SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency

Delta Community, Environment, and Climate Grant Program

Funded by the Proposition 4 Climate Bond and remaining funds from other grant programs

Solicitation Notice

Contents

I. Background 2
II. Proposal Submission 3
III. Available Funding 6
IV. Evaluation Criteria 7
V. Contact 9

I. Background

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) is a primary state agency in the implementation of ecosystem restoration in the Sacramento- San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and Suisun Marsh and supports efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents. The Conservancy works collaboratively and in coordination with local communities, leading efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment, for the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of California.

The Delta and Suisun Marsh are unique natural resources of local, state, and national significance, and have a distinct natural and cultural heritage. The Delta is a 1,300-square-mile estuary and one of the largest on the west coast of North and South America. It is home to more than 500,000 people and is a world-class recreational destination. Despite its large size and economic importance, too many Californians cannot access the Delta's outdoor spaces (e.g., open lands, parks, trails, beaches) or the array of museums and cultural and historical sites. While many Delta residents frequently go outside to experience nature, others never have the opportunity. Given this, the state is working to expand all Californians' access to parks, open space, nature, and cultural amenities. In addition to expanding access to outdoors for all, the State has accelerated its response to build climate resilience to extreme and forecasted climatic events (e.g., drought, flood, wildfire, and sea-level rise). Climate resilience actions should support climate smart land management to achieve carbon neutrality, sustain the economy, protect food and water security, and support the state's biodiversity. To support community access and climate resilience, California is committed to conserving 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030. These initiatives are part of a movement to protect natural resources and elevate the role of natural and working lands against climate change and advance biodiversity conservation. In line with the Conservancy's mission and to advance these statewide initiatives, the Conservancy is solicitating for projects that support public access, build climate resilience, and promote natural resource protection in the Delta region.

Goals of the Program

The goal of the Delta Community, Environment and Climate Grant Program is to fund multi-benefit projects in the Delta and Suisun Marsh. The Conservancy is soliciting proposals for three different priorities: Community Enhancement, Nature-Based Solutions, and Ecosystem Restoration.

- Community Enhancement planning and implementation projects will benefit Delta communities through public access, recreation and tourism, historic and cultural preservation, environmental education, and community engagement. Funded projects will provide outdoor access for all, sustain the Delta's heritage, and/or enhance the unique values of the Delta today. Example projects include, but are not limited to, water or hiking trails, sidewalks, bike routes, community parks or picnic sites, public boating infrastructure, visitor centers, kiosks, signage, renovation of

historic buildings for public use, development of cultural relevant historic districts, educational materials for the public about environmental or environmental justice issues, and land acquisition to support community enhancement projects.

- Nature Based Solutions projects will address ongoing subsidence and greenhouse gas emissions occurring on highly organic soils in the Delta and Suisun Marsh, which threaten the region's communities, agriculture, ecosystem, and the State and Federal water projects. Example projects include, but are not limited to, planning and implementation of managed and tidal wetland restoration, crop conversion to paludiculture (e.g., rice, walking wetlands, other wet crops), technical assistance to access the Voluntary Carbon Market or support practice implementation, scientific research, education and outreach on related topics, and land acquisition or easement.

- Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation projects protect the Delta and Suisun Marsh's natural resources, environment, and biodiversity. Funded projects will restore, research, plan, or educate about landscape health and/or reduce the risks of climate change impacts upon natural resources, fish, and wildlife. Example projects include, but are not limited to, planning, education, habitat restoration and enhancement, wetland protection, watershed resilience, land acquisitions, and conservation easements.

All projects funded through the Delta Community, Environment and Climate Program should aim to include multiple benefits as described below in Section IV Evaluation Criteria. Projects may span two or more of the funding priorities listed above.

II. Proposal Submission

The Conservancy's Delta Community, Environment, and Climate Program will have two funding cycles. The first funding cycle will begin in 2026, and the second will begin in 2027. Each cycle will have two rounds with a concept proposal and a full proposal for those invited to the second round. This Grant Solicitation Notice is for cycle one.

The General Grant Guidelines establish the process and criteria that the Conservancy will use for all grant programs. Since individual funding sources may establish additional limitations, requirements, or require additional guidance as mandated per statute, the grant solicitation notice will provide more details. To the extent that there are slight differences between these documents, this grant solicitation notice will have the most relevant information and will supersede the General Grant Guidelines.

The Conservancy will use the General Grant Guidelines and the principles outlined within this Grant Solicitation Notice to select and administer grants. Applicants should review the General Grant Guidelines and the requirements outlined in this Grant Solicitation Notice prior to applying for funds to tailor their applications to the specific funding requirements. In addition, applicants should review the goals of the various policy guidance listed in Section IV Evaluation Criteria below.

Eligible Grant Recipients

The eligible grant recipients under the Proposition 4 Climate Bond include the following:

- State and local public agencies, including special districts, public utilities, local public owned utilities, mutual water companies, and joint powers authorities
- Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status
- Native American Tribes as defined in the Proposition 4 Climate Bond in Public Resources Code Section 90100

While the Proposition 4 Climate Bond funds are the primary funding source for this grant solicitation, there are two additional funding sources included in this solicitation (see Section III Available Funding). Those funding sources have additional restrictions on eligible recipients. Conservancy staff will identify when projects meet the criteria for one of the additional funding sources and may fund projects using these funds if appropriate.

