



## Frequently Asked Questions Grant Administration during COVID-19

Grant programs and funded projects under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's [Watershed Restoration Grants Branch \(WRGB\)](#) may be impacted by the ongoing [COVID-19 pandemic](#) and associated constraints, including shelter-in-place orders, and businesses being considered non-essential. The below guidance is intended to address general questions and concerns posed by the restoration community.

### **Current Grant Agreements**

1. Q: My project will be delayed due to physical distancing requirements, shelter-in-place orders, and telework constraints. Can my grant term be extended?

A: WRGB will work with grantees to extend grant terms as feasible. Grant funding typically has a reversion date, wherein the funds are no longer available. WRGB is working to extend deadlines. Please contact your WRGB grant manager as soon as possible to see if an extension is possible.

2. Q: Does the Department deem restoration efforts towards the protection of Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species an essential service?

A: The Department provides Essential Governmental Services in support of its Mission Essential Functions. At this time, and in efforts to ensure these governmental services continue, we are continuing to award new grants, develop grant agreements for previously awarded grants, process invoices submitted pursuant to existing grant agreements, and manage permitting associated with T&E restoration projects. Restoration efforts towards the protection of T&E species help the Department accomplish its mission. The start or continuation of such restoration efforts should be consistent with local, state, federal, and tribal public health guidance regarding the COVID-19 emergency.

3. Q: My grant project included a commitment to attend or present information at a conference, technical advisory committee, or other scheduled meeting, which has since been canceled. What can I do?

A: Work with your WRGB grant manager to identify an alternative means to disseminate information.

4. Q: Will my grant be cancelled or have unspent funding taken back by the State?

A: Grants are not being canceled and there are no plans to take back unspent funds before the scheduled reversion date.

5. Q: Is WRGB still processing invoices for payment?

A: Yes. WRGB is still processing invoices. You can, and should, submit invoices electronically to your grant manager. Submitting invoices electronically will expedite processing and payment.

6. Q: Can payments to grantees be made electronically?

A: The State Controller's Office (SCO) does not have the ability to send electronic payments. SCO will send checks to grantees by mail.

7. Q: Can WRGB reimburse grantees for personnel costs if currently they are unable to work?

A: WRGB can only reimburse for staff time and costs associated with project work per the grant agreement. WRGB cannot pay for staff costs not associated with the project.

8. Q: What are our options if costs for a project increase because of COVID-19 related issues?

A: CDFW grants are typically not augmented with additional funding after the award. Grantees may work with their grant managers to, if possible, and with the aim of achieving the original grant objectives, identify critical and non-critical tasks and amend the grant to shift funds accordingly.

9. Q: Will we be penalized on future grant applications if we are unable to complete tasks reporting because of COVID-19 constraints?

A: WRGB will NOT penalize applications for constraints beyond their control.

10. Q: What if we need to cancel a grant agreement?

A: Both parties have the option to cancel a grant agreement per the general grant provisions. If a grantee needs to cancel an agreement because of COVID-19 related issues, it will not be held against them in future applications.

## **Applying for Grants**

11. Q: We may not be able to submit an application by the solicitation deadline. What are our options?

A: CDFW has extended the application deadline for current grant solicitations, and will continue to monitor the situation as well as consider how to review applications in light of current constraints.

12. Q: We may not be able to get bids from subcontractors or suppliers for our project for a grant application. How should we proceed?

A: Applicants may include placeholder amounts in proposed budgets, using your best estimates. Final budgets in awarded grants may be adjusted between budget categories and line items, as long the total dollar amount does not increase.

If you have a particular question or concern related to grants impacted by COVID-19, please submit them to [WatershedGrants@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:WatershedGrants@wildlife.ca.gov).