



Cannabis Restoration Grant Program



Proposal Solicitation Notice Cannabis Research and Innovation Funding Opportunity

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Established July 2024



The Mission of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BPC	Business and Professions Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CLC	California Labor Code
CRGP	Cannabis Restoration Grant Program
CWC	California Water Code
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PRC	Public Resources Code
RIFO	Research and Innovation Funding Opportunity
PSN	Proposal Solicitation Notice (Solicitation)
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board

1 BACKGROUND

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Cannabis Restoration Grant Program (CRGP) is seeking Research and Innovation proposals from eligible applicants to evaluate environmental conditions and impacts relative to cannabis cultivation; produce resources for ecological and environmentally sound cultivation practices; facilitate environmental sustainability of legal cannabis cultivation; and overall, address environmental impacts related to cannabis cultivation in California. The Research and Innovation Funding Opportunity (RIFO) focuses on research and innovation across multiple disciplines. Projects may involve environmental research and/or technological innovation and may be qualitative and/or quantitative in scope. Project proposals may focus on species and habitats, particularly [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#) and [Sensitive Natural Communities](#), and approaches for mitigating potentially adverse impacts of cannabis cultivation and related activities.

Funding is provided by the Environmental Restoration and Protection Account and authorized by Revenue and Taxation Code section 34019(f)(2)(A). CDFW's Cannabis Restoration Grant Program is responsible for distributing and managing RIFO grants. All qualified eligible applicants (see [Section 2.1 Eligible Applicants](#)) are encouraged to submit environmental research and/or technological innovation proposals. RIFO proposals may include one or more of the following Project Types as they relate to cannabis cultivation: water use, land management, native species, social dimensions and community engagement, and technological innovations (see [Section 2.4, Project Objectives and Project Types](#)). Project proposals must specifically and clearly describe how the proposed project will contribute to the conservation of California's fish, wildlife, and the habitats upon which they depend.

This document details eligibility requirements, the application process, proposal review procedures, and other pertinent information. Eligible applicants are encouraged to read this Solicitation thoroughly prior to submitting an application. CDFW will advertise funding updates through email announcements, postings on the [CRGP website](#), and news releases. Please [sign up](#) for email updates on CDFW's Grant News Notification page.

1.1 Funding

Research projects under this funding opportunity are focused on improving the understanding of how cannabis cultivation influences the environment as well as approaches for mitigating potentially adverse impacts of cultivation and related activities. Projects submitted under this funding opportunity are subject to availability of funds. Grant funded projects must be completed within three years of executing the Grant Agreement unless otherwise agreed to by the Grantee and CRGP.

1.2 Concept Consultation

CRGP will conduct Concept Consultations with eligible applicants as part of the application process. Eligible applicants interested in submitting an application to

the Cannabis Restoration Grant Program can email CannGrantProgram@wildlife.ca.gov to schedule a Concept Consultation with CRGP staff. CRGP staff discuss project ideas with applicants and provide comments in order to assist applicants with project planning and prioritization.

1.3 Application Timeline

Applications are accepted and considered for approval on a rolling basis while funding is available. The CRGP will invite applicants to submit a Pre-Application after determining eligibility and alignment with the Solicitation priorities. The Pre-Application includes a brief summary of the proposed project, the team, as well as an estimate of the total project costs, including the amount requested for grant funding. CRGP staff review Pre-Applications based on the eligibility requirements, project objectives, and project priorities. The applicant is invited to submit a Full Proposal if the conservation benefits to fish and wildlife are clearly outlined, the Pre-Application is consistent with the requirements outlined in the Solicitation, and the eligible applicant and the Cannabis Restoration Grant Program have the capacity to manage the project (see [Section 4 – Submission, Review, and Selection Process](#)). Applicants must address all comments received from the CRGP when submitting a Full Proposal.

If the applicant is invited to submit a Full Proposal, the Full Proposal should be submitted a minimum of two months in advance of the desired approval timeframe. Processing time for Full Proposals can vary depending on project complexity and completeness. Full Proposals are evaluated by a scientific review team that may consist of subject matter experts within CDFW, California Department of Cannabis Control, and other appropriate agencies. If a Full Proposal is accepted and approved for funding, a Grant Agreement is prepared between CRGP and the applicant. Grant Agreements may take up to 120 days to complete before the Grantee and CRGP sign and execute the grant.

2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITIES

The eligibility requirements outlined below represent the minimum requirements for funding. Detailed information on funding requirements can be found in [Section 3 – Full Proposal Requirements and Conditions](#).

Grant funds cannot be used to satisfy compensatory mitigation as defined by CEQA Guidelines, section 15370(e), or mitigation projects undertaken solely pursuant to a court order or settlement agreement (see [Section 3.2.3 Ineligible Costs](#) for a complete list of ineligible costs).

2.1 Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to receive grant funding (Fish and Game Code, section 1501.5(b)):

- Public agencies within California (federal or state agencies or departments, public universities or colleges, special districts, joint power authorities, counties, cities, or other political subdivisions of the state).
- Nonprofit organizations qualified to do business in California, qualified under Section 501(c), Title 26 of the United States Code, and with the capacity to meet the requirements of this Solicitation and the executed Grant Agreement.
- California Native American tribes as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21073.

