Clean California Local Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

Application Process

Q1: What is needed from applicants on the date of the Call for Projects?

A. No action is needed from applicants on the date of the Call for Projects; that is just the day that the final guidelines and application materials will be published and posted online. Applications will be due on April 28, 2023, at 5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (PDT).

Q2: How would you define a "project"?

A. A project can include multiple elements such as infrastructure and non-infrastructure elements, as well as multiple locations. For example, one project may include installation of lighting, litter abatement, and painting of a mural in different parts of a community or in one location. All elements of a project must be described in one application.

Q3: Can I submit multiple projects in one application?

A. Only one project can be described in an application. However, one project can contain more than one project element and can include both infrastructure and non-infrastructure elements. One project can also contain multiple locations. One way to help determine what your "project" is if you have several project elements or locations is to consider which project elements you would include together in one application's cost proposal. Those project elements make up your project. We recommend bundling project elements into one project application as much as it makes sense to do.

Q4: Can an agency submit multiple applications?

A. Yes. There is no limit to the number of applications an agency or applicant can submit. Also, multiple departments within one agency can submit separate applications. However, if an applicant submits more than one application, they will be asked to rank these applications based on their priority to the community, to help ensure that the CCLGP team awards funds to the projects that are most important to applicants.

Q5: Do I need to submit a Local Agency or Tribal Council Resolution for my project with my application?

A. A Local Agency or Tribal Council Resolution is not required to be submitted with an application. If the application is awarded funding, then a resolution will be required to execute the grant agreement between the awardee and Caltrans. Though not required at the time of application submittal, applicants may want to consider including a resolution that authorizes the submission of the application and authorizes execution of the grant agreement if the grant is awarded. This may save awardees time in executing the grant agreement. If an applicant decides to include this with their application, they should include the resolution in the "Other Materials" attachment. More details on attachments are included in the Application Instructions on the CCLGP website.

Q6: Is there a maximum and minimum amount each agency/applicant can apply for?

A. The maximum grant amount request is $5 million per application. Applications that request $3 million or less may be more competitive in Cycle 2 due to this program's tight project delivery deadline and the

increased likelihood of smaller projects to meet that deadline. There is no minimum amount that an agency can apply for.

Q7: Will my agency need a Smartsheets license to submit the application?

A. No.

Q8: Can I consult with Caltrans on whether my application is eligible or competitive?

A. Caltrans can provide clarification on program requirements and objectives, such as the program guidelines. We can also provide information on Caltrans procedures that may affect certain project timelines, such as the Caltrans encroachment permit process or process for art projects on Caltrans right of way. In addition, we can share our lessons learned on Caltrans projects that are similar to the applicant's project.

However, we cannot consult with an applicant on whether a specific project is eligible or competitive. This ensures that Caltrans is neutral and impartial when evaluating applications, and that all applicants have received similar guidance on completing their application. To determine if your project is eligible or competitive, please refer to the sections in the program guidelines called "Eligibility", "Scoring Criteria", and "Other Selection Considerations".

Q9: How do maintenance agreements with artists work?

A. If a project off of Caltrans right-of-way contains artwork, then the primary applicant should either obtain a copyright license from the artist in order to maintain that artwork after it is complete, or the primary applicant should enter into an agreement with the artist, through which the artist agrees to maintain the artwork themselves. In either situation, the artist should be consulted on the types of tasks that need to be done to maintain the art (e.g., applying an anti-graffiti coating to a mural). Artwork should be maintained for the life of the art piece.

Note that art projects on Caltrans right-of-way should complete and abide by Caltrans' Transportation Art Process, which includes developing a maintenance strategy for the project. See Caltrans' Transportation Art Guidelines for Local Agencies for details. Gateway Monuments and

[Community Identification](#) projects on Caltrans right-of-way entail separate processes and requirements.

Q10: What are our options if my agency is applying for an infrastructure project, doesn't have a licensed engineer on staff to sign off on the Engineer's Estimate in the Scope of Work, Cost, and Schedule workbook, and we don't have the funds to hire a licensed engineer just to complete the Engineer's Estimate?

A. Typically, licensed engineers review and sign off on Engineer's Estimates to ensure that the costs are reasonable. However, if your agency doesn't have a licensed engineer to do this at the time of application, a licensed architect or landscape architect could sign the Engineer's Estimate instead, assuming that your project's scope of work relates to the expertise of one of these licensed professionals. If your agency does not have access to a licensed engineer, architect, or landscape architect at the time of application, the person who signs the Application Checklist can sign the Engineer's Estimate and leave the license number field blank. However, if the project is awarded, your agency should still procure the appropriate professionals to implement your project. Also note that the CCLGP does not support cost increases or time extensions. If a licensed professional does not review the Engineer's Estimate and the costs were underestimated, the CCLGP will not have any funds to cover these unexpected cost increases after the grant is awarded.

