



Prop 4 Tribal Corps Climate Bond Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet

Section 1: Project Eligibility & "Capital Project" Definitions

Q1: What is the governing definition of a "capital project" under this grant program, and how does it apply to project eligibility?

Eligible "capital projects" refer to California Government Code (GC) section 16727. Under the Prop 4 Tribal Corps program, bond proceeds are restricted to the acquisition or construction of tangible physical property. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) applies this statutory requirement through two core rules:

- **Asset Durability & Land Tenure:** Projects must result in a physical asset or a durable landscape treatment. To satisfy the bond law's useful-life expectations, project durability is tied directly to Land Tenure commitments: 10 years for grants up to \$100,000, and 20 years for grants between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000.
- **Ineligible Projects:** Standalone planning, routine maintenance, landscaping, or independent educational/training curriculum projects are ineligible because they do not create a durable, tangible asset.

Q2: Do Tribal stewardship activities (cultural burning prep, native plant restoration, traditional gathering area enhancement) qualify as capital projects? How should we describe their tangible outcomes?

Eligibility: Yes. These activities are fully eligible under the Cultural Resource Protection category. The State recognizes that ancestral territories require a flexible framework and does **not** require standard fee-title land ownership. Instead, flexible site control documentation, such as tribal stewardship agreements, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), or written partner permissions are fully accepted to satisfy bond law.

Describing Outcomes: To pass audits and score well, applicants must describe the durable, physical impact of their stewardship using measurable ecological and workforce metrics rather than sensitive cultural data. Examples include:

- **Acreage:** "20 acres treated for fuel load reduction" or "15 acres of traditional gathering grounds restored to a sustainably managed landscape status."
- **Revegetation:** "30 native trees or culturally significant first food plants established."

- **Capacity:** Specific on-the-job training hours completed by crews performing physical land treatments.

Q3: Must a tribal program structure force tribes into a state-law nonprofit model, or can tribal governments utilize existing government departments and enterprises?

Tribal government departments, tribal enterprises, and tribally chartered entities are fully eligible. Federally recognized tribes satisfy pass-through statutory requirements directly by signing the template JPA (Appendix H) and running projects directly through their existing governance structures. The state will not impose a "one-size-fits-all" operational framework, and tribes retain complete self-determination over program structure.

Section 2: Energy & Resiliency Infrastructure

Q4: Can energy and shade infrastructure (solar/battery storage, EV charging, park transit shade structures) be proposed as the primary scope of a project?

Yes. Proposals can focus on green energy and climate resiliency upgrades as their primary scope. Eligible projects include standalone community EV charging infrastructure, solar panel and emergency backup battery installations, or durable shade structures at parks and transit stops. These fulfill GC section 16727 requirements for structural equipment, retrofitting, and physical property enhancements.

Q5: What role are Corpsmembers/Participants expected to play in energy and infrastructure projects? Is training-only allowed?

Because this program funds "demonstrated job projects," standalone training, design, or curriculum projects are not allowed. Proposals must integrate practical workforce development directly with physical property installation. Eligible structures include:

- **Hands-on Installation:** Participants performing direct physical labor (e.g., weatherization, solar assembly, building shade canopies) under the supervision of a licensed contractor, project supervisor, or technical expert.
- **Workforce Development:** Providing specialized technical certifications or career pathway opportunities tied directly to executing and completing the infrastructure asset.

Q6: How will energy and infrastructure projects be scored under the "project impact" criteria if the criteria focus heavily on natural resource management?

Infrastructure projects (transportation, energy, or housing) are on equal footing with conservation work and will not lose points.

- The Project Impact criteria (0–25 points) evaluate alignment with overarching Climate Bond priorities, where protecting communities from climate risk carries equal weight to resource conservation.
- The Community & Cultural Benefit criteria (0–30 points) heavily concentrates points, rewarding infrastructure proposals that directly upgrade tribal structures, protect vulnerable elders from extreme heat, or provide paid workforce opportunities.

Section 3: Workforce Models & Partnerships

Q7: Can an annual summer internship program qualify as an "existing youth/young adult workforce development program," or must it be a crew-based corps?

An annual summer internship program is fully eligible. The guidelines accept any existing tribal youth/young adult workforce development structure, and the CCC explicitly rejects a "one-size-fits-all" model. However, note that a structured, supervised work crew model receives 10 additional points in the evaluation criteria.

Q8: Can a Tribe partner with a certified Local Conservation Corps to administer a project? What are their respective roles?

Yes. Federally recognized tribes can apply directly using a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) template (Appendix H) and include a certified Local Conservation Corps as a partner. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit structure is not required for the tribe.

- **Tribe's Role:** Serves as the primary applicant and grantee, maintaining legal and fiscal responsibility.
- **Local Corps' Role:** Serves as a project partner or contractor to help execute the physical scope of work.

Q9: Can a partner corps supervise crews and be paid with grant funds?

Yes. A partner corps can supervise crews and be compensated using grant funds. Allowable personnel costs cover project managers, supervisors, and required technical consultants.

Q10: Can tribal projects collaborate directly with local State CCC Centers?

Yes, absolutely. The official agreement template specifically allows the CCC to utilize its own state crew members and staff to help work on and complete projects managed by the tribe.