Proposals from private individuals, for-profit enterprises, or out-of-state public entities (except those that are nonprofit organizations registered with the California Secretary of State) are ineligible for funding under this Solicitation. However, these entities can work as subcontractors for an eligible organization.

2.2 California’s Sensitive Species and Natural Communities Focus

Funds under this Solicitation are available for projects statewide. Proposals that directly benefit [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#) or [Sensitive Natural Communities](#) will receive higher scores under the “Solicitation Priorities” scoring criteria.

2.3 Inclusive and Collaborative Conservation

CDFW is committed to fostering inclusive conservation and governance of natural resources and recognizes that collaborative conservation yields multiple benefits, including improved problem-solving and innovation as well as increased productivity. Proposals that directly involve local capacity building, collaborative research, or equity centered assistance and engagement (with communities potentially impacted by the proposed research) will receive higher scores under the “Solicitation Priorities” scoring criteria.

2.4 Project Objectives and Project Types

All proposals submitted under this Solicitation should clearly articulate how the proposed activities relate to cannabis cultivation or related activities, benefit fish and wildlife, and create local partnerships. Proposals should clearly describe how the project will accomplish one or more of the following Project Objectives:

- 1) Improve the collective understanding of how cannabis cultivation influences the environment.
- 2) Provide actionable solutions for mitigating adverse impacts of cannabis cultivation and related activities on the environment.
- 3) Address factors that support ecological or environmentally sound cultivation practices.
- 4) Contribute to the conservation of California’s fish, wildlife, and the habitats upon which they depend.

Additionally, all grants funded by CDFW under this Solicitation must fall within one of the following Project Types:

2.4.1 Project Type – Water Use

This Project Type is focused on research in freshwater ecosystems and water resource conservation. Topics may include, but are not limited to: where, when, and how cannabis sites source their water (e.g., surface water diversions, wells, rainwater catchment ponds, water storage tanks); potential impacts of water use on broader ecosystem functions, including surface water-groundwater interactions; irrigation practices; maximizing water use efficiencies; and approaches for assessing and maintaining freshwater flow functionality necessary to support aquatic organisms (e.g., fish spawning, migration, and rearing) and water quality.

2.4.2 Project Type – Land Management

This Project Type is focused on applied research in agricultural practices and land management. Specific research topics may include, but are not limited to: soil health; regenerative agriculture; spatial planning of cultivation (meeting cultivator needs while minimizing loss/fragmentation of natural landscapes); climate/drought adaptations that promote landscape resilience; strategic use of native plants on cultivation sites; maximizing and assessing the efficacy of remediation and restoration; habitat enhancements and protection measures; and pesticide use and residual pesticides at or near cultivation sites.

2.4.3 Project Type – Native Species

This Project Type is focused on sustaining and enhancing the distribution, abundance, and richness of native species in areas with cannabis cultivation with a focus on [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#) and [Sensitive Natural Communities](#). Research topics may include, but are not limited to: the adaptive response of flora and fauna to changing environmental conditions, including the cumulative impacts of cannabis cultivation, other land uses, and climate related changes; aquatic and terrestrial wildlife connectivity; and mitigating disturbances associated with cannabis cultivation on native species (e.g., road construction / placement / maintenance; artificial lights; human-produced noise; fence construction and placement; potential spread of invasive species; erosion control).

2.4.4 Project Type - Social Dimensions and Community Engagement

This Project Type is focused on understanding the social and community dynamics that influence environmental impacts associated with cannabis cultivation. Research topics may include, for example: socio-economic drivers of conservation in areas impacted by cannabis; strategies for

effective community outreach; language access for communities impacted by cannabis cultivation and the associated regulatory framework; comparative community perspectives on cultivation and environmental impact; cannabis consumer packaging and waste production; sustainable management and minimization and management of unusable cannabis, cannabis products, and disposal of materials necessary to conduct commercial cannabis cultivation.

2.4.5 Project Type – Technological Innovation

Technological innovations include, but are not limited to: tools that benefit cultivators while simultaneously minimizing potential environmental impacts (e.g., water efficient cultivation); regenerative cultivation practices in the face of climate change; carbon, greenhouse gas, and water quality credits as tools for promoting ecological and environmentally sound cultivation practices; cloud-based platforms and machine learning tools that enable regular, expedited assessments of land use change, water availability, bioassessment, and the mapping of cannabis cultivation; and technologies that will maximize the efficacy of field data collection, processing, and integration into planning, management, and decision support frameworks.

2.5 Land Tenure/Site Control

For work proposed to be performed on lands not owned or managed by the applicant, written proof of permission to access the land from the fee title owner or land management agency must be provided. For projects involving multiple landowners, all landowners or their appointed designees must provide written permission to access properties and complete the project. Applicants for projects proposing on-the-ground-work must submit documentation showing they have adequate tenure to the properties for the duration of the grant. When an applicant does not have tenure at the time of proposal submission, the applicant must submit a proposed agreement, memorandum of understanding, or landowner permission form upon grant execution. Proof of adequate land tenure includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Fee title ownership
- An easement or site access agreement
- Other agreement between the applicant and the fee title owner that provides the applicant adequate site control for the purposes of completing the project.