Award Process and Administrative Requirements

Q11: Is it possible for the same agency to be awarded multiple grants?

A. Yes.

Q12: Will CCLGP projects fall under the Division of Local Assistance's Master Agreement?

A. The Master Agreement/Program Supplement process will not be used for this program. Awardees will need to execute a Restricted Grant Agreement (RGA) with Caltrans. A template of the Restricted Grant Agreement is available on the CCLGP website.

Q13: Will there be future rounds for this grant?

A. Currently the legislature identified a one-time budget increase of approximately $100 million for Cycle 2 of the CCLGP.

Q14: How quickly does Caltrans typically pay invoices?

A. Invoicing for the CCLGP largely aligns with [Chapter 5 of Caltrans' Local Assistance Procedures Manual (LAPM)](#), which states that invoices from an awardee are routinely processed for payment within 45 days after Caltrans receives a complete and accurate invoice. Caltrans has 30 days to review the invoice and the State Controller's Office (SCO) issues payments within 15 days after receiving the claim from Caltrans. See Chapter 5 of the LAPM for more details.

Grant recipients must submit invoices on a regular and timely basis. This is no more frequently than monthly and no less frequently than every six months for projects not requesting advance payments. Invoicing must occur monthly for projects requesting advance payments.

Competitive Projects

Q15: Are agencies who were awarded funds in Cycle 1 just as competitive as in Cycle 2?

A. Yes.

Q16: How can I make my application competitive?

A. Please see the "Scoring Criteria" and "Other Selection Considerations" sections of the program guidelines on our website. Projects that substantively meet the majority of the program goals will be more competitive.

Q17: Are projects with infrastructure elements more competitive than projects with non-infrastructure elements?

A. Projects that meet the majority of the program goals and have lasting, transformative benefits for the community are most competitive.

Q18: Are projects with a higher local match requirement more competitive?

A. The amount of the required local match, above the required minimum, is not considered in the awardee selection process.

Q19: Is a project more competitive if it's adjacent to or on Caltrans property?

A. The CCLGP program is intended to beautify and improve public spaces in local communities that meet the program's goals and objectives. If a

project that meets the program's goals and objectives is on or near Caltrans property, it is an eligible project. However the applicant should be certain that it can complete the Caltrans encroachment permit process and any other Caltrans requirements to deliver the project, on or before the June 30, 2026 project delivery deadline. See the section "Scope, Cost, and Schedule" in the program guidelines for considerations when building a project schedule, particularly if the project encroaches onto Caltrans right of way.

Eligible Applicants

Q20: Who is an eligible applicant?

A. The applicant must be a local or regional public agency, transit agency, or federally recognized tribal government. Nonprofit organizations may partner with eligible applicants, as sub-applicants only.

Q21: Are school districts, special districts, Metropolitan Transit Agencies (MTA), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), or Joint Powers Authorities (JPA) eligible applicants?

A. The applicant must be a local or regional public agency, transit agency, or federally recognized tribal government. If it is unclear which of those categories your agency falls under or whether your agency is considered a "public agency", please consult your agency's enacting documents.

Q22: Who can be a sub-applicant?

A. Usually, sub-applicants are other public agencies, nonprofits, or Federally Recognized Tribes that contribute funds or project development work such as project management, design, contract administration, volunteers for a project, or in-kind contributions. The work they provide must add value to the project in some way. Sub-applicants are not typically consultants or contractors that are performing work for hire.

Q23: Is there a limit to the number of sub-applicants that can be included in an application?

A. No.

Q24: Can awardees from Cycle 1 apply for Cycle 2?

A. Yes, however the application must be for a new project. Cycle 1 awardees cannot apply to Cycle 2 to fund cost overruns for their Cycle 1 projects.

Q25: If our agency was not awarded in Cycle 1 but still needs funding for the same project, can we resubmit an application for the same project with updated information?

A. Yes, as long as the project meets the updated criteria and requirements described in the new guidelines on the CCLGP website, which is: https://cleancalifornia.dot.ca.gov/local-grants/local-grant-program.

Eligible Expenditures and Activities

Q26: Are renewable and clean energy technologies considered an eligible activity?

A. This may be an eligible item if it meets the majority of the goals and objectives of the program and can be completed by June 30, 2026.

Q27: Is graffiti abatement considered an eligible activity?

