



WHALE TAIL[®] Grants Application Walk-Through



It will be helpful to have the guidelines and application available during the presentation. Find them at coastal.ca.gov/whaletailgrant

Thank you for your interest in the Whale Tail Grants! We're very happy to have you with us today, and hopefully after this presentation you'll feel prepared and confident to put together a grant proposal.

We're going to walk through the Whale Tail Grant Guidelines and Application during this presentation, which will take about 40 minutes.



Please keep yourself muted until asked to unmute.



There will be time at the end to ask questions. You can also type questions into the chat box during the presentation.



The presentation will be recorded and posted to the grant webpage.

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Some quick notes before we dive in.

Please keep yourself muted until asked to unmute.

There will time at the end of the presentation to ask questions. You can also type questions into the chat box during the presentation at any time, which we'll answer after the presentation. If you have a question about a particular slide, make a note of the slide number, found in the box on the bottom left, and we can go back to it if that's helpful.

The presentation will be recorded and posted to the grant webpage within a few days, along with the slideshow and our script.

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We have two staff members here today. I'm Jessica Lie, and I manage the Whale Tail Grants program.

I'm Annie Kohut Frankel, the manager of the Public Education unit for the Coastal Commission.

This is our contact information, with email being the best way to initiate a conversation. Please feel free to contact us with questions about your project. This meeting isn't the place to get into your specific project details, but it *is* a good time to ask more general questions about the grants and the application process.

During this presentation it will be helpful if you have both the Guidelines and Application in front of you. We'll be showing a lot of text on the screen as we walk you through the Guidelines and Application. Most of it is taken directly from those documents so you don't need to try to read it all on the screen.

The California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grants fund projects that connect people to the California Coast and its watersheds through education, stewardship, and outdoor experiences.



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We're going to start with the Grant Guidelines. It's very important to read through the Guidelines before starting your Application.

Page 1 in Guidelines starts by explaining that this grant funds projects connecting people to the California Coast and its watersheds through education, stewardship, and outdoor experiences.

The California Coastal Commission started the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program in 1998, with funding from purchases of California's Whale Tail License Plate. In 2014, the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund was added to the California state tax return's Voluntary Contributions section to provide taxpayers the option to contribute to the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program.

Funding for the 2025-2026 WHALE TAIL® Competitive Grants Program comes from California Climate Investments through a partnership with the California Ocean Protection Council or OPC. There is a total of approximately \$2,000,000 in grant funds this cycle. We're excited for this partnership, and you can learn more about OPC on page 2 of the guidelines.

Eligible Applicants

- Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Projects of a non-profit fiscal sponsor
- Public schools or districts
- Government agencies
- California Native American Tribes as defined by Governor's Executive Order B-10-11

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Please note that if you're following along with the Guidelines document in front of you, you can find the page number to refer to at the top of the slide in light blue. If you go to page 3 in the Guidelines, you'll see the types of organizations eligible to apply for a Whale Tail Grant, which are listed on this slide.

Tribal Set-Aside

Approximately half of total grant funds (\$1,000,000) will be set aside for projects led by California Native American tribes, tribally-led entities, and organizations directly engaging California Native American tribal communities.

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We are very excited to have a tribal set-aside component for the first time for this grant program. Approximately half of total grant funds (\$1,000,000) will be set aside for projects led by California Native American tribes, tribally-led entities, and organizations directly engaging California Native American tribal communities.

Tribal Set-Aside

ELIGIBILITY:

- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Non-profit organizations or fiscal sponsors applying on behalf of non-federally recognized tribes, inter-tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts or other organizations.
- School districts that engage California Native American students

Any proposal submitted under the tribal set-aside must provide proof of partnership or support from tribal leadership.

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On page 3 in the Guidelines, you'll see the type of governments and organizations eligible to apply for the tribal set-aside.

Please note that any proposal submitted under the tribal set-aside must provide proof of partnership or support from tribal leadership. We'll talk more about this when we go through the application.

Tribal Set-Aside

To qualify for the Tribal Set-Aside, projects need to be led by tribes/tribally-led entities or directly engage tribal communities in partnership with a tribe. For non-tribal organizations applying for the Tribal Set-Aside, your entire project should be related to tribal engagement.