The following section provides a summary of the application and review process.

Concept Proposal

Applicants must submit a concept proposal using the Concept Proposal Application by October 23, 2026. The concept proposal provides a high-level summary of the proposed activities and a budget that will form the basis of a full proposal. Applicants must use the Concept Proposal Application and Instructions (available on the Conservancy website) and submit by email to grants@deltaconservancy.ca.gov

Concept proposals will be reviewed based on the Evaluation Criteria discussed in Section IV below. Once reviewed, Conservancy staff may confer with the applicant to discuss the project concept, request additional information as needed, or discuss next steps. An in-person meeting or a site visit may be necessary. Please refer to the timeline table provided below for specific dates on when feedback and decisions will be finalized.

Viability Assessment

Based on information gathered during the concept proposal stage, along with input from technical experts if needed, Conservancy staff will evaluate the viability of the proposed project and the overall benefit to the Delta by assessing if the proposed project:

- Is technically and financially feasible
- Is likely to provide locally supported benefits to the Delta and Suisun Marsh
- Will significantly advance the Conservancy's priorities
- Is consistent with the grant guidelines and applicable program priorities and goals

Full Proposal

If Conservancy staff determines that a project concept appears to be viable and brings significant benefit to the Delta, Conservancy staff will notify the applicant that they have been chosen to develop the concept proposal into a full proposal.

Applicants should submit a full proposal using the Delta Community, Environment, and Climate Grant Program Application and Instructions. Full proposals must be submitted by February 28, 2027, to: grants@deltaconservancy.ca.gov

Full Proposal Assessment and Board Approval

Conservancy staff will assess each full proposal based on the evaluation criteria and compare the merits of all full proposals received within each priority. Conservancy staff will consult external subject matter or technical experts as needed and reach out to applicants if additional information is needed to assess the proposal. Conservancy staff will present all projects to the Conservancy Board and will recommend projects that advance the program goals (described in Section I) and meet the Evaluation Criteria (described in Section IV) based on information provided in proposals. All final determinations regarding grant funding will be made by the Conservancy Board at a public meeting.

Table 1: Timeline for funding cycle one

Cycle One	**Due Dates**
Proposition 4 Applicant Webinar (recorded for on-demand viewing)	October 1, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Meeting links will be provided on the Delta Conservancy website
Concept Proposal Submission	October 23, 2026
Concept Proposal Review and Discussion with Applicants	October 23 through December 11, 2026
Full Proposal Submission	February 28, 2027
Full Proposal Review	March through June 2027
Board Meeting for Consideration for Award	July and October 2027 Board Meetings

III. Available Funding

The Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding provided the Conservancy with $29 million, and $24,752,000 is available to support grants for the Delta Community, Environment and Climate Program. The Conservancy will conduct two cycles of solicitations for proposals. The first cycle of solicitations will occur in 2026, and the second cycle will occur in 2027. The Conservancy anticipates awarding $15 million in cycle, one. The Conservancy reserved $900,000 for the Small Grants Program (separate grant solicitation notice) and plans to split the remaining $14,100,000 relatively evenly among three priorities: Community Enhancement, Nature-Based Solutions, and Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation projects (approximately $4,700,000 for each priority).

Cycle one will primarily be funded through the Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding but will be combined with remaining funding from other grant programs as needed or desirable to advance the Conservancy's and program goals. The additional funding will come from unspent funds in the Conservancy's other grant programs including Proposition 68 and Climate Access and Resource Programs. Since these grant programs share some of the priorities of the Delta Community, Environment and Climate Program, these funding sources may be available to the proposed projects submitted under this solicitation. Applicants do not need to identify which funding source will be appropriate to their specific project as Conservancy staff will identify when projects meet the criteria for one of these other grant programs. Because there are differences between the funding sources, projects are not guaranteed to be eligible for these additional funding sources.

Funding Sources

Proposition 4, Chaptered on July 5, 2024, SB 867, the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Senate Bill 867 93020(a)(4)) provided the Conservancy with $29 million — $24,752,000 of which now remains for funding proposed projects that reduce the risks of climate change impacts upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increase public access.

Chaptered on October 15, 2017, the Proposition 68 California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Senate Bill 5) provided the conservancy $12 million for projects that enhance Delta communities and keeps them economically strong.

Chaptered on September 6, 2022, the Amended Budget Act of 2022 (Assembly Bill 179, Item 3875-101-0001 of Section 111) provided the Conservancy with $6,125,000 for projects that support climate resilience, community access, and natural resource protection activities (collectively known as Climate, Access, and Resource (CAR) Funding). Of the total, up to $5,818,250 is available for projects.

Additional Funding Information

With rare exceptions, the Conservancy will cap funding amounts based on project type:

- Planning, research, communication, and capacity building grants can be awarded between $100,000 to $750,000.