A. This may be an eligible activity if it meets the majority of the goals and objectives of the program, and the activities can be completed by June 30, 2026.

Q28: Is maintenance an eligible activity?

A. Maintenance of a project improvement is a reimbursable expense if it occurs prior to June 30, 2026.

Q29: Can funds only be used towards construction or implementation expenses, or can they also be used for pre-construction activities such as design and environmental review?

A. Funds can be used for pre-construction activities however the most competitive projects will have minimal pre-construction activities and will be close to shovel ready at time of application. The phrase "shovel ready" usually means the project is at 100% design.

Q30: Are staff salaries of those working directly on the project an eligible expense?

A. Yes. Also, staff time from the primary applicant can be counted as cash match. See the "Local Match Sources" section of the program guidelines for details. However, if indirect costs are included in local agency staff charges, agencies must have an approved indirect cost rate to be eligible for indirect cost reimbursement. See the Caltrans Internal Audits Office (CIAO) website for details.

Q31: The guidelines state that art installations should not include symbols, icons, or text. Are symbols, icons, or text such as the logo of a public agency and the name of a community okay to include in art installations?

A. For art installations off Caltrans right-of-way, symbols, icons, or text are acceptable in the installations if they are for placemaking purposes and not political or commercial purposes. For instance, it is acceptable to put text stating the name of a community and an official logo or slogan of the community on an art installation. It is also acceptable to have the artist's signature and sponsor recognition on the installation in discreet locations.

  For art installations on Caltrans right-of-way, refer to Caltrans' Transportation Art Process and Caltrans' Transportation Art Guidelines for Local Agencies. Gateway Monuments and Community Identification projects on Caltrans right-of-way entail separate processes and requirements.

Q32: Do project sites need to be fully accessible to the public at all times to be eligible? For instance, would a site that is only open for certain hours or that charges an entrance fee be eligible?

A. A project site should be accessible to the general public to be eligible for the CCLGP. In general, sites on private property or members-only sites (e.g., private golf courses or country clubs) are not eligible for the CCLGP. See "Eligible Project Area" in the program guidelines for more details.

  Sites that are *fully* accessible to the general public are more competitive than sites that are *partially* accessible to the general public (e.g., only open for limited hours and charge an entrance fee).

Funding

Q33: Can a project that has already received funding from another program apply for additional funding with this grant?

A. CCLGP funds cannot be used to supplant existing funds, which means you cannot substitute committed funds with CCLGP funds. However, if the project is adding scope or has an unfunded portion of the scope, that portion of the project may be eligible for CCLGP funding. If other grant funding is used, the agency must ensure that it complies with all the laws, regulations, and guidelines from the other grant program in addition to the CCLGP requirements.

Q34: Can funding be used to support smaller components of a larger project that exceeds $5 million?

A. CCLGP funds cannot supplant other funds. However, if the proposed smaller components meet the goals and objectives of the program and are not already funded by another program, they may be eligible. The smaller components must meet the program objectives, requirements and be completed and open to the public by June 30, 2026.

Q35: Does this program involve federal money?

A. No. The CCLGP is 100% state funded.

Q36: Do projects require California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocation of funds?

A. Funds for the CCLPG are not allocated through the CTC. Project funds become available for expenditure once the Restricted Grant Agreement is executed between the Awardee and Caltrans, and the Awardee receives a Notice to Proceed letter from Caltrans.

Q37: Is the $5 million maximum per grant application or per Agency?

A. The $5 million maximum is per grant application. Agencies can submit multiple applications and may receive multiple awards if several of their applications are competitive. For Cycle 2, applications that request $3 million or less may be more competitive due to this program's tight project delivery deadline and the increased likelihood of smaller projects to meet that deadline.

Q38: Is there a rural/urban or Caltrans District specific distribution for the grant awards?

A. There is no pre-calculated geographic or District level split for how grant awards will be distributed. The CCLGP is a state-wide competition and awards will be offered to the most competitive applications.

Local Match

Q39: If a Federally Recognized Tribe is a sub-applicant, does that still qualify the project for a 0% local match?

A. Yes, if the project work is on tribal land.

Q40: Is required local match determined by the disadvantage of the agency or the project location?

A. The local match requirement is determined by the disadvantage of community surrounding the project location. The required local match will decrease as the disadvantage of the community increases. See the section "Local Match Requirement" in the guidelines for details.

Q41: Is the local match requirement based on the entire project cost or the grant amount request?

A. The minimum local match requirement is based on the grant amount request. Applicants will be held responsible for any local commitments at or above their minimum local match requirement as part of their grant agreement with Caltrans.

Q42: Can funds from other grant programs, including grant programs from other agencies, be used to meet the local match requirement?

