

March 4, 2015.

**CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) Grants**

Questions and Answers

Note: This document will be regularly updated with new questions and the corresponding answers as they are received.

Q Can the project application budget be modified from the budget submitted with the concept proposal?

A Yes, the budget submitted with the project application can be modified from the budget submitted in the concept proposal.

Q Are State agencies eligible for GGRF grants?

A State agencies are not eligible for U&CF GGRF grants.

Q Do you have a preferred scientific methodology to quantify the GHG emission reductions for your fuel reduction grants?

A We do not have a preferred methodology. We have offered some guidance on the website and hope to have additional guidance posted on the web during the project application period. We are working with the Air Resources Board on acceptable methodologies.

Q Is there a cost share or match share requirement for the U&CF GGRF grant programs?

A No. There is a suggested matching rate of 25%, which can be either funds, or in kind.

Q Is a high school district considered a public agency?

A Public Schools are public agencies.

Q Will there be another grant application period in the coming future?

A CAL FIRE has been identified to receive funding in the FY 2015/16 Governor's Budget. There will be no certainty on receiving this funding until the budget is signed. All information on future funding opportunities will be on CAL FIRE's Grant website <http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/grants.php>.

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Q Can a Federal agency apply for U&CF GGRF funds?

A No. Eligible grantees for U&CF GGRF grants may be cities, counties, special districts, or nonprofit organizations. Per the Public Resources Code, Section 30910 (c) "Nonprofit organization" means any California corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code. “

Q Is there a cap on the amount of indirect costs a grant can have in the budget?

A The indirect rate is capped at 10% of the direct cost of the grant (excluding direct cost related to equipment purchases).

Q Are implementation projects preferable over feasibility studies?

A Yes, projects with a tangible GHG benefit are preferable.

Q Is CEQA always required for these projects or can NEPA substitute?

A NEPA can substitute if the conditions in [14 CCR §15221](#) are satisfied.

Q When does the project need to be completed by?

A If your project is selected for funding, it must be completed by the Project Completion Date identified in your Project Application or December 31, 2019, whichever is earlier. Under no circumstances will the project be awarded for a period beyond December 31, 2019.

Q Would applying for two or more UCF GGRF grants from different categories at the same time negate our applications?

A Applying for multiple grant categories at the same time would not negate the applications. However, it is expected that you would not enter into an additional grant agreement for the same portions of the same project. If portions of the project were split, grants could be obtained from different sources for the split portions, not to exceed 100% of the project value. Attempts to bill two grants for the same work within a project would likely result in legal action by the State against the applicant.

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Q Why wasn't my U&CF GGRF Grant Project invited to submit a project application?

A There are many possible reasons. Keep in mind that there was over \$107 million in requests received in concept proposals. There is only \$15.7 million that will be awarded. Not being invited back is by no means an indictment of a project not having merit. Only the very highest scoring projects have been invited back. A few possible reasons projects may not have been invited back:

- The concept proposal was received late or was not completely filled out.
- The project did not adequately demonstrate that it would achieve benefits, like GHG reductions, energy savings, public health benefits, etc. of significance commensurate with the budget request.
- The project was not in or would not serve a disadvantaged community as defined by Cal Enviro Screen 2.0 and Air Resources Board Guidance.
- The project did not demonstrate meaningful partnerships.
- The project did not demonstrate it would utilize best management practices.
- The project did not demonstrate community engagement or a plan to engage the community.

Q We were not invited back for a project application. What areas did we score poorly in?

A Your Regional Urban Forester will be available to discuss your concept proposal and how it could be improved for future potential grant offerings.

Q What methods should Management Activities project applications use to demonstrate GHG reductions?

A It is recommended that these kinds of projects include a tree planting component at this time. Further guidance on GHG methods will be provided when we have finished working with the Air Resources Board on acceptable methodologies.

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Q Out of the 169 concept proposals, how many were invited to submit project applications?

A There are 62 concept proposals that were selected to provide project applications.

Q How will project proposals be selected for funding?

A All the criteria used to determine grant awards are listed in the grant category RFP and the Procedural guide that is common to all the grant categories.

Q How can we improve upon our concept proposal for submitting our project application?

A There are a number of ways to improve upon concept proposals. All of them involve providing more project specifics. Some examples:

- Improved and/or more detailed GHG methods that are verifiable and defensible. CAL FIRE will provide further guidance as additional information becomes available from the Air Resources Board.
- Detailed planting location information, and/or specific information on how sites will be chosen.
- Detailed planting palette that takes into account site specific issues and concerns, as well as overall urban forest population concerns.
- Specific commitments by identified project partners to participate in the project (letters of commitment are a way to do this).
- Providing more urban forest related benefits for the cost.
- Providing a detailed budget in the form provided that uses actual price quotes or thorough estimates that are explained in the budget explanation.
- Demonstrating a clear and technically sound plan for plant and/or tree planting and establishment care.
- Detailing how long term maintenance of the project will be achieved with a high degree of certainty.
- Clearly showing that the community the project will serve has been engaged and are in support of and will be able to participate in the project.
- Clearly stating that the priorities and goals stated in the grant category RFP will be met, and how that will be accomplished.