Section 4: Environmental Review & CEQA Compliance Pathways

Q11: Will a tribal project become ineligible if no separate state or local public agency is available to act as the CEQA Lead Agency?

No. A tribal project will still be eligible for funding even if there is no local or state agency available to oversee the environmental review (CEQA). The guidelines recognize that CEQA generally does not apply to projects on trust, restricted fee, federal, tribal, or ancestral lands that fall under exclusive tribal approval. Furthermore, the state separates its decision to provide the funding from the actual building of the project. Because of this distinction, a project will not lose its eligibility simply because a separate state or local agency is missing.

Q12: What specific direct environmental review assistance or fast-track pathways will the state provide?

The CCC Grants and Certification Unit will provide direct, hands-on assistance to identify a workable environmental review pathway that does not shift the state's legal responsibilities onto the tribe. This includes:

- **CCC as Lead Agency:** In limited and special circumstances, the CCC can act as the Lead Agency for CEQA if all NEPA documents are completed and a Categorical Exclusion is determined.
- **Fast-Track Exemptions:** The state will guide tribes in utilizing Public Resources Code (PRC) § 4799.05, which legally exempts fire-prevention, thinning, and forest health work on federal and ancestral lands from standard state environmental reviews when reviewed under NEPA.

Section 5: Program Administration, Data Sovereignty, & Rules

Q13: Can grant funds be used to buy equipment like vehicles, or are rentals required?

Both purchasing and renting are allowed. Applicants should choose whichever option is most affordable. If a vehicle or heavy equipment is purchased, its use must be tracked. When the project ends, the leftover value must either be returned to the state or deducted from the final grant payment.

*Note: The program's administration fee (indirect cost rate) cannot be added to items that cost more than \$20,000.

Q14: Are letters or waivers of sovereign immunity required, and how are advance payment waivers limited?

No, standard participation does not automatically require a waiver of sovereign immunity. The state commits to avoiding waivers, utilizing them only as a last resort under specific "risk triggers" (such as an advance payment request, high-risk prescribed burn operations, or severe fiscal tracking histories).

- **Advance Payments and Legal Rights:** If we give you permission (a waiver) to delay paying back an **advance payment**, that waiver only applies to the money you have not yet accounted for. The waiver **ends automatically** as soon as you show proof of how the money was spent. Furthermore, the remedies in this agreement (JPA in Appendix H of Guidelines) do not give anyone the right to sue or take legal action in court.

Q15: How will confidential tribal cultural resources and data sovereignty be protected during mapping and reporting?

Strict data sovereignty frameworks have been established to protect sensitive information:

- **Mapping Special Exemptions:** Applicants are explicitly advised against submitting precise coordinates or highly detailed site records for sacred, traditional gathering, or ceremonial sites. Generalized coordinates, buffered maps, or regional indicators are fully acceptable and will not negatively impact scoring.
- **Public Records Act (CPRA) Shield:** Pursuant to GC section 7927.000, records of Native American graves, cemeteries, and sacred places are legally exempt from public disclosure.
- **Data Ownership:** Tribes retain absolute ownership, copyright, and veto power over all tribal data, stories, or photos. Progress reporting metrics will focus exclusively on non-sensitive ecological and workforce outputs (e.g., acres treated, training hours completed).

Q16: Are letters of support or partner permissions required?

While not mandatory to apply, they are highly recommended to earn more points. You can earn up to 5 extra points for submitting official Tribal Council Resolutions or written partnerships with external groups. For work on non-tribal lands (federal, partner, or ancestral), standard deeds are not required; the CCC accepts flexible partner permissions, emails, or simple agreements.

Section 6: Applicant Eligibility & Non-Profit Structure

Q17: Would the CCC accept a proposal from an independent, Indigenous led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates a Tribal Corps program in association with local tribes, while the nonprofit remains the independent program operator and fiscal entity? Or does the grant require a tribal government itself to exercise direct governance or fiscal control over the program?

The CCC does not require a tribal government to exercise direct governance or fiscal control over the project if the applicant is already established as an eligible independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) § 91545(c), the grant program allows for two distinct administrative pathways to satisfy state pass-through and eligibility requirements:

- **Pathway 1: Non-Profit Structure:** *Applicants that operate an existing youth/young adult workforce development program and are established as a non-profit entity as defined by the IRS (including 501(c)(3) structures utilized by or in partnership with tribes) are fully eligible to apply and act as the independent program operator and fiscal entity.*
- **Pathway 2: Tribal Government Structure:** *Projects operated directly by a federally recognized tribal government (including tribal departments or enterprises) must execute a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the CCC to satisfy state requirements.*

An eligible nonprofit organization does not need a formal letter of authorization or shared tribal governance to apply, provided they operate an eligible, existing conservation workforce training program.

Section 7: Important Program Dates (2026)

October 26, 2026: Official release of FAQ document.

November 9th at 2:00 PM and November 12th at 6:00 PM – Technical assistance workshops

November 2nd: Final Guidelines and Solicitation are released.

December 7, 2026: Window for optional eligibility screenings closes.

January 22, 2026: Final proposals are due.