

Certified Local Conservation Corps

Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Forestry Corps: Wildfire Resilience Grant Guidelines

Funded by:



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I. Technical Assistance & Program Support

For all questions related to the grant agreement and the administration of grant funds and policies, please contact your designated Program Coordinator:

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II. Overview

Introduction

Assembly Bill 2126 (2018) requires the California Conservation Corps (CCC) Director to establish a Forestry Corps program to accomplish certain objectives related to forestry health, corpsmember training, and employment pathways. Assembly Bill 178 (2022 – Forestry Corps Expansion) directed \$15,000,000.00 to the CCC for forest resilience projects to be developed and implemented by the CCC and certified Local Conservation Corps (LCCs). \$5,000,000.00 of these funds shall be in the form of grants to certified LCCs for forest health and resilience projects.

The Forestry Corps program shall accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop and implement forest health/resilience projects, pursuant to PRC § 14412.
- Provide assistance to corpsmembers in obtaining forestry and forest technician degrees and certificates.
- Train corpsmembers to operate equipment in forestry and related fields.
- Create pathways from corps to degree programs and jobs.
- Partner with community colleges, trade associations and forest and timber industries to provide training and experience to corpsmembers.

Funds Available

Approximately \$225,000.00 in grant funds have become available for distribution. LCCs certified for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 may submit a Forestry Corps proposal to the CCC for consideration. All proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis by the CCC's Grants and Certification Unit and scored according to the criteria outlined on pages 9 and 10.

Note:

- *The proposal amount for each proposal is \$75,000.00.*
- *An LCC may submit only one proposal in accordance with the parameters listed above.*

Priorities for Forestry Corps: Wildfire Resilience Grant

The priority of this grant program is to fund proposals that restore the health and resilience of California forests, grasslands, and natural lands in a manner

that reduces wildfire risk to communities. The most competitive proposals will meet one or more of the following priorities:

- Maintain and enhance the resilience of California’s forestland to promote healthy resilient forests throughout the state.
- Improve forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in areas where people are living near wildlands.
- Implement demonstrable and measurable forest improvement practices.

Competitive Criteria for Proposals

The most competitive proposals will meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Located in a high or very high fire hazard area.
- Included in CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans or similar community-wide strategic planning document.
- Leverages private, federal, or local funding.
- Is shovel-ready and has California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (if applicable) completed.
- Receives documented support from an appropriate fire or public agency identifying the project as an important community need and demonstrating that the project meaningfully addresses that need.
- Demonstrably and measurably creates pathways for corpsmembers and/or provides unique opportunities for workforce development, education, and training.
- Directly benefits a Disadvantaged or Severely Disadvantaged Community as defined in Appendix C.

Calendar of Key Dates

- Solicitation period begins: June 11, 2025
- Proposals due: August 8, 2025
- All project work must be completed and all funds expended: April 15, 2027
- Last day to reconcile advances and submit invoices for reimbursement: May 15, 2027
- Funding appropriation expires: June 30, 2027

III. Program Requirements

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to receive grant funds under this program, the Applicant must:

- Be certified by the CCC in accordance with PRC § 14507.5 for Fiscal Year 2022/2023, 2023/2024, and 2024/2025;
- Not already received direct funds from the legislature to operate a Forestry Corps;
- Have the fiscal viability and operational capacity to complete the proposed project on a reimbursement basis and comply with all State policies; and
- Maintain a financial management system that, as determined by an Independent Auditor, has adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures to ensure accurate disclosure of project costs.

The CCC reserves the right to conduct due diligence to determine an Applicant's eligibility. This may include confirming there are no outstanding legal actions adjudicated or pending against an Applicant that would undermine the ability to carry out the project and/or contacting other public agencies to inquire about an Applicant's current or past performance in complying with an agency's grant or contract management policies.

Statutory/General Requirements

All proposals funded under this program must comply with AB 2126 and all other applicable state laws, including:

- All projects must advance the objectives of the Forestry Corps grant program and comply with AB 2126 directives, including reporting requirements.
- Only currently certified LCCs in accordance with PRC § 14507.5 are eligible to apply.
- All projects must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Division 13 (commencing with Section 2100).
- All Applicants must obtain three bids for contract work, supplies, and materials which total in cost at or above \$10,000 from a single vendor/supplier or submit a CCC 521 Sole/Single Source Justification Form (non-competitive justification form).

- Legally mandated/required mitigation is not an allowable use of grant funds.
- The Applicant is responsible for ensuring the project complies with all applicable current laws and regulations.

Eligible Proposals

Eligible proposals shall accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop and implement forest health/resilience projects, pursuant to PRC § 14412.
- Provide assistance to corpsmembers in obtaining forestry and forest technician degrees and certificates.
- Train corpsmembers to operate equipment in forestry and related fields.
- Create pathways from corps to degree programs and jobs.
- Partner with community colleges, trade associations and forest and timber industries to provide training and experience to corpsmembers.

Eligible Projects

Proposals must qualify under one of the categories listed below. Examples listed are not exhaustive.

- Fuels reduction and hazardous fuels removal
 - Removing dead and dying trees to reduce wildfire intensity and rate of spread.
 - Vegetation clearance in critical locations to reduce wildfire intensity and rate of spread.
 - Creation or maintenance of fuel breaks in strategic locations, as identified in CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or similar strategic planning documents.
 - Removing ladder fuels to reduce the risk of crown fires.
 - Elective tree removal (thinning) to improve forest health to withstand wildfire.
 - Modification of vegetation adjacent to roads to provide for safer ingress and egress of evacuating residents and responding emergency personnel.
- Reforestation and forest health
 - Cone and seed collection.
 - Planting seedlings on deforested land.

- Soil stabilization/debris removal.
- Improving forest stand conditions through the removal of diseased and dead trees.
- Protecting watersheds through fire rehabilitation and erosion control.
- Tree mortality and tree felling
 - Felling dead or dying trees for the purpose of wildfire resilience, ecology restoration or public safety.
- Urban forestry
 - Wildfire resilience landscaping (hardscaping).
 - Tree planting and native landscaping for the purposes of carbon sequestration and water conservation.
 - Vegetation management for the purposes of fuels reduction and/or habitat restoration.
 - Wetland restoration and erosion control around river corridors.

IV. Application Process & Instructions

Fill out the [2025 Forestry Corps: Wildfire Resilience Grant Program Application](#) online via Submittable. Application forms can be found in the [2025 Forestry Corps: Wildfire Resilience Grant Program Application Forms](#) Dropbox.

Application Documents

Grant proposals are due via submission on Submittable on August 8, 2025. The Project Partner should take an active and primary role in assisting the LCC in answering the proposal summary questions, especially as it relates to the overall purpose and objective of the project, how it relates to forest health and resilience, and the specific project activities and deliverables. Avoid using “N/A” by stating clearly why a question or section does not apply to the project.