2.6 Environmental Compliance and Permitting

Activities under this funding opportunity must comply with all applicable state and federal environmental laws and regulations, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other environmental permitting requirements. State Scientific Collecting Permits,

CESA Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and federal ESA Recovery Permits must be current for all staff identified in the project that are conducting work and “take” or otherwise impact state or federally listed species. All authorizations must be in place prior to the start of the grant performance period. The Grantee is responsible for obtaining all permits necessary to complete the proposed work. Applicants must identify the project’s expected permitting requirements and state which permits have been obtained and the process through which additional permits will be obtained, including the anticipated timeframe for obtaining each permit. Projects that fail to comply with this requirement will not be eligible for funding.

3 FULL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

As described in [Section 1 – Background](#), only those applicants that successfully submit a Pre-Application consistent with the eligibility requirements and Solicitation priorities may be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Applicants must address CRGP comments provided in the Full Proposal.

Applicants must comply with all stated requirements of this Solicitation. Any changes to the application process will be posted in a timely manner on CDFW’s [CRGP website](#).

All information requested in this Solicitation is mandatory unless otherwise indicated. Proposals are subject to Public Records Act requests and may be made publicly available.

3.1 Data Collection and Management

Grantees and subcontractors or collaborators are responsible for ensuring project data are collected using peer-approved methods and undergo a quality control and assessment process. When appropriate, Grantees may be encouraged to use data collection protocols developed by the Office of Cannabis so that data can be integrated into broader monitoring efforts.

CDFW’s intent is to improve the management of biological resources and conservation planning through appropriate data management. Cannabis Research and Innovation Grantees are required to develop and submit a data management plan with each project. The designated CRGP Grant Manager can provide additional guidance. Data management plans should be consistent with the recommendations described in [Enhancing the Vision for Managing California’s Environmental Information](#) and the Open and Transparent Water Data Act ([AB1755](#)). Data management plans are short (2-3 page) documents that include the following:

- Description of the data to be acquired or generated by the project
- Quality control/quality assurance procedures
- The process for managing, describing, analyzing, storing, curating, and publishing datasets
- The process for efficient and effective data flow
- The process for addressing data sharing
- The mechanisms for sharing and ensuring long-term archival of the dataset

If wildlife cameras, acoustic recorders, dissolved oxygen loggers, stream gauges, or similar continuous passive data collection methods are used, raw data (e.g., jpg, wav, and csv files) and the corresponding metadata will be submitted to CDFW or the appropriate CDFW-associated platform (e.g., Wildlife Insights for camera data) on an annual basis. Data related to observation, occurrence, or distribution of state or federal Special Status Species or California Native Plant Society listed species must be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) using the online field survey form or other digital method. The CRGP Grant Manager may provide the Grantee a metadata template that must be completed and submitted as a condition of payment. Grantee will work with the designated Grant Manager to determine the best way to submit raw data to the CRGP.

3.2 Budget

Applicants must submit a complete project budget with the Full Proposal. The budget must provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand how the requested funds will be used, why the expenses are necessary, what deliverables are associated with each, and how the applicant is estimating project costs.

Eligible costs are reimbursable costs incurred by the Grantee during the performance of an eligible activity (deliverable) identified in the Grant Agreement. Only eligible costs incurred during the agreement period or grant term are reimbursable. All eligible costs must be supported by accurate invoices, purchase orders, and/or other records.

Applicants should budget for all costs associated with project delivery, for example: personnel costs to manage the project and subcontracts; subcontractor costs; presentations to CDFW, conferences, or workshops including any travel costs; data deliverables; field supplies; publication fees; permit fees, etc. All costs must be reasonable and customary. Only direct and indirect costs included in the project budget are reimbursable.

3.2.1 Cost Share

Cost share is the portion of the project cost not funded by the awarding agency (CDFW) and is provided by the Grantee and/or other sources (e.g., private companies, nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and/or other

entities). The cost share must support the proposed project and be spent during the term of the executed Grant Agreement. While cost share is encouraged, it is not required as part of this Solicitation. However, proposals with a higher proportion of secured cost share will receive higher scores during the evaluation process.

Applicants must indicate if they intend to use funds from other grants or entities as cost share for the proposed project. Applicants must also disclose whether they intend to leverage CRGP funds as cost share for other grants.

3.2.2 Indirect Costs

The applicant's indirect costs (administrative overhead) are limited to actual costs and cannot exceed 20 percent of the direct costs. Indirect is capped on the first \$25,000 of each subcontract. Indirect costs cannot include major equipment as defined in the [CDFW General Grant Provisions](#). Although CDFW will not fund indirect costs amounting to over 20 percent of the direct costs, the applicant can use any funds above the 20 percent cap as cost share. Indirect costs include, but are not limited to: utilities, office space, phone, use of computers and office equipment, postage, photocopying related to completion of the proposed project, and office supplies.