- Implementation and acquisition grants can be awarded between $100,000 to $2 million.

Consistent with Proposition 4 Climate Bond language, the Conservancy may reimburse grantees for indirect costs based on one of the following criteria:

- The grantee's federally negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA). Applicants must provide documentation of NICRA.

- The federal de minimis indirect cost rate (15 percent as of October 1, 2024).

- A rate negotiated by the grantee with another state agency within the last five years. Applicants must provide documentation to support indirect cost rate calculations.

- If an applicant does not have an existing indirect cost rate, applicants may propose an indirect cost rate for consideration by the Conservancy. Applicants must provide documentation to support indirect cost rate calculations.

Applicants may request reimbursement of indirect costs for the first $50,000 of equipment purchases or subcontractor payments. The Conservancy will not reimburse grantees for indirect costs on acquisition fees or for costs associated with subcontractor markup. Please contact the Conservancy for questions regarding eligible indirect costs.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

Full proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Advances Delta Conservancy, Regional, and State Objectives**
   Does the project advance priorities identified in the following:
   - The Conservancy's mission, governing statute, and 2022-2027 Strategic Plan and the funding priorities identified above in Section 1 under Goals of the Program.
   - The Delta Plan and the Delta Stewardship Council's Science Action Agenda
   - The National Heritage Area Plan
   - State Initiatives, including, but not limited to the following:
     - Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy
     - California's Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets
     - Pathways to 30X30
     - Outdoors for All

    - California Climate Adaptation Strategy
    - California Water Resilience Portfolio
    - Suisun Marsh Habitat Preservation Plan
    - Delta Protection Commission Land Use and Resource Management Plan
- Other relevant local, regional, State, and federal plans

2. **Investment of State Resources**
   Is the project feasible and likely to achieve project goals? Is the budget complete, accurate, fair, reasonable, and justified? Does the project leverage non-state resources (e.g., in-kind services, volunteer hours, donations, local or federal grants)? Does the project team have the skills and expertise to meet the project goals within the funding term? Does the project provide resources in a geographic area(s) that have been underserved by the Delta Conservancy or State, or are considered a disadvantaged or vulnerable community? The State has developed several tools to assist in identifying communities that are vulnerable to climate and that are disadvantaged.
   - The Climate Vulnerability Map is an informational tool developed by the State of California to assist with identifying climate vulnerable communities. The tool can be accessed here: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/652c6def7040429bafe23c38966f8f73/page/Welcome-%26-Regions
   - The Vulnerable Communities Platform was created to identify where climate vulnerabilities and hazards are most severe. The Vulnerable Communities Platform can be accessed here: https://vcp.lci.ca.gov/
   - The Climate Bond Communities Map was developed to assist with the Proposition 4 Grant Program to determine if a project is anticipated to serve a disadvantaged (DAC) and/or severely disadvantaged community (SDAC). The tool can be accessed here: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/aa723fdf521a44c9a428f1a46cd38a09/page/(S)DAC-Communities-Map

3. **Readiness, Resiliency, and Sustainability**
   Does the project demonstrate the readiness of the project to proceed? How quickly and how long will the project provide meaningful benefits? For planning projects, are projects feasible and will planning activities advance the project toward implementation in a timely manner? For implementation projects, how complete is project planning, including the status of CEQA and permitting efforts? What is the status of land tenure? How does the project integrate adaptive management and climate change? Do implementation and acquisition projects have sustainability and funding for long-term operations and maintenance?

4. **Community Engagement and Support**
   Was the community engaged in the visioning of the project? Does the project plan to engage the community throughout planning and implementation? Does the project build trust in the community or change unequal power dynamics? Does the project team reflect the community it serves? Does the project team have a good working relationship within the community? Has the project team made it easy for the community to participate in the project? Has the project team identified, informed, and consulted with all affected parties to avoid, reduce or mitigate conflicts with the community or existing and adjacent land use? Has the project team addressed the Good Neighbor Checklist?

5. **Tribal Engagement**
   Has there been an effort to engage with tribes in the project development or design phase? Does the project include working with tribes to enable traditional stewardship and cultural practices on ancestral lands or co-management of ancestral lands? Does the project include indigenous voices, leadership, perspectives including, traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous stewardship, or education programs? Are tribal concerns respected, and archaeological and cultural resources protected? Does the project acknowledge (e.g., signage, communication) tribal land and accurate historical information?

6. **Merit**
   Does the project have multiple benefits? Does the project protect or enhance significant resources (natural, agricultural, recreational, or tourism)? Does the project have multiple, clear, achievable, and measurable performance metrics? For projects with a scientific component, is the project hypothesis driven and use the best science available and/or use traditional knowledge? Does the project use an innovative approach to address project goals?

7. **Additional Considerations**
   Is the purpose of the project, goals, tasks, schedule, and deliverables clear and compelling? Does the project either possess or have a plan to gain, the knowledge, skills, and expertise to carry out the project?

V. Contact

For more information: http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/grant-program/

If you have questions, please contact the Conservancy at grants@DeltaConservancy.ca.gov or (916) 375-2084.