The required information and documents below must be submitted as part of the proposal on Submittable. See Appendix B for Tips for Strengthening Your Proposal.

1. Applicant Information, including LCC name, address, and contact information for the designated representative.
2. Project Partner Information

- Organization name and address and contact information for the designated representative
- Project Sponsor/Partner Letter of Interest: Include with your proposal the Project Partner's documented interest and support of the proposal and request for funding. Letter should be no more than two pages and include the objective and long-term goals of the project and why the Partner believes this should be funded.

3. Project Information

- Project title
- Estimated start and end dates

4. Project Funding

- Amount of grant funds requested and any matching or leveraged funds
- A high-level list of budget categories and amounts
- CCC Form 510 – Grant Budget Estimate: The CCC Form 510 is a standardized form and budget line items are examples only. To enhance clarity, delete any budget line items and categories from the template that will not be used. Note that some example categories or line items may not be eligible – always consult the Eligible Costs section.
 - Round to the nearest whole number for total costs, not exceeding available funding.
- Budget Narrative supporting the Budget Estimate Form.
 - The narrative must provide a full explanation of all proposed costs, including their purpose, justification, and the basis of the calculations. Calculations must be specific and should be presented in a way that clearly shows how a cost was estimated.
 - Organize the narrative in the order of the Budget Estimate Form, including category headers and line items.
 - All costs must be able to stand up to an independent audit. Records, methodologies, source documentation, etc. are to be kept with project files and be submitted to the CCC or an Independent Auditor for review upon request.
- Hourly Rate Justification Form and Narrative (if applicable): The CCC Form 509 is a standardized form and rates should be based on an approved hourly rate for all projects completed during a given fiscal year, regardless of program. The LCC shall base their hourly reimbursement rate on direct costs associated with operating natural resource crews

during the previous fiscal year. This rate will remain consistent throughout the program.

- An LCC may request an adjustment to their Corpsmember hourly rate during the year if their actual costs change due to circumstances external to the LCC (e.g., state or locally mandated wage increases). The LCC shall submit a CCC Form 513 – Grant Change Request for approval with documentation to the CCC in advance. The new hourly rate will go into effect on the first day of the month following approval and cannot be applied retroactively to Corpsmember hours. An increased hourly rate will not result in an increase of the total project grant amount.

The CCC encourages Applicants to be thorough when including eligible costs/categories in a project's estimated budget and budget narrative. Per Department of Finance (DOF), any costs/cost categories NOT included in the budget estimate will not be eligible for reimbursement unless an approved budget change has been implemented in advance.

5. Project Scope

- Project Category(ies)
- Expected Project Activities and Deliverables
- Estimated Project Timeline: The project timeline should be a high-level projected schedule for all major tasks detailed in the proposal. Dates can be estimates but should be based on actual projections based on the project calendar and Project Partner's plans. If permits, special licenses, or other approval items are needed to initiate the project, please clearly detail what they and the steps needed to obtain them.

6. Proposal Summary

- Describe the goals, nature of the work, detailed project activities, and partners involved. Please see Appendix B for tips to strengthen your application and score higher on this competitive grant program.
- Describe the overall purpose of the proposal and how the proposal promotes the objectives of the Forestry Corps Grant Program and complies with AB 2126 directives.
- Describe how your proposal accomplishes and/or meets one or more of the wildfire resilience priorities below. Please use headings for each objective and be as detailed and thorough as possible.

- Maintain and enhance the resilience of California's forestland to promote healthy resilient forests throughout the state.
 - Improve forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in areas where people are living near wildlands.
 - Implement demonstrable and measurable forest improvement practices.
- Describe how your proposal demonstrably and measurably creates pathways for corpsmembers and/or provides unique opportunities for workforce development, education, and training.
- Letter of Support: Proposals that have a letter of support by a fire or public agency will receive additional points. The letter must identify an important community need and demonstrate that the project meaningfully addresses that need.
 - For fuel load reduction projects, the letter of support for the project must come from a Chief or Assistant Chief of the federal, state, or local Fire Department.
- Will the proposal reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or sequester carbon? If so:
 - How does this proposal reduce GHG and/or sequester carbon?
 - Do you have a way to measure GHG emission reduction/carbon sequestration after the completion of the proposal? If yes, provide the steps you will take to measure GHG emission reduction/carbon sequestration after the completion of the project.

7. Project Site Information

- Name of the Property/Land Owner and the type of entity they are:
 - Federal
 - State
 - Local
 - Tribal
 - Private
- Project Address
- Assembly District and Senate District
- Project Coordinates
- At least one Project Area Map that clearly indicates:
 - The treatment areas
 - Project area boundaries
 - The size of the project site in acres

- Relevant topographical features, nearby roads, structures, streams, lakes, creeks, staging areas and other landmarks
 - For projects that include multiple project activities (e.g., wildfire resilience projects with cone and seed collection, seedling planting, fuel load reduction, etc.), the map must clearly label and delineate each project activity.
 - For projects on Private Property, maps must also include the Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) for each property included in the project area. Maps should be accompanied by written confirmation from the Project Partner stating that they have obtained landowner permission to work on the property or will obtain permission before field work begins. Email confirmation is acceptable.

See Appendix D for Sample Project Area Maps & Before and After Photos.

- If the Project Partner does not own the land, and/or if the property is subject to any land use agreement, operations and management agreement, easement, or other Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), please explain/describe.
- For project sites or surrounding areas that have been worked by the LCC in the last 5 years, please describe the project activities performed and provide a separate map that indicates the sites previously worked in correlation to the proposed project location.
- Fire Hazard Map: The most competitive proposals under this program will be in a very high or high fire hazard area. If the project is in one of these areas, documentation is required to support the proposal. Utilize the tools below and submit a copy showing that the project location is within an eligible fire hazard area.

For proposals in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or Local Responsibility Area (LRA):

- [CAL FIRE Fire Resource Assessment Program \(FRAP\) Fire Hazard Severity Zone \(FHSZ\) Map](#)

For projects in a Federal Responsibility Area (FRA):

- [U.S. Forest Service's Wildfire Hazard Potential Online Mapping Tool](#)

- Planning Document: Proposed projects that are included in strategic planning documents for wildland fire response and prevention will receive additional points.
 - To find a specific CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan, visit their [Pre-Fire Planning webpage](#).

