

Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)

Community Grant Program Policy

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Governance. The Board of Directors (“Board”) for the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (“District”) consists of five members (“Director”) of the Board. As the governing body of the District, the Board reviews and approves District policies. The Board may choose to delegate responsibility for policy administration to the District’s Executive Director (“ED”), including but not limited to the development of procedures and internal controls to implement the policy.

Purpose of the Policy. As part of its commitment to conservation of natural resources within the region, the District provides community grants for outside projects and programs to assist the District in meeting its Long Range Plan’s goals. This policy will guide the granting of funds in order to provide for a transparent and equitable process.

Policy Revisions. The Board reviews its policies annually. Any Director or the ED may make recommendations for changes to a policy at any time, but all policy changes require approval by the Board.

Statement of Non-Discrimination. The District contracts on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, political affiliation or beliefs, sex, age, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status or pregnancy (as those terms are defined by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act -- Government Code Section 12900-12996). Additionally, the Board has adopted a Statement of Diversity and Inclusion to ensure diversity and environmental justice are key components of the District’s strategic planning and programmatic work.

II. GRANT FUNDING

Grantee Eligibility. Grantees shall be based within Santa Clara County, unless the Board makes a finding during the grant award process that the grantee has an established history of operating programs or conducting research that directly benefits District watersheds or constituents.

Eligible grantees are:

- Nonprofit organizations and educational institutions certified as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and classified as “not a private foundation” under Section 509(a).

- Charitable organizations that do not have tax exempt status but have an eligible nonprofit organization serving as its fiscal sponsor. Organizations that have completed and filed Form 1023 but not yet received an IRS determination letter must use a fiscal sponsor until the IRS determines they qualify for nonprofit status.
- Federal, state, regional or local government agencies.
- Native American tribal governments.

The District does not fund individuals, fundraising activities; debt reduction; sectarian religious activities; political lobbying or legislative activities; or institutions that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, or sexual orientation in policy or in practice.

Project Eligibility. Grant-funded projects shall provide a benefit to District watersheds or constituents. Applications shall demonstrate how the project will assist the District in meeting the goals and strategies identified in the District’s current Long Range Plan.

Allocation of Funding. During the annual budget process, the Board will determine the maximum funding to be allocated to the grant program for the duration of the fiscal year; the number and timing of grant cycles; and how the allocation will be split between funding cycles. The Board is not precluded from revising the overall or cyclical funding allocation during the fiscal year based upon changing budget, program or other District requirements.

Grant Match. Applicants must demonstrate in the application how they will meet the match requirement, if one has been established for the grant cycle. Applicants may use District grant funding to leverage additional funds from other agencies or foundations provided that the intent to use District funds as match is included in the application for consideration in the grant process.

Maximum Grant Amount. The maximum grant amount will be set by the Board during its annual budget process. The Board may waive the annual cap on a case-by-case basis based upon the merit of the proposed grant application.

III. GRANT PROCESS

Public Notice. Information regarding opening and closing dates for grant cycles shall be posted on the District website after the annual budget has been approved. The website shall also include links to the District’s Community Grant Program Policy and the application form to be used to apply for funding.

Applications. The ED shall be responsible for development and implementation of the grant program, including the creation of guidelines, forms and screening tools. The grant review process will be conducted as follows:

- The ED shall screen the application for grantee eligibility. Those deemed eligible will move to the next step in the process. Those deemed ineligible will be returned to the applicant with a letter of explanation. Any applicant deemed ineligible by the ED

during the initial screening process has the right to appeal that determination to the Board.

- If the grant is deemed eligible, the ED will designate volunteers to review the applications for project eligibility. Directors may serve as reviewers provided that no more than two (2) Directors participate throughout any designated funding cycle. Associate Directors may also serve as reviewers. Reviewers will perform their review confidentially, independently, and without consultation with each other.
- Once the application review is complete, the ED will compile the results, rank the grant applications, and prepare recommendations for the Board to consider for funding.
- Projects that demonstrate a direct benefit to Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) populations or include a project component to address systemic racism in the governmental, environmental, or scientific communities will be eligible for additional points in the rating process.

Board Review and Selection. The Board shall consider applications for grant funding at a regular or special Board meeting. Eligible applicants will be notified of the Board date and time so they can participate in the meeting. The Board will select for available funding the applications it believes are best suited to help meet the goals of the District. The Board may reject any and all proposals received.

IV. GRANT AWARD

Funding Agreement. Grantees are required to enter into a funding agreement with the District as a condition of the grant award. The ED shall be responsible for developing the agreement's scope of work to match the grant proposal, and shall be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the District. No funding shall be disbursed until a completed and signed funding agreement is in place.

Funding Advances. Funding shall be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Unless specifically allowed by the Board's motion, advances on grant funding are not allowed.

District Recognition. Grantees shall be required through their agreement with the District to provide recognition of the grant award on location, on marketing materials, on their website, and/or through their social media accounts, depending on the specific situation.

Reports. Grantees shall be required to file written reports of grant activities, as determined by the ED and in accordance with the terms of their agreement.

Amendments to the Agreement. The ED is authorized to make non-substantial changes to the scope of work, dates of completion, and/or line item detail of the budget. Requests for additional funding, advances, or substantial changes in scope of work from the original application shall require approval by the Board.

V. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Public Information. For purposes of transparency and accountability, all successfully-awarded grants shall be posted on the District’s website, and include the name of the applicant, the purpose of the grant, and the amount of funding. Applications and their supporting documents shall be considered public documents; individual review sheets shall not include reviewer names or other identifying information.

Insurance Requirements. Insurance, bonding, and other requirements to protect the District from potential liability shall be set forth as appropriate for each grant award in the funding agreement.
Policy Change Log:

Date	Action
01/11/2016	Board adopted the initial policy.
07/15/2020	Board adopted an amended policy.