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To qualify for the Tribal Set-Aside, projects need to be led by tribes/tribally-led entities or directly engage tribal communities in partnership with a tribe. For non-tribal organizations applying for the Tribal Set-Aside, your entire project should be related to tribal engagement. If you have any questions about your specific situation, please reach out directly to me to discuss.

Eligible Projects

We strongly encourage projects that engage communities that face barriers accessing coastal and marine education and stewardship, and applicant organizations based in and composed of the communities they are engaging.

We strive for broad geographic distribution across CA.

Projects must engage communities in California and include education about coastal and marine environments.

Projects can engage participants of any age.

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On page 4 in the Guidelines, you'll see that we strongly encourage projects that engage communities that face barriers accessing coastal and marine education and stewardship, and applicant organizations based in and composed of the communities they are engaging.

We strive for broad geographic distribution across California, both coastal and inland, and balancing that may influence the selection of proposals.

Projects must engage communities in California and include education about coastal and marine environments.

Projects can engage participants of any age.

What do we fund?

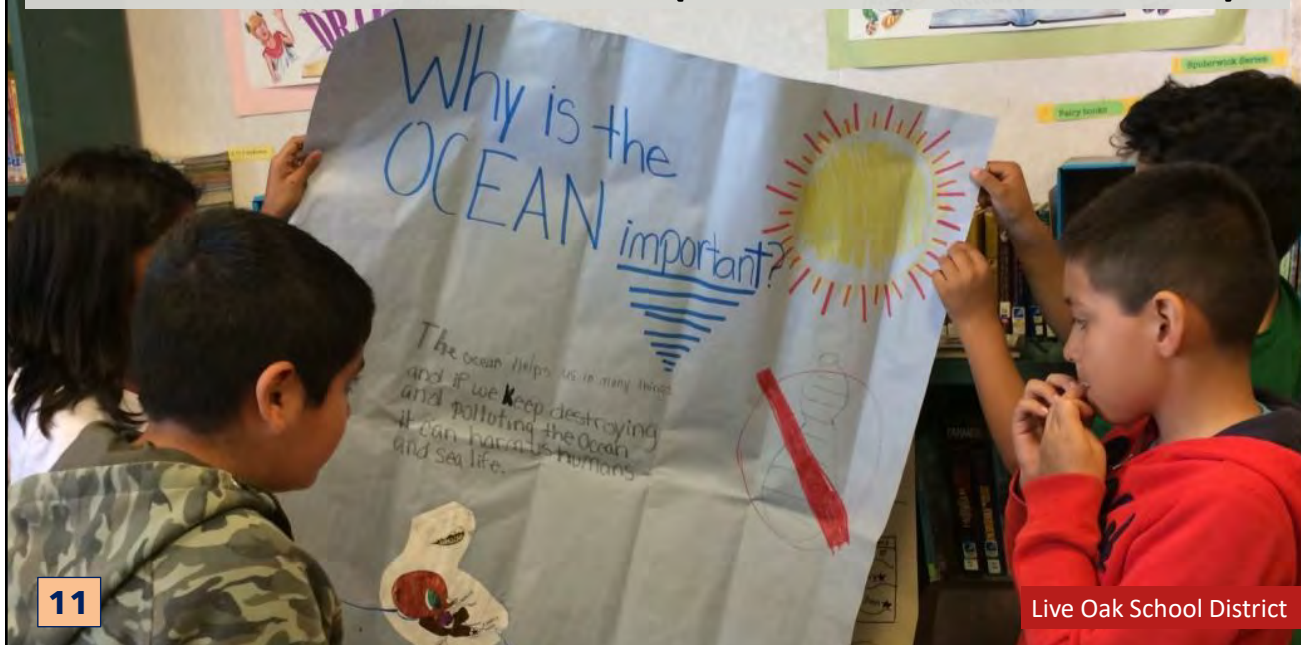
10

A Family Doing Beach Activities
by Vincent Yao



Under Eligible Projects, the Guidelines also includes examples of types of projects that the grant funds. The Coastal Commission has funded hundreds of different projects over the 25+ years of Whale Tail Grants and although there isn't really a typical project, we'll go into some of these examples. This is by no means an exhaustive list and if I don't mention your project idea, that doesn't mean it's not appropriate for funding.

