SAN FRANCISCO BAY
RESTORATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2026

TO: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

FROM: Linda Tong, Deputy Program Manager
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San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

SUBJECT: Review of Round 9 (FY2025-26) Grant Process and
Authorization to Release Round 10 (FY2026-27) Grant Round Materials

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) authorize the release of the 2026 Grant Round Materials: Request for Proposals (RFP), Pre-Application, and Grant Application. These documents have much of the same content as the 2025 Grant Round materials but include clarifying edits and formatting changes.

Background

The Authority issued RFPs annually from 2017 to 2021 for Grant Rounds 1 through 5. Grant Round 5 included an unusually large total funding request of approximately $56 million for 18 projects. Instead of issuing a Request for Proposals in 2022 for Grant Round 6, the Authority relied on the 2021 Round 5 list of projects when developing a list of projects to recommend in Grant Round 6, in accordance with Resolution No. 97. The Authority returned to an annual RFP in 2023 for Grant Round 7. For 2025, the Grant Round 9 materials followed a similar template to those released in previous years.

Review of Round 9 (FY2025-26) Grant Process

For last year's Grant Round 9, as with each year after the RFP is released, applicants are encouraged to submit a Pre-Application, which initiates scheduling a project consultation meeting with staff. At these consultations, staff learn about the proposed projects and provide feedback on eligibility and points to emphasize in their application to be a competitive project. Meanwhile, staff recruits members of the Advisory Committee to serve as reviewers in the fall. Following the October deadline, key staff vet the applications for eligibility before assigning them for review. After receiving training on application scoring, AC members and staff are assigned to review applications; each application is reviewed by at least two AC members, one senior project manager, and one project manager. Reviewers score projects quantitatively on how well they implement the programs of Measure AA, meet the prioritization criteria, have a likelihood of success, then qualitatively by strengths, weaknesses, and follow-up questions. The quantitative scores correlate to ranges of high, medium, and low ranked proposals. The

qualitative comments inform follow-up discussions with reviewers and staff to create an initial recommended project list, generally drawn from the high and medium ranked proposals. Those applicants are sent the reviewers' follow-up questions to further inform staff's final recommended list, which also takes into consideration budget availability, campaign goals, regional goals, and equity goals.

For this year's Grant Round 10, staff plan to follow the same standards for a robust grant review process. Staff are also exploring ways to provide additional resources for reviewers to evaluate grant applications, based on feedback from Advisory Committee members.

Summary of Proposed Edits for Round 10 (FY2026-27) Grant Round Materials

(Redlined versions are attached to this memo as Attachments 1, 2 and 3.)

Proposed Edits to the RFP:

- Update the dates for the grant application timeline and process.
- Update the deadline to include "by midnight" to provide clarity for applicants.
- **Section V. Grant Application Review and Evaluation, F. Grant Agreement**: Remove requirement to list the Authority as "additional insured" as this is no longer a requirement for insurance coverage within the grant agreement.
- **Appendix D. Definitions and Clarifications of Eligibility Criteria:** Provide an additional link to map resources for eligible project locations. Provide additional guidance on the permissible use of mitigation funds for Authority-funded projects.

Proposed Edits to the Pre-Application:

- Add a checkbox for applicant to indicate whether they have spoken to San Francisco Bay Trail or Water Trail staff if their proposed project will overlap with existing or future trail alignments. This is to ensure that Bay Trail and Water Trail staff have early consultation and to prevent future project delays and costs due to miscommunication.

Proposed Edits to the Grant Application:

- **Section 1: Project Description, Question 11**: Ask applicant to list proposed public access facilities to be constructed and to indicate whether they have spoken to San Francisco Bay Trail or Water Trail staff if their proposed project will overlap with existing or future trail alignments and the outcome of those conversations.
- **Section 3: Prioritization Criteria, Question 4**: Provide examples of how a project may benefit an Economically Disadvantaged Community, including goal categories from the Equity Guidelines. This will help reviewers understand which benefits a project will provide and will make it easier to track these benefits in the Lessons Learned report for funded projects.
- **Grant Application Checklist**: Specify that the cover sheet must be submitted in PDF format and the budget must be submitted in Excel format, to minimize back and forth after the applications are submitted. There is also a new checkbox indicating that the applicant understands their project may be considered for partial funding, which will minimize back and forth during the review process.

- Update the deadline to include “by midnight” to provide clarity for applicants.

Recommendation
Staff recommends the Authority adopt Resolution 144, authorizing the release of the 2026 Grant Round Materials: Request for Proposals, Grant Pre-Application, and Grant Application.