

Financing Sustainability: Accessing State Funding, Resources, and Tools October 18, 2011 Webinar- Questions and Answers

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Questions for Heather Fargo, Strategic Growth Council

Questions answered during the webinar (full written answers also provided here)

Q: Are these grants only for local / regional government entities only? Are nonprofits eligible to apply?

A: Nonprofits are not eligible to apply. The eligible applicants are defined by the state legislature, and they only include cities, counties, MPOs, JPAs, RTPAs, and COGs. However, nonprofits can still be involved with funded projects and can partner with applicants—some have done so successfully in Round 1.

Q: What is your definition of disadvantaged community?

A: As defined in the program guidelines, an economically disadvantaged community is a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average. A severely disadvantaged community is a community with a median household income (MHI) less than 60 percent of the statewide average.

Q: Would you please repeat the web address?

A: sgc.ca.gov

Q: In the economically disadvantaged category for Cities and Counties, is the 20% of funding from that category or 20% of funding for all categories?

A: The latter: the SGC has committed to using 20% of the entire round's funding to go toward EDCs.

Q: Will SGC staff be available to work with organizations that submitted applications last year (but weren't funded), to help refine/improve Round 2 applications?

A: The grant program staff at the Department of Conservation will work with Round 1 applicants to help them prepare for Round 2. They can be reached at (916) 322-3439 or

SGCSustainablecommunities@conservation.ca.gov

Q: Will SGC grants require matching funds?

A: A match is not required, but proposals that leverage additional resources do receive points for doing so.

Q: Do you have examples of successful applications for basic community infrastructure plans under the SGC planning grant program?

A: The City of Farmersville was funded to create a Comprehensive Infrastructure Master Plan. Their application, along with all the others from Round 1, is available on our website. The direct link for the Farmersville application is http://sgc.ca.gov/docs/funding/grantee_3010/3010-512_Farmersville.pdf

Questions not addressed during the webinar

Q: Will municipal composting facilities be included in community basic infrastructure plans?

A: The listing of example eligible proposals is not meant to be exhaustive—it's simply a list to help potential applicants understand the broad scope of this program. There is nothing that prevents a municipal composting plan from being eligible, but look carefully through the guidelines ensure your application satisfies the other requirements. So long as your application complies with the guidelines, it is eligible (it need not be in the list of proposal examples).

Q: Could LAFCOs be an applicant agency under Focus Area 3?

A: LAFCOs are not eligible as an applicant. However, they can still be involved with funded projects and can partner with applicants—some have done so successfully in Round 1. But an eligible entity must be the primary applicant. The eligible applicants are defined by the state legislature, and they only include cities, counties, MPOs, JPAs, RTPAs, and COGs.

Q: Are public school districts or county Offices of Education eligible applicants?

A: Neither a public school district nor an Office of Education is an eligible applicant. The eligible applicants are defined by the state legislature, and they only include cities, counties, MPOs, JPAs, RTPAs, and COGs.

Q: What kinds of projects are projected to receive more funding (i.e. water sustainability, transit opportunities etc.)?

A: There's truly no way to know. Money is not set aside into pots for different types of projects, and applicants are likely to come up with creative project types that fit within the guidelines but didn't even cross our minds. The bottom line is that for a project to be competitive it must achieve multiple benefits—it must achieve more than just a few of the twelve program objectives listed in the guidelines.

Q: We are a recipient of a first round grant, and have been having difficulty with the 15% hold back of funds. This makes it difficult for smaller consulting firms to propose to work on the project, particularly given the length of time until completion. Can future rounds mitigate this? Our jurisdiction cannot "backfill" the 15%.

A: It's necessary that bond-funded grant programs have some incentive for completion, and this often takes the form of withholding. The Council approved this method with the hopes that it would be less demanding than the alternatives. If your jurisdiction is having particular problems with this, we encourage you to share those with our grant staff so that we can evaluate other options for the future.

Q: Will the list of grant recipients for round 2 be available to the public once awarded?

A: Yes. The grant recipients will be determined by the Strategic Growth Council at a public, webcast meeting, and we will publish the results promptly after that meeting. Applications for successful Round 2 applicants will also be posted on the SGC website, as the successful Round 1 applications are now.

Q: Do you have a particularly good example of an update to a circulation element of a General Plan?

A: The City of Calimesa and the City of San Luis Obispo were both funded for proposals that included circulation elements. Their applications, along with all the others from Round 1, are available on our website. The direct links for these two applications are as follows:

http://sgc.ca.gov/docs/funding/grantee_3010/3010-504_Calimesa.pdf

http://sgc.ca.gov/docs/funding/grantee_3010/3010-532_SLO_City.pdf

Q: Will there be preference in round two for design or implementation of plans that were funded in round 1?

A: No, there will be no special preference given to projects or jurisdictions the SGC has previously funded.

Questions for Dana Papke Waters regarding the Funding Wizard (California Air Resources Board)

Questions answered during the webinar (answers can be heard in the webinar recording)

1. If you enter a zip code in the funding wizard, will it limit results to just that zip, or will funding ops throughout CA be included in any CA zip search? If it only results for specific zips, how do you search to include all CA zips?
2. Is this website free or is this for members only? Are you required to register?
3. Who enters grant information and where do you get the information? (at the end of webinar)
4. Can you explain how the Funding Wizard interacts with customized climate action plans?

Questions not addressed during the webinar

Q: Commissioner Mark Ferron recently froze spending for the Engage 360 program. Does this affect your plans to add rebates to Finance Wizard as you move forward? Do updates and information depend on that site continuing functionality?

A: No. While there is a hold on the Engage 360 project, the Engage 360 website will continue to operate in its current state. Organizations can still manage information about their rebate programs through Engage 360. These updates will still continue to be updated to the Funding Wizard available through CoolCalifornia.org.

Q: Can the Funding Wizard be customized to assist small commercial businesses in a particular city/county to help identify rebate/incentive programs in their specific area? In other words, can it be filtered with criteria so a small commercial business can input specific info regarding their proposed retrofit projects, business details, location, etc... and have current rebate programs populate in the results?

A: Yes, the Funding Wizard can help small commercial businesses in a particular city/county to identify rebate programs. On the Advanced Search Page, simply select item number 8 for "Local Opportunities." Then, input the zip code where the business is located. Hit the "Add" button and then select "View Search Results." On the left hand navigation bar, you can "Narrow Your Search," by "Assistance Type." This will show you options for grants, rebates, and other financing incentives. If you select "rebates," you can view those opportunities that are specifically available within your local jurisdiction. You can then narrow the search further by selecting "Commercial" as the "Eligible Applicant." This should provide you with an approach to view rebate programs applicable to a small commercial business in a particular city/county.

Questions for Wendy Hartman, Yuba County Community Development & Services Agency

Question not addressed during the webinar

Q: If addressing climate change is a key focus area and you decided to not develop a Climate Action Plan county wide, are your cities looking to do other same Resource Efficiency Plan or CAP's? Is your REP going to cover all Yuba County cities?

The REP will cover just the unincorporated area of Yuba County. We only have two very small cities in the County (bulk of the population is within unincorporated area of the County) and at this time there was not an interest in doing a Countywide plan. Therefore, we will need to confine the REP to the inventory, projections, and measures for just the territory over which Yuba County has jurisdiction.

If there are any other questions, I would be happy to answer them. Our application is posted on the SGC website and we have created a website for our grant project www.yubazoningupdate.org where we will be posting documents and information.