3.2.3 Ineligible Costs

The following expenses are ineligible for reimbursement:

- Costs incurred outside the grant agreement term
- Costs related to the preparation of the Pre-Application or Full Proposal
- Costs required by compensatory mitigation as defined by CEQA Guidelines, section 15370(e), or mitigation projects undertaken solely pursuant to a court order or settlement agreement (projects that include mitigation efforts may be considered for funding for activities that go beyond the required mitigation)
- Indirect costs greater than 20 percent of the direct costs
- Indirect costs over 20 percent of the first \$25,000 of each subcontract
- Indirect costs on major equipment costs
- Student tuition and fees
- Intern stipends
- Travel, equipment, and other property costs not specifically identified in the grant budget and/or costs that are inconsistent with the [CDFW General Grant Provisions](#)
- Out of state travel without prior written authorization from CDFW
- Appraisal, title, or escrow costs
- Insurance, including liability insurance

- Activities performed by law enforcement¹

3.3 Conflict of Interest

All applicants and individuals who participate in the review of Pre-Applications and Full Proposals are subject to state and federal conflict of interest laws. Any individual who has participated in planning or setting priorities for a specific Solicitation or participate in any part of the Grant Agreement development and negotiation process on behalf of the public is ineligible to receive funds or personally benefit from funds awarded through the Solicitation. Applicants should also be aware that certain state agencies may submit proposals that will compete for funding. Employees of state and federal agencies may participate in the review process as scientific and technical reviewers but are subject to the same state and federal conflict of interest laws.

Failure to comply with the conflict of interest laws, including business and financial disclosure provisions, will result in rejecting the Proposal and any subsequent Grant Agreement being declared void. Other legal actions may also be taken. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to, California Government Code section 1090 and Public Contract Code sections 10365.5, 10410, and 10411.

3.4 Confidentiality

Once a Full Proposal has been submitted to CDFW, any privacy rights as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law, will be waived. Unsealed Proposals are public records under the California Government Code sections 6250-6276.48 and therefore subject to public disclosure, barring an exemption.

3.5 Cannabis Equity Program

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz) administers the Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions to aid local equity program efforts that support equity applicants and equity licensees by offering technical support, regulatory compliance assistance, and assistance securing capital for beginning a business. If applicable, applicants working with local equity applicants, local equity licensees, and/or part of a local equity program(s), as defined by the Business and Professions Code Section 26240, will receive higher scores during the evaluation process.

3.6 Grantee Qualifications

Applicants must demonstrate the project team has the experience and capacity to successfully perform the proposed research by providing a Statement of Qualifications and/or bio sketch for all key personnel, including the Principal Investigator.

¹ Law enforcement activities may be eligible as a subcontractor cost and will be evaluated by CRGP on a case-by-case basis.

Some projects require a California licensed professional engineer or California licensed professional geologist in order to comply with applicable requirements of the Business and Professions Code, including [Section 6700 et seq. \(Professional Engineers Act\)](#) and/or [Section 7800 et seq., \(Geologists and Geophysicists Act\)](#). In these instances, a qualified professional licensed to practice in California is required to design and plan the project.

3.7 Labor Code Requirements: Prevailing Wage

Grants awarded through the Cannabis Restoration Grant Program may be subject to prevailing wage provisions of Part 7 of Division 2 of the California Labor Code (CLC), commencing with section 1720. Typically, the types of projects subject to the prevailing wage requirements are public works projects. Existing law defines "public works" as construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work (among other things) done under contract and paid for in whole or in part out of public funds. Assembly Bill 2690 (Hancock, Chapter 330, Statutes of 2004) amended CLC section 1720.4 to exclude most work performed by volunteers from the prevailing wage requirements until January 1, 2031.

The Grantee must pay prevailing wages to all persons employed in the performance of any part of the project if required by law. Any questions of interpretation regarding the CLC should be directed to the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, who maintains authority in these matters. Please see the [Department of Industrial Relations website](#) and California Fish and Game Code Section 1501.5 for more details.

3.8 Water Law

Funded grant projects that address stream flow and water use must comply with the California Water Code (CWC), as well as all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Any Full Proposal that requires a change to water rights, including, but not limited to, bypass flows, points of diversion, location of use, purpose of use, or off-stream storage must demonstrate an understanding of the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) processes, timelines, and costs necessary for project approval by SWRCB. In addition, the project must demonstrate the ability to meet these timelines within the executed grant term. Any Full Proposal that includes modification of the water rights for an adjudicated stream must identify the required legal process for the change and all associated legal costs. Prior to completion, any water right acquisition must be supported by a water rights appraisal approved by the Department of General Services Real Property Services Section.

3.9 Recognition of Funding Source

Recognition of funding under the CDFW Cannabis Restoration Grant Program must be acknowledged in all publications, websites, and other related media and public outreach products. All materials prepared for publication or circulation to the

public must be submitted to the CRGP Grant Manager for review and approval a minimum of 10 business days prior to circulation.

4 SUBMISSION, REVIEW, AND SELECTION PROCESS

4.1 Submission Process

If the applicant is invited to submit a Full Proposal, the Full Proposal should be submitted a minimum of two months in advance of the desired approval timeframe. The name of this Solicitation is **CRGP – Cannabis Research and Innovation Funding Opportunity**.

The Full Proposal consists of multiple forms. CRGP staff will provide further instructions to applicants for submitting Full Proposals.

4.2 Review and Selection Process

Full Proposals are evaluated using a multi-step review process. An overview of the administrative and technical review criteria is described below. Full Proposals are evaluated and scored by technical reviewers who independently score in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Engineering-Geologic review is completed on all Full Proposals where engineering design or geologic investigation are included.