- For a Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), contact the applicable local or county government or visit the County's website to acquire a copy.
- Does the project benefit a disadvantaged community (DAC) or severely disadvantaged community (SDAC) as defined in Appendix C?
- CEQA Documentation: Evidence of compliance with CEQA or a detailed summary describing the status of CEQA must be submitted with the proposal. Grant Projects may not begin, nor may any grant funds be expended, until CEQA compliance is documented and received and the close of the period for administrative challenge under CEQA, if applicable.

See Appendix E for detailed information and instructions on how to comply with CEQA and limited suspensions of CEQA compliance.

In certain circumstances, the CCC *may* be able to act as Lead Agency for CEQA if all NEPA documents are completed and a Categorical Exclusion was determined. Please contact your Program Coordinator for more information.

- NEPA Documentation: If the project is located on federal land or is receiving federal funds, documentation of NEPA compliance must be submitted with the proposal in addition to CEQA documentation. Request the NEPA environmental review and decision document from the implementing agency.

8. Project Photos: Include at least three “before” photos of the project location. These photos should be clear, relevant photos of the site as it currently exists, and be able to represent the progress of the project through completion. Note the proposed activities of the sites photographed and the GPS location and directional view of each photo to refer to for the “after” photos required for the Completion Report.

See Appendix A for a full list of required application and project administration forms and documents. See Appendix D for sample project area maps and before and after photos.

Proposal Review Process

Please allow 45 days from the date the CCC receives a complete proposal with all required attachments for the full review by the CCC. The CCC Review Team

will review all submitted proposals according to the requirements listed in these guidelines.

Applicants will be notified if their proposal is approved, and the Program Coordinator will initiate the process to execute a grant agreement.

Scoring Criteria for Proposals

Information provided in the proposal should demonstrate how effectively the proposed project aligns with the funding priorities listed in these Guidelines. Proposals will be evaluated using established criteria and additional funding considerations. Proposals will receive an initial ranking with a score of 100 points possible.

Below are the scoring criteria and possible points for each criterion:

1. **Project Impact (0-40 points):** The proposal advances the objectives of the Forestry Corps Program through an eligible project, establishes a link between the project's impact and the priorities of the program, and articulates how the project accomplishes and/or meets these priorities. The scope of work and deliverables demonstrate how the project will improve wildfire resilience and forest health.

Forestry Corps program objectives:

- Develop and implement forest health/resilience projects, pursuant to PRC § 14412.
- Provide assistance to corpsmembers in obtaining forestry and forest technician degrees and certificates.
- Train corpsmembers to operate equipment in forestry and related fields.
- Create pathways from corps to degree programs and jobs.
- Partner with community colleges, trade associations, and forest and timber industries to provide training and experience to corpsmembers.

Forestry Corps program priorities:

- Maintain and enhance the resilience of California's forestland to promote healthy resilient forests throughout the state.
- Improve forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in areas where people are living near wildlands.
- Implement demonstrable and measurable forest improvement practices.

2. Develops Career Pathways (0-20 points): The proposal creates pathways for corpsmembers and/or provides unique opportunities for workforce development, education, and training.
3. Located in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Area (0 or 5 points): Project is in a high or very high fire hazard area. For projects in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or Local Responsibility Area (LRA), a CAL FIRE Fire Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) map is referenced to support this criterion. For projects in a Federal Responsibility Area (FRA), a U.S. Forest Service Wildfire Hazard Potential map is referenced.
4. Included in a Fire Strategic Planning Document (0 or 5 points): Proposal is part of CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or similar community-wide strategic planning documents.
5. Ability to Leverage Other Funds (0 or 5 points): Proposal leverages private, federal, or local funding.
6. Environmental Law Compliance & Timeline (0-10 points): Proposal is shovel-ready and has CEQA (and NEPA, if applicable) completed. If environmental review documents have not been completed, a detailed description of their status and the implementing agency's plan to complete it is provided. The proposal includes a realistic timeline and can be completed by April 15, 2027.
7. Support From Fire or Public Agency (0 or 5 points): Proposal receives documented support from an appropriate fire or public agency identifying the proposal as an important community need and demonstrating that the proposal meaningfully addresses that need. For fuel load reduction projects, the letter of support for the project must come from a Chief or Assistant Chief of the federal, state, or local Fire Department.
8. Serves a DAC and/or SDAC (0 or 10 points): Proposal directly benefits a Disadvantaged or Severely Disadvantaged Community as defined in Appendix C.

Total Points Possible: 100 points

Selection Process

Each proposal will be evaluated for merit and relevance to this grant program and will be reviewed and scored by the CCC Grants and Certification Unit based on the scoring criteria listed in these Guidelines. In evaluating proposals, scores will be used to determine initial rankings and facilitate discussions for each proposal. After the completion of the review of all proposals, the Unit will

submit the list of recommended proposals to the CCC Executive Team for final review.

Note: To achieve equitable distribution of funds, the CCC may consider additional factors and funding considerations, including but not limited to geographic distribution, organizational capacity, youth impact, and the likelihood of success of the proposal.

Appeals Process

An Applicant may file an appeal regarding the denial of a submitted proposal by the CCC Grants and Certification Manager within 20 business days of the date of notification of any decision. Written appeals shall be submitted directly to the CCC's Chief Deputy Director or designated authority. The Chief Deputy Director may request additional information. Upon receiving the additional information, a decision will be rendered in 20 business days.

If needed, a second level appeal shall be made to the CCC's Director. The second level appeal shall be made within 20 business days of the date of the Chief Deputy Director's decision/notification. Upon receiving the second level appeal, the CCC Director shall review all the information submitted. The CCC Director may request additional information. Upon receiving the additional information, the CCC Director shall have 20 business days to review and render a decision. The second level appeal shall include a full and complete written statement specifying the grounds of protest and must be based on the process and/or procedures used in the review and recommendation of proposals for awards. The CCC Director's decision shall be final.

V. Grant Project Administration

Overview of Grant Process

1. The Applicant submits a proposal.
2. Proposals are reviewed and scored by the Review Committee.
3. Recommended proposals are submitted to and reviewed by the Executive Award Panel.
4. Proposals are selected and awarded, and the CCC will initiate the grant agreement process with the Grantee. This process will include:
 - a. Finalizing the agreed scope of work, budget, and any outstanding documents needed for the proposal.
 - b. Drafting the Grant Agreement.

5. The grant agreement will be sent for CCC and LCC signatures. The CCC will send a fully executed grant agreement to the Grantee. The Grantee can start work on the first day of the Project Performance Period.
6. Advance requests and reimbursement payment requests can be submitted by the Grantee.
7. Quarterly reports are completed and submitted by the Grantee on an ongoing basis until project completion and final payment has been processed.
8. The Grantee completes the project and submits a Project Completion Report before submitting or with the request for retention.

