



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
RESTORATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 07, 2019

TO: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

FROM: Matt Gerhart, Program Manager; Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to the Grant Program Guidelines, Proposal Solicitation, and Grant Application

Staff requests feedback from the Governing Board on proposed revisions to the Grant Program Guidelines, Proposal Solicitation, and Grant Application. The proposed changes will be presented to the Governing Board for adoption at the Authority's September 2019 meeting, which, along with this meeting and the June 2019 Advisory Committee (AC) public meeting, will constitute three opportunities for public comment.

Background

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) adopted amendments to the Grant Guidelines in June 2018. The Grant Guidelines are a summary of the requirements of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act (Restoration Act) and the language included in the San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention, and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA), as well as some explanation of how the Authority will apply them.

The Authority adopted and released an updated Proposal Solicitation and Grant Application for the Measure AA grant program's Round 2 in September 2018. The Solicitation and Application provide additional guidance on project eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Since that time, the Measure AA grant program has gone through two grant cycles. Project proponents submitted applications, staff and members of the AC reviewed applications, staff prepared recommendations, and the Governing Board approved grant awards for Round 1 in April 2018 and February 2019. Staff recommendations for grant Round 2 are being brought to the Governing Board for approval from June through December of 2019.

During the Authority's second grant cycle this past year, staff tracked lessons learned on suggested improvements to the grant program documents. Proposed revisions based on these are shown in the three attached, updated redline versions of the documents.

- Draft Grant Program Guidelines (Attachment 1)
- Draft 2019 Proposal Solicitation (Attachment 2)
- Draft 2019 Grant Application (Attachment 3)

During the past year, staff recognized the need to better serve and engage economically disadvantaged communities, provide more information about beneficial reuse of dredged material in habitat restoration projects as an eligible activity, and capture performance measures in the application. The following sections describe these three issues and provide a brief summary of suggested edits.

1. Key Issues

The three most critical issues that surfaced during the second grant cycle are:

- Equity Improvements to the Grant Program: How can the grant program better serve and engage economically disadvantaged communities?
- Dredging and Beneficial Reuse: How should requests for funding the cost of beneficial reuse of dredged material in habitat restoration projects be evaluated?
- Performance Measures: How can staff improve the efficiency of collecting performance measure data and integrate consideration of performance measures into the review of applications?

Staff proposes to address these issues as described below.

Equity Improvements

The Governing Board and the AC have both expressed a strong commitment to achieving the Measure AA goal of prioritizing projects that benefit economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs). Staff hired an equity consultant to assist staff and the AC in gathering more input from community representatives in EDCs and other equity experts. The consultant worked with AC to frame the issues and conducted several interviews with community-based equity experts and AC members. She will be conducting focus groups and completing a report over the summer. Staff looks forward to working with the AC to use the consultant's report to develop a comprehensive recommendation on equity improvements by the end of this year. This recommendation is expected to include actions that can be initiated in early 2020, as well as changes to the grant program that will affect Grant Round 4 in the fall of 2020. For Round 3, staff has proposed extending the application due date to give applicants more time, as suggested by equity experts, and adding references to tips for meaningful community engagement, as described below.

Beneficial Reuse of Dredge Material in Restoration Projects

The Authority received several applications in Round 1 and one application in Round 2 for funding some or all of the cost of bringing dredged material to subsidized restoration sites, but reviewers encountered difficulty in interpreting a series of issues related to the efficacy, suitable costs, and eventual benefits of these proposals. The staff recommends adding guidance for such

projects to the Grant Program Guidelines, including clarifying the need for an application to be tied to a specific restoration site and describe the ecological benefits of using the dredged material on that site.

Performance Measures

Although Measure AA does not require reporting on performance measures, staff implemented the AC recommendations on performance measures when developing the annual report for FY 2017-18, which we presented to the Governing Board at the February 2019 meeting. During the preparation of the annual report, staff realized that it would be more efficient to use the application to collect performance measure data, rather than contacting grantees later to request the data. Therefore, staff recommends adding several additional fields to the application. This has the added benefit of enabling application reviewers to take performance measure data into consideration. During application review, performance measure data will be considered in the context of the project purpose and will not directly influence scoring.

2. Summary of Proposed Edits

Proposed Edits to the Grant Program Guidelines:

- Adjusted release date.
- Added reference to the State Coastal Conservancy's *Tips for Meaningful Community Engagement*.
- Added information about beneficial use of dredged sediment in habitat restoration projects as an eligible project activity.
- Added an explanation of the Authority's use of performance measures, including performance measure data collection in the grant application.
- Moved the information about mitigation project eligibility from "Greatest Positive Impact" section to the section on additional eligibility considerations.

Proposed Edits to the Proposal Solicitation:

- Extended the time period from the release of grant program materials to the application due date from two to three months.
- Added reference to the State Coastal Conservancy's *Tips for Meaningful Community Engagement*.
- Added reference to information about beneficial use of dredged sediment in habitat restoration projects as an eligible project activity.
- Added instructions related to providing performance measure data in the application.

Proposed Edits to the Grant Application:

- Adjusted release and due dates.
- Changed the Project Type box to Measure AA Program Areas
- Added the following boxes to collect performance measure data:
 - Acres of subtidal habitat to be restored
 - Acres of baylands habitat to be restored
 - Acres of upland habitat to be restored
 - Miles of Bay Trail expected to be designed
 - Miles of Bay Trail expected to be constructed

- Miles of other trail expected to be designed (non-Bay Trail)
- Miles of other trail expected to be constructed (non-Bay Trail)
- Number of Water Trail sites expected to be designed
- Number of Water Trail sites expected to be constructed
- Species targeted for restoration
- Number of youth expected to be engaged
- Number of public access facilities expected to be completed
- Number of volunteer hours expected to be contributed
- Number of unique volunteers expected to participate in restoration

Next Steps

Staff expects to further refine these proposed amendments based on Governing Board and Advisory Committee input and present a proposed final version for adoption at the Authority's September meeting.

Attachments

1. Proposed Revisions to the Grant Program Guidelines (Redline Version)
2. Proposed Revisions to the Proposal Solicitation (Redline Version)
3. Proposed Revisions to the Application Form (Redline Version)