4.2.1 Administrative Review

Administrative review determines whether a Full Proposal is complete, consistent with the Solicitation requirements and priorities, and clearly describes the conservation benefits to fish and wildlife. The administrative reviewer uses a “Yes/No” scoring method based on the criteria outlined in Table 1. All comments are provided to the applicant. Insufficiencies must be addressed in the final Full Proposal.

TABLE 1. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW EVALUATION CRITERIA

Administrative Criteria	Score
Pre-Application approved and applicant invited to submit a Full Proposal	Yes/No
Proposal components are complete, including all forms, associated documents, and the applicant’s contact information, including the person authorized to sign a Grant Agreement	Yes/No
Applicant is an eligible entity	Yes/No
Proposal clearly describes the project priority(ies) and conservation benefits	Yes/No
Proposal does not include any ineligible activities	Yes/No
Proposal addresses the legal requirements for land tenure for the duration of the grant term	Yes/No

4.2.2 Technical Review

CDFW technical reviewers evaluate and score all eligible and complete Full Proposals. Technical reviewers evaluate Full Proposals in accordance with the technical review criteria described in Table 2 and may make narrative comments that support these scores. Each criterion is assigned a point value between zero and five and multiplied by the applicable weighting factor to calculate the criterion score. The sum of the criteria scores produces the total score for the Full Proposal. Individuals selected to serve as technical reviewers are professionals in fields relevant to the proposed project. CRGP staff recommend proposals score an average of 70 out of 100 points or better prior to finalizing. CRGP staff will make recommendations to improve project success if applicants are open to continuing the process.

Where standard scoring criteria are applied, points are assigned as follows:

- A score of 5 points is awarded if the criterion is fully addressed and supported by thorough and well-presented documentation and logical rationale.
- A score of 4 points is awarded if the criterion is fully addressed but is supported by less thorough documentation or less sufficient rationale.
- A score of 3 points is awarded if the criterion is less than fully addressed and supported by less thorough documentation or less sufficient rationale.
- A score of 2 points is awarded if the criterion is moderately addressed, or the documentation or rationale are incomplete or insufficient.
- A score of 1 point is awarded if the criterion is minimally addressed, or no documentation or rationale is presented.
- A score of 0 points is awarded if the criterion is not addressed.

TABLE 2. TECHNICAL REVIEW EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING STANDARD

Criteria	Weighting Factor	Max. Score
1. Objectives and Background The Full Proposal includes a detailed description of the project background, objectives, and priorities, including sufficient rationale to justify the project need.	2	10

Criteria	Weighting Factor	Max. Score
<p>2. Project Methods The Full Proposal includes a clear description of how the project objectives will be met. Data will be collected using peer-approved methods, undergo a quality control and assessment process, and if appropriate, use Office of Cannabis protocols. The project description and methods are sufficiently detailed to serve as a statement of work for a Grant Agreement.</p>	3	15
<p>3. Significance of Benefits The Full Proposal provides sufficient analysis and documentation demonstrating the significance of the expected project outcomes (e.g., magnitude, diversity).</p>	3	15
<p>4. Project Team Qualifications / Ability to Accomplish Project The Full Proposal demonstrates the project team has the qualifications, experience, and capacity to perform the proposed tasks.</p>	2	10
<p>5. Inclusive and Collaborative Conservation Actions The Full Proposal includes local capacity building, collaborative research, and/or equity centered assistance and engagement (number, diversity of partners).</p>	2	10
<p>6. Sensitive Species The Full Proposal describes how the project will benefit at least one Species of Greatest Conservation Need or Sensitive Natural Community.</p>	2	10
<p>7. Timeline and Deliverables The proposed schedule demonstrates the sequence and timing of project tasks, milestones, and deliverables and is sufficiently detailed and reasonable.</p>	3	15
<p>8. Applicant Budget and Justification The proposed budget is appropriate for the work proposed, cost effective, sufficiently detailed, and consistent with the tasks and deliverables described in the project narrative and schedule.</p>	2	10
<p>9. Cost Share The Full Proposal leverages other funds, including private, state, federal, or local funds.</p>	1	5
Total Possible Points		100

4.2.3 Selection Panel Review

CDFW will convene a Selection Panel to review the scores and comments from the Technical Review process. The Selection Panel may establish subcommittees, organized around Solicitation priorities, to provide a preliminary ranking for Selection Panel deliberations. Representatives from other agencies and organizations may be invited to participate on the Selection Panel or its subcommittees. The Selection Panel will generate the initial funding recommendations. When developing funding recommendations, the Selection Panel considers the following:

- Technical Reviewer scores and comments
- Input from CDFW Regional Managers and Staff
- Subcommittee preliminary rankings
- Policy considerations
- Balance and distribution of funds according to the following: a) project priorities, b) project types, c) geographic areas, and d) type of applicant
- Results of coordination with partner agencies implementing other relevant grant programs

The Selection Panel may recommend modifications, including reducing requested award amounts, to meet current priorities as well as any potential future program priorities, funding targets, and available funding limitations.

4.2.4 Final Approval

The Cannabis Program Director reviews the Selection Panel recommendations and associated materials and makes the final funding recommendation to CDFW's Director on a continual basis.