Approval and Grant Agreement Execution

Once the proposal is approved by the CCC, a grant agreement will be prepared. Please allow 10-15 business days from the date of project approval for grant agreement preparation and execution. Grant agreements are fully executed when both the Grantee's authorized signatory and the CCC's Deputy Director of Administration have signed the grant agreement.

After approval, the Grantee must receive a fully executed grant agreement BEFORE beginning work or otherwise incurring any expenses.

All projects must be completed by April 15, 2027.

Eligible Costs

Only direct project-related costs and indirect costs that can be directly tied to the implementation of an approved project, incurred during the project performance period specified in the grant agreement, will be eligible for reimbursement. All eligible project costs must be supported by the appropriate documentation and must be able to hold up to a State audit.

- Direct Project Personnel: Costs for the services of Grantee's employees directly engaged in the implementation and execution of the project, which may include Corpsmember labor, project/program managers, other staff directly involved in program administration and/or project coordination, and required technical consultants for projects.
 - Costs for the services of Grantee's employees directly engaged in project execution must be computed according to Grantee's prevailing wage or salary scales, and may include benefits such as

vacation, sick leave, Social Security contributions, etc., that are customarily charged to the Grantee's various projects.

- Costs charged to the project must be computed on actual time spent on the project and evidenced by time and attendance records describing the work performed on the project as well as payroll records. Overtime costs are allowed under the Applicant's established policy provided the regular work time was devoted to the same project.
- Direct personnel responsible for coordinating and supervising crews must be captured in the Hourly Rate Justification Form and **cannot** be included as a separate budget line item. **The Corpsmember Hourly Rate is capped at \$50 per hour.**
- Equipment, Supplies, and Materials: Up to 20% of awarded funds may be used for the costs of supplies, materials, equipment, vehicle expenses, and transportation directly related to the implementation of the project.
 - Supplies and materials may be purchased for a specific project or may be drawn from a central stock, providing they are claimed at a cost no higher than that paid by the Grantee.
 - Purchases of equipment, supplies, and materials must be made for the direct implementation of the project and not for re-supply of a center stock upon completion of field work.
 - Supplies that are part of the standard compliment of tools and equipment given to all Corpsmembers, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hand tools, should be captured in the Hourly Rate Justification Form.
 - Equipment may be leased, rented, or purchased, whichever is most economical. If equipment is purchased, its residual market value must be returned to the State or deducted from the final retention payment upon completion of the project. Owned equipment may be charged to the grant in accordance with the Grantee's normal accounting practices. Local prevailing rental rates may be used as a guide.
 - Costs for fuel and projected maintenance for leased, rented, or owned vehicles may be claimed under the project. Note that vehicle costs can only be claimed as **EITHER** part of the Hourly Rate Justification **OR** the Budget Estimate. A tracking log (hourly or daily use or mileage) will be required as source documentation for

the proportional amounts of these costs that can be attributed to the project. See Appendix F for the tracking log requirements.

- Acknowledgment signage is encouraged but optional for this program.
- Indirect Costs/Overhead: Reimbursable indirect expenses are the necessary overhead costs that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and are incidentally related to the project. Indirect costs include the appropriate pro-rata allocation of expenses that are regularly assigned to all projects in accordance with the standard accounting practices of the Grantee. Overhead should be included as a line item in the approved project budget and the amount is **limited to a maximum of 15% of total direct costs** of a grant.
- Contingency: Up to 10% of the requested grant amount may be budgeted for unanticipated “contingency” costs. All such costs must be eligible per these Guidelines. Contingency funding is available for use in any of the budget categories except indirect costs. Explanation and approval may be required prior to expenditure of contingency funds.
- Other Expenditures: In addition to the major categories of expenditures, funding may be provided for miscellaneous costs necessary for project execution at the State’s discretion. Please contact your Program Coordinator to determine if an operating expenses and equipment (OE&E) cost not listed is eligible.

Capital Acquisitions and Facility Development projects are not eligible under this program.

Changes to an Approved Project

Project scope changes are allowed. Proposed changes to the approved project must be requested at least four weeks prior to implementing the change using the CCC Form 513 – Grant Change Request. Changes must be approved by the CCC before implementation. Changes to the scope of work cannot be requested after the Project Performance Period has ended.

Proposed changes to the project scope or deliverables must continue to meet the conditions and criteria described in these Guidelines and must not include

any modifications that would significantly alter the Project's purpose, impact, and/or eligibility set forth in the Grantee's proposal.

The total amount of the Grant Funds may not be increased.

Payment of Grant Funds

Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis. All eligible reimbursement requests must be paid out by the LCC to the vendor before the CCC will approve a payment request. Only costs incurred during the Project Performance Period as defined in the executed Grant Agreement will be eligible for reimbursement. Indirect costs may only be incurred when a project is currently active.

All supporting documentation must demonstrate that the invoiced amounts are for valid expenditures incurred and that the expenditures are consistent with the intended purpose of the grant agreement.

Please see Appendix F for detailed information on submitting Grant Reimbursement Requests and required information.

Retention

10% of funds will be retained from each payment request. To obtain a retention payment, a Project Completion Report must be submitted to the CCC. A final site visit may be conducted. The CCC recommends that Grantees submit retention payments only after all such activities are completed.

Note: If the project is completed within one month and/or the billing includes a single transaction, retention may be waived upon receipt of the project completion report.

Advance Payments

Government Code (GC) §11019 authorizes the CCC to make advanced payments of up to 25% of the total grant amount, with controls in place, if it is determined that an advance is essential for the effective implementation of the project.

Please see Appendix F for detailed information on how to and requirements for submitting an advance request.

Site Visits

CCC staff and staff from other agencies, such as Department of Finance (DOF), State Controller's Office and/or Natural Resources Agency, may make periodic site visits to determine if funded projects are consistent with the Guidelines. A minimum 24-hour advance notification will be provided. In addition, a final site visit may be conducted for all projects before final retention payments will be approved and issued.

Audit Requirements

The CCC and all Grantees are subject to audits of grant funding. If the project is selected for audit, the Grantee will be contacted in advance. The Grantee must provide a copy of any document, paper, record, or the like requested by the auditor.

Audits determine if:

- Expenditures were made according to the established criteria and processes;
- Expenditures were consistent with the intent of the Grant program; and
- Expenditures achieved the intended outcomes.

Additionally, the CCC may conduct intermittent documentation reviews to ensure project requirements are met and in compliance with the grant agreement.

Accounting Requirements

The Grantee must maintain an accounting system that:

- Complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP);
- Accurately reflects fiscal transactions, with the necessary controls and safeguards;
- Provides a good audit trail, including original source documents such as purchase orders, receipts, progress payments, invoices, timecards, canceled checks, etc.; and
- Provides accounting data so the total cost of each individual project can be readily determined.