Classroom-based education (in-school & after-school)...



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Live Oak School District

We fund projects that take place at school and at after-school programs.

Educational field trips...



...and a lot of experiential learning in the field. This doesn't have to be on the coast, although often it is, but it could be at a creek, or in a science center, or elsewhere.

Hands-on marine science...



Whale Tail Grants fund hands-on marine science...

On-the-water education...

Bird School
Project

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...on-the-water educational programs...



... and projects dealing with sea level rise, ocean acidification, or other things relating to climate change in the coastal and ocean environments.

Watersport skills incorporating education or stewardship...



The grants fund watersport skill programs that incorporate environmental education or stewardship.

Guided tours...



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Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful

The grants funded guided and self-guided tours.

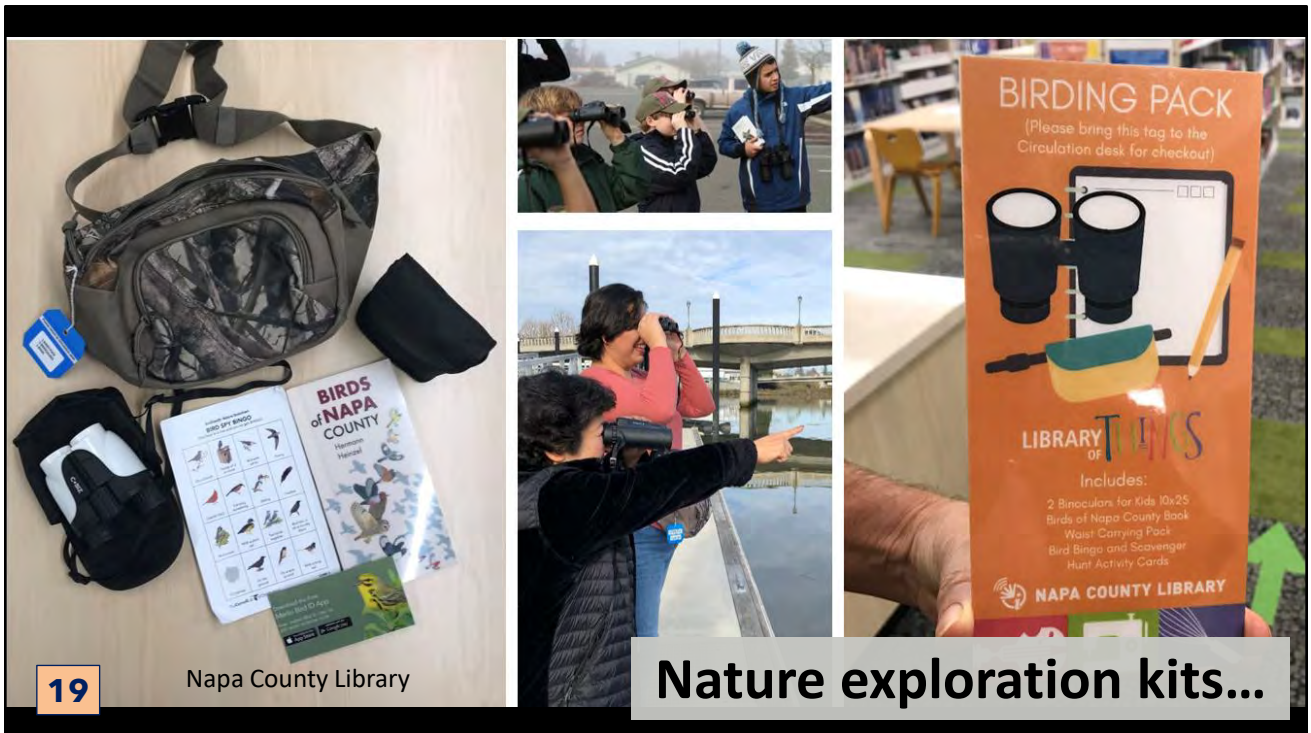
Camping and wilderness trips...



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Ventana Wilderness Alliance

We've also funded camping and wilderness trips with education or stewardship elements.



We've funded kits for independent exploration that organizations lend out...

Interpretive signage...

