume ahead of time can we submit what skills and experience we

would require in a new hire? Yes, the project may hire staff to help with the implementation of the project. Yes, if the applicant does not yet have the staff person hired or name on file, and the grant funding will be used to hire personnel and support resources, be sure to include the title, hourly rate and jobs duties of the staff that will be hired in the budget.

Can non-profit applicants use the funds for small re-grants or for small business partners? No, applicants may not use CalEPA EJ Small Grants to re-grant or to provide support to small businesses.

What are the requirements for the progress reports and final report? Information can be found in the Draft Exhibit A – Procedures and Requirements, which can be viewed or downloaded from the CalEPA EJ Small Grants Program website, section II on page 3.

Pending budget allocations, is this program annual? No, CalEPA does not have continuous appropriation, so this Program is available as long as funding is available.

If the project includes collaboration with two separate non-profits, what resumes should be included? Resumes included in the application should be from the three lead project staff (i.e., three highest paid staff in the CalEPA EJ Grant proposal) no matter what organization they are affiliated. Please remember there is a 1 page, double sided limit per person per resume.

Must the application include resumes of everyone who is being paid by the grant? Yes. We require the resumes of at least three key staff who will be involved in the project, but you please include resumes of those staff members will be working on the project and paid through the grant.

Does a resume need to be provided for contractors like interpreters? No, unless the interpreter is a staff person of the applicant organization.

Could a non-profit hire a consultant? Yes.

Could a non-profit use the funds to hire a specialist consultant rather than a staff person? Yes.

Is there a cap on hired personnel's hourly rate or number of paid hours? Yes. If you are an Executive Director or similar grant lead, signing off as signature authority for the grant or supervising authority of the grant, that person may not individually benefit from over 50 percent of the grant award (i.e., personnel costs, travel expenses, contracting, etc.).

Could you share some outcomes from past grantees who have designed and implemented collaborative or capacity building efforts? Please see the [summaries of past awardees](#). Past projects have addressed areas under CalEPA's purview: air quality, water quality, cumulative impacts, toxic substances and pesticides exposure, etc.

Would remediation/mitigation to prevent vapor intrusion into affordable housing be an eligible expenditure? See [summaries of past awardees](#) to get a sense of what types of projects CalEPA has awarded in the past. We welcome applications for new, innovative projects, but projects must fall under CalEPA's purview and authority.

Can Tribes or NGOs partner with for-profit companies as technical consultants for project support? Yes, applicants may contract with for profit companies. Please keep in mind that Grantees will still be responsible for the implementation and success of the project even if a consultant is hired to work on the project.

Does the program funding allow for youth and/or community participation? Yes, CalEPA encourages community participation, including community youth participation.

Does the project need to start in the fall in order to be eligible, or is it okay if the project has already commenced? Projects may not start until CalEPA awards and provides the grantee a notice to proceed.

Will there be a certain number of grants allocated to Southern, Central and Northern California? CalEPA always tries to ensure that grantees represent a fair and equitable geographic distribution throughout the entire state of California.

How does CalEPA measure relative "environmental justice" impacts? What are the indicators and how will any outcomes or impacts be measured or evaluated after the program ends? We use a number of tools - quantitative and qualitative lenses (e.g., CalEnviroScreen scores, perceived/gained benefits to target audience, quantified measured benefits and/or deliverables identified by the grantee) – to ensure that project proposals meet the criteria of what is intended to be supported through CalEPA's EJ Small Grants Program.

Do you accept hand delivered applications? No, at this time we are not accepting hand delivered applications for application submittal. CalEPA will only accept emailed and mailed applications. Our mailing address and email address can be found in the Application and Instructions document on the EJ Small Grants Program website, and below:

Mailed Applications: Mailed applications must be submitted no later than August 13, 2021, to the CalEPA Headquarters Building, mailing address: P.O. Box 2815, Sacramento, California, 95812-2815. Mailed applications must be submitted and postmarked by the US Postal Service before or on August 13, 2021. Large commercial delivery (e.g., UPS, FedEx, or Golden State Delivery) service confirmations before or on August 13, 2021 are also acceptable. Applications postmarked after the final August 13 deadline date will not be accepted or considered.

Emailed Applications: Emailed applications must be emailed to the CalEPA Environmental Justice Program email box at EnvJustice@calepa.ca.gov no later than 11:59 pm, Pacific Standard Time (PST), August 13, 2021. Applications received after 11:59 pm, PST, August 13, 2021 deadline to the CalEPA EJ Program email box will not be accepted or considered.