Records Retention

The Grantee shall retain records for a period of 5 years after project completion. A project is considered complete upon the receipt of the final grant payment

from the State. If selected for an audit in year 5 of records retention, records should be retained an additional 1 year following the audit.

VI. Reporting Requirements

Forestry Corps Reporting

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) require ongoing reporting of project activities and accomplishments for all projects undertaken to address forest management, forest health, and wildfire resiliency in California's forests. All grants awarded through this program will be subject to data reporting. The CCC has grant administration and monitoring policies in place to ensure required information and project data is reported accurately and timely to comply with all reporting requirements.

Grant Quarterly Report

Quarterly Reports must be submitted and describe the status of the project, activities and accomplishments completed during the reporting period, deliverables and measurable outcomes completed to date, and progress photos. If no work was completed during the reporting period, a report must still be submitted.

Quarters are determined using the State Fiscal Year of July 1 to June 30. Reports are due on the last business day of the month following the completion of the previous quarter. Reporting periods for each quarter are as follows:

- Quarter 1 (July 1 – September 30) is due the last business day in October
- Quarter 2 (October 1 – December 31) is due the last business day in January
- Quarter 3 (January 1 – March 31) is due the last business day in April
- Quarter 4 (April 1 – June 30) is due the last business day in July

Reducing Greenhouse Gases

It is a priority of the California Natural Resources Agency to fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or sequester carbon. Additional reporting requirements may be requested if your project reduces GHGs or sequesters carbon. Your Program Coordinator will work with you to get the required information for reporting.

Completion Report

Each LCC must submit a completion report to receive the final retention payment of the grant. The Project Completion Report is due within 90 days of finishing the project, not the project performance period end date. The purpose of the report is to provide a stand-alone, comprehensive document that captures all pertinent details about the project, including final deliverables, Project Partner/Sponsor verification of the completion of the project, final grant expenditures and all funding sources, and photos. Completion reports may be requested by an oversight agency, the legislature, auditors, and/or the general public.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Required Application and Project Administration Forms & Documents

Appendix B: Tips for Strengthening Your Proposal

Appendix C: Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities

Appendix D: Sample Project Area Maps & Before and After Photos

Appendix E: CEQA Information

Appendix F: Grant Reimbursement & Advance Payments

Appendix G: Acknowledgment Signage

Appendix A: Required Application and Project Administration Forms & Documents

All required [application and project administration forms and documents](#) can be found on DropBox or by contacting your Program Coordinator.

Appendix B: Tips for Strengthening Your Proposal

It is important that your proposal be as thorough and descriptive as possible to be competitive.

The following are tips to help you strengthen your proposal:

- Submit a proposal that meets one or more of the competitive criteria listed on page 3-4 of the Guidelines.
- Submit a proposal that provides more than one co-benefit and explain the measurable outcomes of the project.
- Incorporate unique opportunities for corpsmember development.
- Acquire multiple Letters of Support to demonstrate priority of project and multiple partner investment.
- Work collaboratively with your Project Partners to:
 - Walk the project thoroughly and develop the proposal based on actual conditions and realistic projections.
 - Provide a clear, concise, and detailed scope of work that captures the overall objective of the project as well as all activities and deliverables. Proposals that clearly and thoroughly link the proposal to Assembly Bill 2126 (2018) and the wildfire resilience priorities will require less follow-up and may be scored higher.
 - Example: ABC Community Fuel Break
 - Objective: Reduce the risk of wildland fire in the community of ABC
 - Activities: Corpsmembers will cut trees less than 12" DBH, thin vegetation and understory, and brush back overgrown vegetation using chainsaws, loppers, and other hand tools.
 - Deliverables: Crews will create a 25 ft fuel break approximately 1 mile long that will slow or stop the spread of wildfire in a strategic area for egress and ingress.
 - Provide clear and useful maps (see Appendix E) that demonstrate not only the location of the project, but the project boundaries/treatment area, topographical features and terrain, and nearby landmarks.
 - Provide clear and useful "before" photos (see Appendix E) that demonstrate the actual, current conditions of the site with GPS

coordinates and directional views that can be replicated for the “after” photos.

- Provide a detailed and realistic estimated timeline that details all major tasks included in the project description.

Appendix C: Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities

Projects that serve a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) or Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) will be scored higher. To qualify as serving a DAC or SDAC, *the project itself*, through either location and/or benefits directly derived from the project, must serve a DAC/SDAC. *Corpsmember residency cannot be used to qualify the project as serving a DAC/SDAC*. The Applicant must clearly demonstrate, with verifiable information, a direct, meaningful, and assured benefit to the DAC/SDAC.

The tools below can be used to determine if the proposal qualifies as serving a DAC or SDAC. To discuss these tools or tools not listed, please contact your designated Program Coordinator.

Median Household Income

A DAC is defined as a community with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average. An SDAC is defined as a community with a median household income less than 60% of the statewide average. To determine if your project qualifies as serving a DAC or SDAC based on median household income, please use one of the following tools:

- [Department of Water Resources' DAC Mapping Tool](#): The specific dataset used in this tool is the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Data: 2016-2020.
 - In the “Layer List” on the upper right corner of the map, check the “Disadvantaged Communities – Census Tracts (ACS: 2016-2020).” An overlay will appear on the map showing DAC and SDAC locations.
 - In the “Find address or place” field on the upper left corner of the map, enter an address, city, or latitude and longitude coordinates separated by a comma.
- [State Parks' Community FactFinder](#): This tool uses primarily 2019-2023 American Community Survey block group estimates data for demographics with supplemental information from Census 2020 in rural areas.
 - Enter an address, a city, or latitude and longitude coordinates separated by a comma and click on “Report”.

- After the report is generated, scroll down to the “Report Map” section. On the map, click on the “Map Layers” icon on the bottom right of the map.
- The “Map Layers” menu will populate. Click on the checkbox for “Disadvantaged Community”. An overlay will appear on the map showing DAC and SDAC and locations.

SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities Map

This map shows DACs designated by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) for the purpose of Senate Bill (SB) 535 (De León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012). These areas represent:

- The 25% highest scoring census tracts in CalEnviroScreen 4.0
- Census tracts previously identified in the top 25% in CalEnviroScreen 3.0
- Census tracts with high amounts of pollution and low populations
- Federally recognized tribal areas as identified by the Census in the 2021 American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase

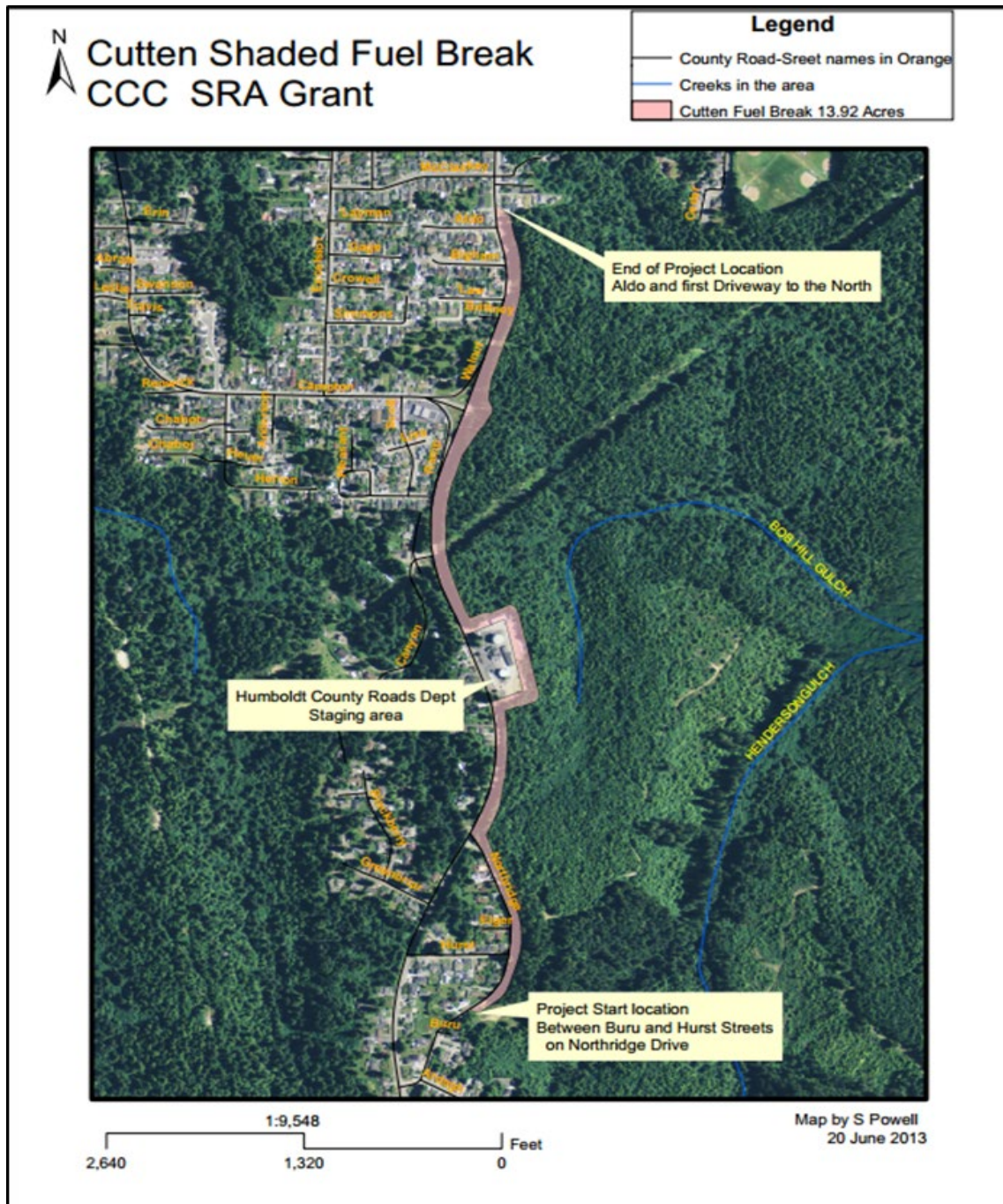
CalEnviroScreen is a tool that helps identify California communities that are most affected by many sources of pollution, and where people are often especially vulnerable to pollution’s effects, using environmental, health, and socioeconomic information. CalEnviroScreen scores represent a combined measure of pollution and the potential vulnerability of a population to the effects of pollution.

When accessing the [SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities map](#), in the “Find address or place” field on the upper right corner of the map, enter an address, city, or latitude and longitude coordinates separated by a comma.

Appendix D: Sample Project Area Maps & Before and After Photos

See Section III: Application Process & Instructions for detailed information about project area maps and before and after photos.

Sample Project Location Map



Sample Before and After Photos

Photo# 1:

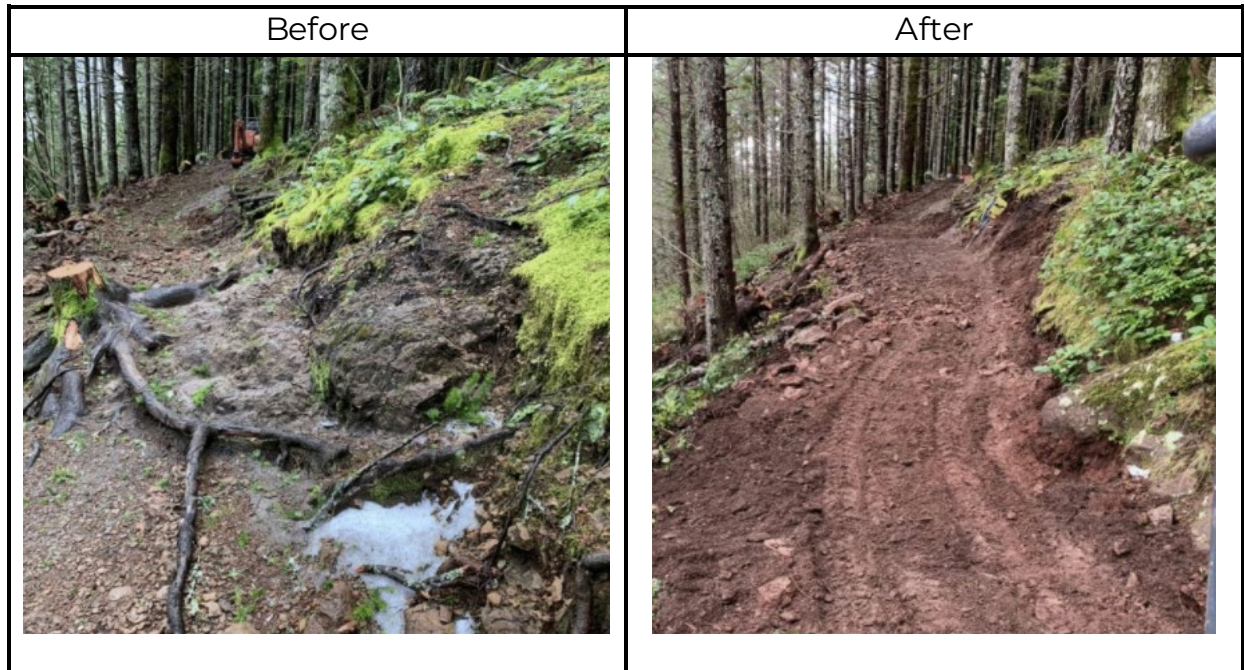
Location Description: GPS coordinates 37.32004, -121.94834. Forney Ridge Trail, between Clingmans Dome and Andrews Bald, facing west



Activity Description: Corpsmembers have installed 100 linear feet of rock staircase. (Photo credit NPS)

Photo #2:

Location Description: GPS coordinates 45.51234, -121.60034. Rattlesnake Ledge, Mile 10, West Trail facing north



Activity Description: Corpsmembers have completed 75 linear feet of trail surface improvement and erosion control and removed one (1) tree stump. (Photo credit NPS)

Appendix E: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Information

Why is CEQA Required?