5 REQUIREMENTS IF FUNDED

5.1 Grant Agreement

Development of Grant Agreements begins following the announcement of awards. Grantees are assigned a CRGP Grant Manager to develop the Grant Agreement. The Grantee must agree to the [General Grant Provisions](#). Grantees from the University of California or California State University system must agree to the [University Terms and Conditions - Exhibit "C" for University of California and California State University Agreements \(UTC-518 Exhibit C\)](#). Grantees must complete, sign, and return the following forms:

- [Payee Data Record form \(STD. 204\)](#)
- Federal Taxpayer ID Number
- [Drug-Free Workplace Certification \(STD. 21\)](#)
- Authorizing Board Resolution (if applicable)

- [Generative Artificial Intelligence \(GenAI\) Reporting and Factsheet \(STD. 1000\)](#) (if applicable)

Executed grants must be signed by authorized representatives, including the grant recipient and CDFW. Work performed prior to an executed agreement will not be reimbursed. Similarly, work performed past the term of the agreement will not be reimbursed.

5.2 Responsibilities of the Grantee

The Grantee must be responsive during the Grant Agreement development and responsible for conducting the work agreed to. Financial management of the grant includes invoicing, providing timely payments to subcontractors, accounting, and financial auditing. Other project management duties, including all reporting requirements, are also required. See [Appendix C](#) for additional state auditing requirements.

Grantees must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances. If necessary, the Grantee is responsible for obtaining the services of appropriately licensed professionals to complete project design plans and other work (see [Section 3.6](#)).

5.3 Invoicing and Payments

CDFW structures all Grant Agreements to provide for payment in arrears of work performed (unless an advance payment, not to exceed 25 percent of the total award, is awarded pursuant to AB 590 as described below). CDFW does not disburse funds until there is an executed Grant Agreement between CDFW and the Grantee. Except for advance payment, all other payments are made on a reimbursement basis (i.e., the Grantee pays for services, products or supplies, submits an invoice that must be approved by the CDFW Grant Manager, and is then reimbursed by CDFW). Funds for construction will not be disbursed until all required environmental compliance, permitting, and design documents have been received and accepted by CDFW. The Grantee must support all expense claims for reimbursement with appropriate documentation. State auditing requirements are described in [Appendix C](#).

5.3.1 Advanced Payment for Community Based Private Nonprofits

The Governor of California signed [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 590, Chapter 535: Advance Payments](#) on October 8, 2023. The bill authorizes CDFW to allow advance payments for grant funded projects to community based private nonprofit organizations, not to exceed 25 percent of the total award, upon CDFW's determination that an advanced payment is essential for the effective implementation of the project. The Grantee must meet the

requirements set forth in California Government Code Section 11019.3(c)(2) to receive advance payment. In determining whether to advance a payment, CDFW will prioritize recipient entities and projects serving disadvantaged, low-income, and under-resourced communities or organizations with modest reserves and potential cashflow problems.

In order to be considered for an advance payment reward, an entity must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Submit documentation to support the need for advance payment, which may include, but is not limited to: invoices demonstrating the nonprofit does not have sufficient cash or credit to float payments before state reimbursement; contracts; estimates; payroll records; and financial records.
2. Demonstrate current status is in good standing as a nonprofit exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
3. Provide an itemized budget for the eligible costs the advance payment will fund.

If selected to receive an advance payment, the Grantee must comply with the following requirements:

1. Deposit any funds received as an advance payment into a federally insured account that provides the ability to track the interest earned as well as withdrawals. Any accumulated interest must be deemed grant funds, subject to federal and state laws and regulations, and the recipient must report the interest earned on the advance payment.
2. The account must be in the Grantee's name, and not in the name of any of its directors or officers.
3. Establish procedures to minimize the amount of time that elapses between the transfer of funds and the expenditure of those funds.
4. Provide progress reports on the expenditure of advance funds no less than a quarterly basis or as otherwise required. All unused funding provided as an advance payment, but not expended within the grant timeline, must be returned to CDFW.
5. Provide a progress report to CDFW following the expenditure of an advance payment that includes a summary of work completed, proof of expenditure, and other information as requested.

5.4 Reporting

Grantees must submit progress reports as outlined in the executed Grant Agreement to the CRGP Grant Manager for the duration of the grant. CRGP may

require annual reports and task specific reports as project deliverables. All reports must be compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

5.5 Performance Retention

CDFW may retain an amount equal to 10 percent of the invoiced amount from the Grantee's reimbursements for each period for which payment is made, pending satisfactory completion of the task. CDFW may modify retention withholding in specific circumstances. For example, if the Grantee or subcontractor is a public entity contracted to construct any public works improvement, CDFW may retain an amount equal to 5 percent from the Grantee's earnings, for each period for which payment is made, pending satisfactory completion of the task (Public Contract Code §7201(b)(1)).

5.6 Loss of Funding

Work performed under the Grant Agreement is subject to availability of funds through the state's budget process. If funding for the Grant Agreement is reduced, deleted, or delayed by the Budget Act or through other budget control actions, CDFW has the option to cancel the Grant Agreement, offer the Grantee a Grant Amendment that reflects the reduced amount, or suspend work. In the event of cancellation or suspension of work, CDFW will provide written notice to the Grantee and be liable for payment of any work completed pursuant to the agreement up to the date of the written notice. CDFW maintains no liability for payment of work undertaken after such date. In the event of suspension of work, CDFW may remove the suspension of work through written notice to the Grantee. CDFW is liable for payment for work completed from the date of the written notice for the removal of the suspension of work and forward. Payment will be consistent with other terms of the grant agreement. In no event is CDFW liable to the Grantee for any costs or damages associated with any period of suspension invoked pursuant to this provision, nor is CDFW liable for any costs in the event that, after a suspension, no funds are available, and the Grant Agreement is cancelled based on state budget contingencies.