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE WATER CYCLE?

Water is life; all living things need clean water to survive. Seventy percent of the Earth is covered in water, but only 1% is freshwater that is available for us living things to use. If we pollute our water, it can be very difficult or even impossible to clean it. This makes water an extremely precious resource.

We can all work together to save water at home by using only what we need! Try 5-minute showers, using a rain barrel, or planting native, drought-tolerant plants.

Check out how humans impact the water cycle:

Agricultural & Industrial Water Use
Ninety three percent of Kern County water goes toward agriculture. The other 7% is used for both homes and industrial needs, such as oil extraction. This water use helps Kern County provide food and oil for people all over the world. However, people all over Kern County experience extreme water pollution from industry "pollutants": dirty water from pesticides, fertilizers, or chemicals related to oil drilling. Luckily, many communities are practicing sustainability by using less pesticides, planting crops that need less water, and cleaning abandoned oil wells.

Home & Town Water Use
At Camp KEEB, our water comes from local creeks, rainfall, and groundwater. The Kern County water is pumped up at home comes from a few places. Some of it is from underground, and some of it is imported from all over the state. More than 13 of Kern County water comes from rivers in other parts of California, including the Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta.

Keeping Our Land & Oceans Clean
When we throw something away, it goes to a landfill. When it rains, toxic chemicals from our landfill trash can enter the water cycle. Rain also washes more than 19 million tons of plastic waste to the ocean annually. The largest accumulation of ocean plastic in the world, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, is located between Hawaii and California.

What can we do about this? Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

- Reduce:** Be careful what you pour down the tap and put in the trash. Is there a choice that creates less waste?
- Reuse:** Think before you buy something new. Can you choose to reuse something?
- Recycle/Compost:** Less than 20% of recycling actually gets turned into something new - most goes to the landfill. Can you use an organic material that can be composted instead?

Climate Connections
The water cycle helps control Earth's climate. For example, oceans absorb heat and keep our planet at just the right temperature for life to exist. But now, humans are causing climate change. When we burn fossil fuels, it adds heat-trapping "greenhouse gases" to the atmosphere. These gases act like a blanket around the Earth, warming up the planet. Climate change leads to extreme natural disasters like high heat days, storms, flooding, and drought.

The US burns so much fossil fuel that we are the 2nd biggest greenhouse gas polluter in the world. Not only do fossil fuels create climate change, but they are also not renewable—we will run out of them in the next 50 years. Luckily, there are ways to stop climate change. We can use more renewable energy sources, like solar (sun) or wind power. Kern County is now the state's largest producer of renewable energy!

You can be a climate hero, too!
In California, students are passing "Climate Action Plans" at school to make their schools more environmentally friendly and better prepared for climate disasters.

This poster is funded by the California Coastal Commission's "Beach Top" Grant.

ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIONS

The California Central Valley is known around the world for how big and flat it is. It is surrounded by mountains and used to be the floor of an ancient ocean. Kern County is in the southern part of the Central Valley, also called the San Joaquin Valley.

The climate and water cycles of the Central Coast are intertwined with the Central Valley. To take care of one, we need to take care of the other. Check out some of the unique Central Valley ecosystems, and their "water ecosystems" on the Central Coast!

CENTRAL COAST

CHAPARRAL
Chaparral is an ecosystem that only exists in California. It is a long dry place with scrubby bushes and trees. The chaparral ecosystem is fire-adapted and recovers quickly after fires. Chaparral shrubs have adapted to dry and hot conditions by having small, waxy leaves and deep roots that go down to the water table. Chaparral shrubs also have thick, waxy leaves that help them store water.

ESTUARY
Estuaries are places where a river meets the ocean. In California, salt water estuaries are found in the Central Valley. Estuaries are important because they are where many fish and birds live. They are also where many plants and animals live. Estuaries are also where many people live. Estuaries are also where many people live.

TIDEPOLDS
Tidepools are small pools of water that are left behind by the ocean. They are found in rocky areas. Tidepools are important because they are where many small animals live. They are also where many people live. Tidepools are also where many people live.