CEQA is a law that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. CEQA is triggered when a public agency directly undertakes, funds, or approves a “project” as defined by CEQA Statute and Guidelines. All projects funded by this program will trigger CEQA compliance.

Who is responsible for implementing CEQA compliance?

Compliance with, and implementation of, CEQA regulations is the responsibility of the implementing agency for the proposed project, called the Lead Agency. As defined by CEQA Statute §21067, “Lead Agency” means the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. The Lead Agency for CEQA must be a State-based public agency as defined by Statute § 21063 and cannot be the federal government, tribal government, or non-profit.

The CCC will review CEQA documentation to ensure it complies with the State law and program policies but does not typically act as Lead Agency for projects carried out by other entities. In limited and special circumstances, the CCC may act as Lead Agency if it is the only public stakeholder involved in the project AND the project meets the definition of a Categorical or Emergency Exemption (see below). If it does not, and if another public stakeholder is not identified, the project will not be approved.

What projects qualify for Categorical Exemptions?

Many projects approved by the CCC qualify for Categorical Exemptions.

Categorical Exemptions do not mean that the project is exempt from CEQA compliance, but rather that a project falls under a specific type of work that does not require an Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report and therefore substantially reduces the amount of analysis and review required. Projects that fall under a Categorical Exemption must still file a notice to the public, called a Notice of Exemption, stating the project is exempt from full review/analysis. A list of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA can be found in the current [CEQA Statute & Guidelines](#).

What CEQA documentation is required to submit with the proposal?

CEQA documentation must include the CEQA document filed and the CCC's CEQA Compliance Certification Form.

1. CEQA document filed must be one of the following:
 - a) A Notice of Exemption (NOE) filed with the State Clearinghouse [Note: NOEs filed with the local county clerk must also be filed with the State Clearinghouse]; OR
 - b) An Initial Study with a Negative Declaration with the response from the State Clearinghouse and a copy of the Notice of Determination filed with the State Clearinghouse and the County Clerk; OR
 - c) An Initial Study and an Environmental Impact Report with the response from the State Clearinghouse and a copy of the Notice of Determination filed with the State Clearinghouse and the County Clerk; OR
 - d) A detailed description of the current status of CEQA review, detailed steps the Applicant will take to complete CEQA, and the date estimated.
2. CEQA Compliance Certification Form must:
 - a) Match the project details in the proposal, including project title, location, and activities.
 - b) Be signed by the Lead Agency.

Limited Suspension of CEQA Review Requirements

Project Streamlining Requests for Fuel Reduction Projects

A new online process now makes it easier to obtain State approval for critical wildfire risk reduction efforts. This streamlined system helps expedite fuel reduction projects under specific conditions, consistent with [Governor Newsom's March 1, 2025 State of Emergency Proclamation](#).

Authority & Purpose

The Proclamation authorizes the Secretaries of the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to determine which projects are eligible for suspension of certain State-level statutory and regulatory requirements to expedite critical fuels reduction projects, while at the same time protecting public resources and the environment.

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for the streamlining request process:

- The request for suspension must be submitted in the 2025 calendar year.
- All project work must be performed or supervised by one or more certified or licensed responsible parties, also known as the Qualified Responsible Party, such as Registered Professional Foresters, Certified Rangeland Managers, qualified vegetation management contractors, qualified incident commanders, certified arborists, certified burn bosses and/or authorized cultural burners.
- The project must meet at least one of the following objectives:
 - Removal of hazardous, dead, and/or dying trees
 - Removal of vegetation for the creation of strategic fuel breaks as identified by approved fire prevention plans, including without limitation, CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans or Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans
 - Removal of vegetation for community defensible space
 - Removal of vegetation along roadways, high-ways, and freeways for the creation of safer ingress and egress routes for the public and responders and/or to reduce roadside ignitions

Note the following:

- *Ground fuel reduction operations must commence no later than October 15, 2026. Project work should conclude no later than two years after initiating work on the ground.*
- *Suspensions only apply to State statutes, rules, and regulations, and compliance with all local and federal statutes, rules, and regulations is still required.*
- *In submitting this request, the Applicant attests that projects conducted under a Secretarial Determination will follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) and measures identified in the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan (EPP). A copy of the EPP must be on display at the project operating site.*
- *Suspensions do not apply to commercial timber operations that do not have one of the six eligible objectives cited in the State of Emergency Proclamation as a primary project objective.*

Who Can Submit a Request?

Eligible Project Partners include, but are not limited to:

- Public Agencies
- Tribes
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Fire Safe Councils
- Utilities and Professional Land Managers

How to Apply

1. [Submit a request](#) via CAL FIRE's Request to Suspend State Statutes and Regulations webpage.
2. After submission, forward the Stage 1 confirmation email to your Program Coordinator.
3. Once Stage 2 is complete, forward the final determination email to your Program Coordinator.

PRC 4799.05 – CEQA Exemption on Federal Lands

Projects on federal lands that use prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and have been reviewed under NEPA are exempt from CEQA as authorized by Secretary Wade Crowfoot in February 2020, Public Resources Code section 4799.05(d).

PRC 4799.05 applies only to CEQA for fuel load reduction/tree mortality and tree felling projects.

Other project types may be exempt from the CEQA review process through alternative CEQA exemptions, such as those outlined in the current [CEQA Statute & Guidelines](#) (e.g., Certified State Regulatory Programs under Section 15251) or other applicable programs. Please contact your Program Coordinator for further information.

If no other exemption options apply, your project must comply with CEQA. Additionally, projects located on federal land must also comply with the NEPA.