Actions of the state that may lead to suspension or cancellation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of appropriated funds
- Executive order directing suspension or cancellation of grant agreements
- CDFW or California Natural Resources Agency directive requiring suspension or cancellation of grant agreements

Actions of the Grantee that may lead to suspension or cancellation of the Grant Agreement include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failing to execute a Grant Agreement with CDFW within 6 months of the award announcement. In such situations, the applicant may apply under a future Solicitation
2. Withdrawing from the grant program
3. Failing to submit required documentation within the time periods specified in the Grant Agreement
4. Failing to submit evidence of environmental or permit compliance as specified by the Grant Agreement
5. Changing project scope without prior approval from CDFW
6. Failing to complete the project
7. Failing to demonstrate sufficient progress
8. Failing to comply with pertinent laws

5.7 General Terms and Conditions

Grantees must agree to the appropriate terms and conditions for their entity type. General Grant Provisions include information regarding audits, amendments, liability insurance, and data rights. All Grantees must agree to the CDFW [General Grant Provisions](#) for Public or Non-Public entities. Grantees from the University of California or California State University system must agree to the [University Terms and Conditions - Exhibit "C" for University of California and California State University Agreements \(UTC-518 Exhibit C\)](#).

As necessary, the Grantee is responsible for obtaining the services of appropriately licensed professionals to comply with the applicable requirements of the Business and Professions Code, including but not limited to, [Section 6700 et seq. \(Professional Engineers Act\)](#) and/or [Section 7800 et seq. \(Geologists and Geophysicists Act\)](#) and all applicable requirements of the Business and Professions Code.

If a project is selected for funding and the project proponent fails to perform in accordance with the provisions of the enacted agreement, CDFW retains the right, at its sole discretion, to interrupt or suspend the work for which the monies are appropriated or to terminate the Grant Agreement.

5.8 Liability Insurance – Additional Coverage

In addition to insurance limits identified in CDFW's General Terms and Conditions, prior to executing a final Grant Agreement, Grantees must provide proof of self-insurance or certificate(s) of insurance showing the required insurance is presently in effect. Insurance coverage requirements are based on the scope of the project and may include policies, including, but not limited to, pollution liability, auto liability, aircraft liability, and watercraft liability.

APPENDIX A – USEFUL WEB LINKS

State Departments and Programs

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

[CRGP Homepage](#)

[CDFW Grant Opportunities](#)

[ERP Conservation Strategy](#)

[State Wildlife Action Plan](#)

California Department of Cannabis Control

California Natural Resources Agency

[Bond Accountability](#)

[CNRA Grant Portal](#)

California Department of Conservation

[Watershed Coordinator Program](#)

California Department of Industrial Relations

California Department of Water Resources

[Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Programs](#)

State Water Resources Control Board

[California Environmental Data Exchange Network](#)

[Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program](#)

[California Water Action Plan](#)

CEQA Information

[California State Clearinghouse Handbook](#)

[CEQA: The California Environmental Quality Act](#)

Climate Change Information

[CDFW's Science Institute: Climate Change](#)

[Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk](#)

[National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy](#)

National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration

NEPA Information

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

United States Forest Service

Water Conservation and Water Use Efficiency

[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[Alliance for Water Efficiency](#)

Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

Applicant – The eligible entity submitting a Pre-Application and Full Proposal. This is the same entity that would enter into a Grant Agreement with CRGP should the Full Proposal be awarded.

California Native American Tribe – A Native American Tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004 (PRC § 21073).

Eligible Costs – Expenses incurred by the Grantee during the agreement performance period of an approved Grant Agreement, which may be reimbursed by CDFW.

Eligible Entities – (FGC §1501.5[b]) - Public agencies within California (state agencies or departments, public universities or colleges, special districts, joint power authorities, counties, cities, or other political subdivisions of the state (CWC §79702[s]); nonprofit organizations qualified to do business in California, qualified under Section 501(c) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and with the capacity to meet the requirements of this Solicitation and the executed Grant Agreement; and California Native American Tribes, as defined in Public Resources Code section 21073.

Executed Amendment – The addition of a new line item (i.e., materials, equipment, or subcontractor) to the grant budget and/or time extension may be permitted after the grant is executed as long as the changes are consistent with the scope of work for the project, the changes are justified, and both parties can sign the required documents. The signed documents should be routed for approval a minimum of 45 calendar days prior to the grant agreement end date to allow processing by CDFW Budgets and Accounting.

Full Proposal – The required application forms for a project proposed for grant funding, including the project narrative, budget tables, statements of qualification, and any required attachments pursuant to the CRGP and this Solicitation.

Grant Agreement – An agreement between CDFW and the Grantee specifying the terms, timeline, deliverables, and payment of funds by CDFW for the performance of the project scope of work.

Grant Manager – The designated CRGP Scientist assigned to assist with the development of the Grant Agreement, manage the grant project, accept and review invoices and deliverables, and the first point of contact for the Grantee.