CENTRAL VALLEY

SALTWATER SCURB
Saltwater scrub is an ecosystem that only exists in California. It is a dry place with low-lying shrubs and trees. Saltwater scrub is important because it is where many fish and birds live. It is also where many plants and animals live. Saltwater scrub is also where many people live.

WETLANDS
Wetlands are places where water is present for most of the year. They are found in the Central Valley. Wetlands are important because they are where many fish and birds live. They are also where many plants and animals live. Wetlands are also where many people live.

HIGH DESERT
High desert is an ecosystem that only exists in California. It is a dry place with low-lying shrubs and trees. High desert is important because it is where many fish and birds live. It is also where many plants and animals live. High desert is also where many people live.

I PLEDGE TO VISIT ONE OUTDOOR SPACE NEAR MY HOME!

This poster is funded by the California Coastal Commission's "Beach Top" Grant.

Kern Environmental Education Program

...educational and interpretive signage...

Community science...

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United Anglers of
Casa Grande

...and community or participatory science.

Cultural and ancestral practice preservation...



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Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians



We fund cultural and ancestral practice preservation...



...and workforce and professional development such as educator workshops and conservation internships.

Ecological restoration...



This grants program has a big emphasis on environmental stewardship – meaning taking action to help care for the coast and other environmental resources. There are many ways to incorporate stewardship. For example, a project might involve participants in ecological restoration.

Shoreline cleanups...



Another example of stewardship is a shoreline cleanup. Ideally we like to see that the stewardship aspect is well integrated with any educational aspect – so there is context that helps give the stewardship activity meaning to participants.

Do we fund inland projects? Yes!



Your project does not have to be on the coast. We've funded projects in Riverside and Stockton and Modoc County and many other inland locations. But projects must still include education about the coast and ocean and how you are connected with the coast and ocean wherever your project is.

Do we fund inland projects? Yes!

Include education about the downstream end of the watershed

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Inland Empire Waterkeeper

For example, if you're teaching about watersheds, and where people are in their watershed, include the downstream end too.

A photograph of three children standing on a rocky riverbank, looking through binoculars. The child in the foreground is a boy in a blue shirt, the middle child is a boy in a red shirt, and the child in the background is a girl in a light blue shirt. They are all focused on something in the distance across the river. The background shows trees and a clear blue sky.

Do we fund inland projects? Yes!

Incorporate
ocean education
into your inland
waterway
experience.

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San Joaquin County
Office of Education

Or, if you're doing a project on an inland waterway, you could incorporate content like tides or salinity or estuaries if those are relevant to where you are.

Another example of an inland project is one that includes education about migrating species like salmon.

And an example of a stewardship message for an inland project would be incorporating how actions taking place inland affect the coast and ocean.

Pages 10-11 in the Grant Guidelines for the complete text.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GRANT RECIPIENTS (out of 100 points)

1. Educational Impact and/or Environmental Improvement (25 points)
2. Audience (15 points)
3. Project Concept (30 points)
4. Proposal Content & Project Implementation (30 points)

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Now, moving back to the Guidelines, pages 10-11.

We're going to go through the scoring criteria, which are fully described in the grant guidelines. The criteria tell you how we'll be evaluating your grant proposal. Keep them in mind as you answer the questions in the application. Your responses will be the basis for how your proposal is scored on these criteria.

First is the project's **educational impact and/or environmental improvement**. These grants are for meaningful education about marine and coastal environments, as well as for improving those habitats through community involvement. The stronger the educational impact of the experience, the more points your proposal will receive.

One way to think about the "educational impact" is what are the participants going to learn and experience, and what do you hope they will come away with from the project. In other words, we're using the phrase "educational impact" broadly to encompass knowledge, the impact of experiences, and the cultivation of a connection to the coast and a stewardship ethic.

In the Guidelines under Criteria 1, you can read some examples of the types of methods and pathways that can lead to a strong proposal. Those are just examples - in your grant application, you might provide evidence of other effective strategies not listed there, and that's fine.

the second criteria is **audience**. Strong proposals will engage communities that face barriers accessing marine education and stewardship opportunities.

Third is **Project Concept**. This criteria has several components. One component is the project's "why," which is defined as the degree to which it is connected to a specific issue, interest, or need, and how that was identified.

Another element is the degree to which the proposal demonstrates that the project is relevant and appropriately designed for the audience or in partnership with the audience.