A. The CCLGP guidelines do not prohibit using funds from other programs to satisfy the local match requirement, however, they do prohibit the supplanting of funds.

   If you are considering using State, Federal, or CTC programmed funds towards the local match requirement, note that you need to comply with those programs' requirements, which can be numerous. For instance, Federal and CTC programmed funds will be subject to requirements such

as fund authorization/allocation processes, NEPA, Buy America, DBE, and the Federal prevailing wage.

To use other programmed funds, you need to demonstrate that they are available and committed for this project at time of application submittal, and that leveraging these funds would not adversely impact the project delivery deadline of 6/30/2026.

Similarly, the CCLGP guidelines do not prohibit using CCLGP funds to meet local match requirements for other grant programs, but they do prohibit the supplanting of funds. While this is possible, it might be very difficult to use CCLGP funds to meet another program's match requirements and deliver the project by the June 30, 2026 project delivery deadline. In the Narrative, it must be explained how the project will still be delivered on-time. Information must also be provided about the project that CCLGP funds are being used to meet the local match requirement for. In addition, the other grant program must allow the use of CCLGP funds to satisfy their local match requirement. Finally, the project must align with all the goals and objectives of the CCLGP, as described in the program guidelines.

Q43: If my project site is large, do I determine the 1/2-mile buffer from the perimeter of my project site or from one point within the site?

A. Determine the "buffer" based on the project perimeter.

Q44: When determining local match, does the same Severity of Disadvantage (SOD) option/definition need to be used for all census tracts?

A. Yes. While you may investigate all the options to see which serves you best, you must ultimately choose one option and use it throughout your calculations.

Q45: If my project is an educational or outreach campaign with no physical improvements (e.g., a social media campaign), how do I determine local match?

A. Determine the area targeted by the campaign and complete the Local Match Calculation Form using those census tracts.

Q46: Does the underserved community option that I use to complete the Local Match Calculation Form need to match the underserved community option I use to complete the Area Surrounding the Project Site and Relative Population Benefit to Underserved Communities Form?

A. Yes.

Q47: Can non-participating/ineligible expenses count towards local match?

A. No.

Q48: If I am using Option 3, National School Lunch Program, to calculate my local match requirement and complete the form "Area Surrounding the Project Site and Relative Population Benefit to Underserved Communities," should I include private schools that fall within a half mile buffer of my project site(s) in my calculations?

A. The Free and Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) data that you will use to determine your local match requirement and complete the form "Area Surrounding the Project Site and Relative Population Benefit to Underserved Communities" under Option 3 only includes public schools. However, note that public schools include schools such as charter schools, Alternative Schools of Choice, and Opportunity Schools, that some might assume from their classification are private schools. To be sure whether to include a school in your calculations, check whether it is included in the FRPM data, and if it is, include it in your calculations.

Permits and Clearances

Q49: Where can I get information about the Caltrans encroachment permit process?

A. Please visit the following website for information on the Caltrans encroachment permit process: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep. If you think your project might require an encroachment permit, we encourage you to reach out to your local Caltrans Encroachment Permit Office as soon as possible, as the encroachment permit process can take some time.

Q50: Are permits or approvals needed for art projects on Caltrans property?

A. Yes. In addition to the Caltrans encroachment permit process (see above question), art projects, including monument signs, on Caltrans right-of-way also need to complete and abide by the Caltrans Transportation Art Process. This includes:

- Separate approval by the Caltrans Transportation Art program.
- Artwork ownership, including copyrights, assigned to Caltrans, with rights licensed back to the artist.
- Waiver of moral rights (California Civil Code § 987).
- Adhering to Transportation Art content restrictions.
- Maintenance plan/funding (i.e., graffiti abatement).

See Caltrans' Transportation Art Guidelines for Local Agencies and the Transportation Art Proposal for details. Gateway Monuments and Community Identification projects on Caltrans right-of-way entail separate processes and requirements.

Q51: Do we need to obtain all permits and approvals for the project prior to submitting the application?

A. No, however projects that can clearly be completed by the project delivery date of June 30, 2026, and have minimal permits and approvals left to obtain at time of application will be more competitive. See "Other Selection Considerations" in the program guidelines for details.

Q52: Will CEQA Environmental Review be required?

A. CEQA requirements are not waived for this program. Ideally the CEQA process would either be complete before application submittal or not applicable to the project.

Public Engagement

Q53: Does public engagement need to be complete before the application is submitted?

A. The application must demonstrate that the project was identified through a public engagement process. That process needs to be explained in the Narrative portion of the application, which is submitted as Attachment A of the application. More information can be found in the section, "1.