Grantee – Refers to the eligible applicant once a proposal is awarded and a Grant Agreement is executed (i.e., a grant recipient).

Local Equity Applicant – An eligible applicant who has submitted, or will submit, an application to a local jurisdiction and engage in commercial cannabis activity within the jurisdictional boundaries of the respective jurisdiction and who meets the requirements of the respective jurisdiction's local equity program (BPC § 26240(c)).

Local Equity Licensee – A person who has obtained a license from a local jurisdiction to engage in commercial cannabis activity within the jurisdictional boundaries of the respective jurisdiction and who meets the requirements of the respective jurisdiction’s local equity program (BPC § 26240(d)).

Local Equity Program – A program adopted or operated by a local jurisdiction that focuses on inclusion and support of individuals and communities in California’s cannabis industry who are linked to populations or neighborhoods negatively or disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization as evidenced by the local jurisdiction’s equity assessment. Local equity programs may include, but are not limited to, the following types of services ((BPC § 26240(e)):

- 1) Small business support services offering technical assistance or professional and mentorship services to persons from economically disadvantaged communities that experience high rates of poverty or communities most harmed by cannabis prohibition, determined by historically high rates of arrests or convictions for cannabis law violations.
- 2) Tiered fees or fee waivers for cannabis related permits and licenses.
- 3) Assistance paying state regulatory and licensing fees.
- 4) Assistance securing business locations prior to or during the application process.
- 5) Assistance securing capital investments or direct access to capital.
- 6) Assistance with regulatory compliance.
- 7) Assistance in recruitment, training, and retention of a qualified and diverse workforce, including transitional workers.
- 8) Other services deemed by the bureau to be consistent with the intent of this chapter.

Nonprofit Organization – An organization qualified to do business in California in accordance with Section 501(c) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and with the capacity to meet the requirements of this Solicitation and the executed Grant Agreement.

Pre-Application – A brief summary of the proposed project, the team, as well as an estimate of the total project costs, including the amount requested for grant funding. CRGP staff review Pre-Applications based on the eligibility requirements, project objectives, and project priorities.

Project – The scope of work, deliverables, and timeline as described in the Full Proposal.

Public Agency – A California agency or department including public universities, public colleges, special districts, joint power authorities, counties, cities, or other political subdivision of the state (CWC §79702[s]).

Review Criteria – Set of requirements used to evaluate Full Proposals.

Selection Panel – Representatives from CDFW assembled to review and consider the evaluations of Full Proposals and provide initial funding recommendations. Representatives from other agencies and organizations may also be invited to participate on the Selection Panel.

Subcontractor – An entity other than the project proponent/applicant that performs a portion of the Scope of Work and includes subrecipients, sub-awardees, independent contractors, and consultants.

Technical Reviewer – A subject matter expert that serves to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of a proposed project. Technical Reviewers may include representatives from CDFW, other agencies, or other subject matter experts. Individuals selected to serve as technical reviewers are professionals in fields relevant to the proposed project.

Appendix C – State Auditing Requirements

The list below details the documents or records that State Auditors may review in the event a Grant Agreement is audited. Grant recipients should ensure all records are maintained for each state grant funded project. For additional details, including specific audit tasks performed during a bond audit, see the [California Department of Finance Bond Accountability and Audits Guide and the Bond Audit Bulletins](#).

State Audit Document Requirements

Internal Controls:

1. Organizational chart (e.g., grant recipient's overall organizational chart and the organizational chart for the state funded project).
2. Written internal procedures and flowcharts for the following:
 - a. Receipts and deposits
 - b. Disbursements
 - c. State reimbursement requests
 - d. State funding expenditure tracking
 - e. Guidelines, policies, and procedures on the state funded project
3. Audit reports of the grant recipient's internal control structure and financial statements within the last two years.
4. Prior audit reports on state funded projects.

State Funding:

1. Original grant agreement, any amendment(s) and budget modification documents.
2. A list of all bond-funded grants, loans, or subventions received from the state.
3. A list of all other funding sources for each project.

Agreements:

1. All subcontractor and consultant contracts and related documents, if applicable.
2. Agreements between the grant recipient, member agencies, and project partners as related to the state funded project.

Invoices:

1. Invoices from vendors and subcontractors for expenditures submitted to the state for payments under the grant agreement.
2. Documentation linking subcontractor invoices to state reimbursement requests and related grant agreement budget line items.
3. Reimbursement requests submitted to the state for the grant agreement.

Cash Documents:

1. Receipts (copies of warrants) showing payments received from the state.
2. Deposit slips or bank statements showing deposit of the payments received from the state.
3. Cancelled checks or disbursement documents showing payments made to vendors, subcontractors, consultants, or agents under the grant agreement.

Accounting Records:

1. Ledgers showing receipts and cash disbursement entries for state funding.
2. Ledgers showing receipts and cash disbursement entries of other funding sources.
3. Bridging documents that tie the general ledger to reimbursement requests submitted to the state for the grant agreement.

Administration Costs:

1. Supporting documents showing the calculation of administration costs.

Personnel:

1. List of all contractors and grant recipient staff that worked on the state funded project.
2. Payroll records including timesheets for contractor staff and the grant recipient's staff.

Project Files:

1. All supporting documentation maintained in the files.
2. All grant agreement related correspondence.