Appendix F: Grant Reimbursement & Advance Payments

When submitting requests for reimbursement, the Grantee must submit the following documentation in the order listed:

1. Cover Letter on Organization Letterhead with:
 - Date
 - Grant Agreement Number
 - Amount
 - Signature of Authorized Representative
2. CCC Form 512 – Grant Reimbursement Request Form: If your request includes reimbursement for indirect costs, the maximum you may request is your approved indirect cost rate times total direct costs incurred within the billing period.
3. Line-Item Expenditures Tracker: Each Grant Reimbursement Request must include a Line-Item Tracker that shows previous balances, current invoice, and remaining balance for each budget category from the Budget Estimate Form. Reconciliation of expenditures between the Line-Item Tracker and accounting records should be performed with every invoice to ensure all financial information is accurate. Your Program Coordinator can provide a template upon request.
4. Documentation Verifying Expenditures:
 - Labor: Documentation supporting corpsmember and staff labor must include the project title and/or project number/code, corpsmember and staff names, dates worked, number of hours worked, and supervisor approval/signature.
If submitting staff timesheets, the type/description of work performed during the billing period must be clearly indicated. Due to the differences in payroll reporting mechanisms, this information can be reported in a number of ways. Please contact your Program Coordinator for clarification.
 - Non-labor expenditures (i.e. OE&E): documentation that confirms that payment was made to the vendor. Examples include:
 - Copy of invoice with a zero dollar balance,
 - Copy of invoice that shows a balance but is accompanied by a bank or credit card statement highlighting the transaction or a copy of the cancelled check (front and back),

- A signed statement from the vendor verifying the payment has been made, or
 - A receipt.
5. Equipment Log (if applicable): If equipment used on the project is owned by the Grantee, a tracking log (hourly or daily) is required and must:
- Describe the work performed
 - Indicate the hours/days used
 - Relate the use to the project
 - Be signed by the operator and supervisor
6. Vehicle Log (if applicable): If the vehicle used on the project is owned by the Grantee, a tracking log (hourly/daily use or mileage) is required and must:
- Describe the arrival and departure locations
 - Indicate the hours/days used for hourly/daily rates or the number of miles driven for mileage
 - Be signed by the driver and supervisor

When submitting Grant Reimbursement Packets, note the following:

- The first reimbursement request must be submitted within three months of the initiation of expenditures and **no less than quarterly thereafter.**
- Reimbursement packets cannot be submitted more than once per month.

Advance Payments

Advance payments of up to 25% of the total grant amount may be available to initiate the project in a timely manner based on compelling need. No advances will be made for in-house labor costs.

Statutory Requirements

Government Code (GC) 11019.3 governs how advances may be administered, stipulating that administering state agencies shall do all the following:

- Prioritize recipients and projects serving disadvantaged, low-income, and under-resourced communities or organizations with modest reserves and potential cashflow problems.
- Stipulate an advance payment structure and request process within the grant agreement or contract between the administering state agency and the recipient entity.
- Ensure the advance payment to the recipient entity does not to exceed 25 percent of the total grant amount awarded to that recipient entity. An administering state agency may exceed the 25-percent limit if the administering state agency determines that the project requires a larger advance and the recipient entity provides sufficient justification and documentation to the administering state agency.

Documents Required for Advance Payment Request

In accordance with GC 11019.3(c)(2)(A), the items below are required when requesting advance payments:

- A detailed summary and any supporting documentation demonstrating the need for advance payment
- An itemized budget utilizing CCC Form 532 – Grant Advance Request Form
- A spending timeline and workplan for the advanced funds, including explanation of procedures in place to minimize the amount of time that elapses between the transfer of funds and the spend down of those funds
- Documentation of good standing with the Internal Revenue Service

Additional Requirements for Grantee under GC 11019.3:

- Advance payments authorized shall be limited to the minimum immediate cash requirements necessary to carry out the purpose of the approved activity, program, or project.
- The Grantee must establish a separate interest-bearing account with a federally insured bank to deposit all advanced funds. All withdrawals and interest earned must be trackable and reported to the CCC on a quarterly basis. Accumulated interest shall be deemed to be grant moneys and must be used to further the project.
- The Grantee must include in the Quarterly Report, or as requested by the CCC, a progress report on the spend down of advanced funds.

- Utilizing CCC Form 534 – Advance Reconciliation Form, the Grantee must submit a documentation following the expenditure of an advance payment that includes a summary of work completed, proof of expenditure and associated supporting documentation as requested by the CCC.
- Further advance payments shall not be made until a grantee is able to demonstrate that all previously advanced funds have been spent down or a plan is in place to ensure spend down of those funds in a timely manner.
- All unused funding provided as an advance payment but not spent down within the grant timeline shall be returned to the state.
- Note: 11019.3 (c) (2) (B) (i) allows grantees to use funds from the advance payment to subrecipients (subcontractors), however note the following:
 - Grantees shall require all entities they subcontract with to comply with the provisions stated above as they relate to establishing procedures to minimize the amount of time that elapses between the transfer of funds and the spend down of those funds and providing reconciliation documentation.
- Regardless of any transfer or assignment of advanced payments to subrecipients, grantees are liable to the CCC for complying with all provisions specified in GC 11019.3 (c) (2) (B) (i) and for any failures by subrecipients to perform contractual obligations or to comply with the requirements of the referenced section.
- The Department of Finance or its designee may audit, during or after the conclusion of the term of the grant agreement, any state agency, recipient, or subrecipient that received an advanced payment under this section. The state agency, recipient, or subrecipient shall cooperate fully with the audit, including, but not limited to, providing access to its staff, books, records, accounts, or other materials, as requested

Appendix G: Acknowledgment Signage

Acknowledgment signage is optional under this grant program. Signs eligible for reimbursement must meet the criteria specified below.

State Approval

The Grantee shall submit proposed location(s), number of signs, size of signs, and draft designs for review prior to ordering signs. Signage costs incurred without approval may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Sign Construction

All materials used shall be durable and resistant to the elements and graffiti. The California Department of Parks and Recreation and California Department of Transportation standards can be used as a guide.

Sign Size

There is no minimum or maximum size required, however, all signs must be large enough to maximize durability and visibility.




Language and Logos

All signs shall contain the following:

- Project title and public-friendly description of project
- Reference to the funding source
- Full name and title of Governor
- Full name and title of Natural Resources Secretary
- Full name of California Conservation Corps and logo (email your Program Coordinator for artwork)
- Full name of Local Conservation Corps and logo

The sign may also include the names (and/or logos) of other partners, organizations, individuals, and elected representatives.

Sign Example (sample only - exact layout not required)

<p>[Project Title]</p> <p><i>This project was funded by the Forestry Corps Grant Program to restore the health and resilience of California forestry, grasslands, and natural lands in a manner that reduces wildfire risk to communities.</i></p> <p>[INSERT NAME], GOVERNOR</p> <p>[Insert Name], Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency</p> <p>California Conservation Corps</p> <p>[OPTIONAL: Name of Project Partner]</p> <div></div>		
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END OF GUIDELINES