Narrative," of the Guidelines on the [CCLGP website](). A template of the Narrative is available on our website.

Q54: Do we need to do new community engagement for our project, or can we use the results of past community engagement events or needs assessments related to our proposed project to satisfy our engagement requirement?

A. New community engagement does not need to be conducted if past engagement was related to the applicant's project, reflects community priorities and is consistent with local or regional plans. Examples of these plans are general plans, specific plans, bicycle and/or pedestrian plans, and complete street plans. The applicant's project should also align with the public outreach that occurred before or during the preparation of these plans. The more specific the public engagement relates to your project, the more competitive your application will be.

Q55: What is the expectation for public engagement for this program considering COVID-19?

A. In-person engagement events are not required. Online engagement activities such as online workshops and surveys that follow locally approved community engagement polices are acceptable forms of community engagement.

Q56: How do I find volunteers for my project?

A. California Volunteers is an excellent resource for finding volunteers. Please visit the following link for more information: https://www.californiavolunteers.ca.gov/.

Q57: Would the public engagement portion of the project that occurred prior to the application submittal be considered an eligible expenditure?

A. Any work performed prior to the execution of the grant agreement and receipt of the Notice to Proceed is ineligible for reimbursement.

Timeline and Deadlines

Q58: Can we spend local match funds after the June 30, 2026, deadline?

A. All implementation or project funds must be expended by June 30, 2026. Caltrans will reimburse for actual close out costs incurred by the awardee

through November 1, 2026 (which, in total, shall not exceed 5% of the total grant award).

Q59: Can the June 30, 2026, project delivery deadline be extended?

A. Funding for this program will revert, therefore the project delivery deadline cannot be extended. It is essential that project schedules account for each step of the project delivery process, not just the desired project start and end dates. Schedules should account for:

- Date of the awardee announcement (which is currently August/September 2023)
- Time to get a Local Agency Council or Tribal resolution, which is required for the grant agreement package
- Time to execute a grant agreement with Caltrans (on average approximately 6 months)
- Time for Caltrans to issue a Notice to Proceed project work after the agreement is executed (approximately 1 week)
- Time for bidding and obtaining subcontractors
- Time for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals. If your project is on Caltrans right of way, it may need an [encroachment permit](#) and a maintenance agreement.

See the Scope, Cost, and Schedule section in the guidelines on our website for information on considerations when building a realistic project schedule.

Q60: If the project is a component of a larger project and the component is completed by the June 30, 2026, deadline, but the larger project is not completed by that deadline, can our agency still apply to this program to fund the smaller component?

A. Yes, as long as the larger project does not need to be complete for the smaller component to be functional or operational and open to the public.

Underserved Communities

Q61: If our agency is not underserved or disadvantaged, can we still apply?

A. Yes, projects that directly benefit underserved communities are competitive, regardless of the agency's status. See the below FAQ and

the section "Underserved Communities" in the guidelines for additional details.

Q62: Is the grant only for projects located in underserved communities?

A. Eligible project sites must be partially or fully located in an underserved community, AND at least 75% of the population surrounding the project site(s) must be underserved. See the section Underserved Communities in the guidelines for information on definitions of underserved communities.

Q63: Does an applicant need to meet all definitions of an underserved community to be considered underserved, or just one?

A. Just one definition. If the community surrounding the project is considered underserved based on more than one definition, the agency should choose the definition that best supports the community's status as underserved.

Miscellaneous

Q64: Will signs notifying the public that this is a Clean CA project be required?

A. There are no sign requirements for this program.

Q65: Will Right-of-Way (RW) Certification be required?

A. All infrastructure projects will need RW Certification. If the project is not on Caltrans RW, RW can be self-certified by the applicant. Applicants will be asked to provide a copy of their RW certification document.

Q66: Which project elements are considered "infrastructure" elements?

A. While some project elements, such as education campaigns, are clearly not infrastructure, it is not as clear whether other elements (e.g., murals) are infrastructure or non-infrastructure.

This determination may be based on where and how the item is being placed or installed. As an example, the Local Assistance Procedure Manual (LAPM) defines non-infrastructure as: "transportation-related projects that will NOT involve engineering design, right of way acquisition, and the eventual physical construction of transportation facilities." Non-infrastructure projects also typically don't involve breaking ground. Thus, if

an art project requires any of those processes, it may require additional considerations that normally apply to infrastructure projects, per Caltrans' definition of non-infrastructure.

In sum, please work with your agency's engineers and follow your agency's applicable laws, regulations, and policies to determine whether a project element should be considered infrastructure or non-infrastructure.