A third element under Project Concept is a reasonable budget that is clearly connected to your project goals. And there are a few points that may be awarded based on elements such as building organizational capacity or incorporating creative ideas and innovative approaches.

And finally, the fourth criteria is **proposal content and project implementation**. We're looking for well-developed ideas where you've already figured out a lot of the details, you know how you're going to evaluate your success, and you've included all the information we asked for, as relevant.

It can help to look at your proposal from the point of view of the reader. Ask yourself questions such as "Does this paint a clear and complete picture of what I want to do? Are there parts that are vague and could leave the reader with questions?" A good practice is to have someone unfamiliar with the project read through it and see if it makes sense to them.

2025 WHALE TAIL® Grant Application

CONTACT INFORMATION	
→	Name of Applicant Organization:
→	Name and Title of Contact Person:
	Email (where you will receive grant notifications):
	Telephone:
	Organization Mailing Address:
	Website:
PROJECT INFORMATION	
→	Project Title:
→	WHALE TAIL® Grant Request: \$
→	Total Project Budget (if larger than Grant Request): \$
→	Brief Project Summary (no more than 3 sentences, focusing on WHAT you propose to do, <i>not</i> WHY):
	Location(s) where project participants are based:
	Number of people who will be directly reached by the project:
	Project Start Date:
	Project End Date:

Projects must start between May 15 and October 1, 2026. If the project starts on or before June 30, 2026, the project must end by April 17, 2028. If the project starts on or after July 1, 2026, the project must end by November 30, 2028. Grant-funded expenses must occur between start date and end date.

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Now, let's move to the Application.
The first element is the Cover Sheet.

The Applicant Organization is the organization's official name that will be written on a check if you get a grant. If you have a fiscal sponsor, you can write the fiscal sponsor's name, and a slash, and then the project organization name.

The Contact Person is the person who will be notified whether your proposal receives funding, and who we would contact if there are questions about your application. Include their email address rather than a general email address box. It's important that someone will see and respond to our emails.

For the Project Title, you can make up whatever name you want. You don't have to repeat the name of the organization in the project title. And please keep your title concise.

For the requested grant amount, keep in mind that there are two funding levels for this grant, which are explained in the Grant Guidelines. The small grants are \$25,000 or less, and the larger grants are 25,001 up to \$50,000. A minimum of 25% of the funded grants under the general pool will be small grants. Depending on the applications we receive, it's possible that there may be a *slightly* lower bar for small grants. My advice is that you should apply for the amount of funding you need, *unless* what you need is just

over \$25,000 in which case, ask for \$25,000.

The Brief Project Summary is an important part of this cover sheet. What you write here shouldn't include the *why* or the *how* of your project, but really just the *what* and maybe the *who*. This summary statement allows the reviewer to enter your application with an idea of what it's all about.

EXAMPLE OF BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY

"The project will host 120 8th grade students from Fort Bragg Middle School to attend a 4-day 3-night environmental education experience. Students will be led by experienced naturalists through a variety of local ecosystems and participate in hands-on comparative ecology concepts to enhance their classroom learning."

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I'll share a couple of real-life examples of that Brief Project Summary.

"The project will host 120 8th grade students from Fort Bragg Middle School to attend a 4-day 3-night environmental education experience. Students will be led by experienced naturalists through a variety of local ecosystems and participate in hands-on comparative ecology concepts to enhance their classroom learning."

EXAMPLE OF BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY

"The project will increase environmental literacy and outdoor teaching techniques among formal educators in San Diego, with a focus on ocean, climate, and watershed literacy. Over the period of ten months, participants will visit and explore six local ecosystems by focusing directly on science practices that inspire engaged learning, curiosity and wonder."

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Here's another example:

"The project will increase environmental literacy and outdoor teaching techniques among formal educators in San Diego, with a focus on ocean, climate, and watershed literacy. Over the period of ten months, participants will visit and explore six local ecosystems by focusing directly on science practices that inspire engaged learning, curiosity and wonder."

→ Location(s) where project participants are based:

→ Number of people who will be directly reached by the project:

→ Project Start Date:

→ Project End Date:

Projects must *start* between May 15 and October 1, 2026. If the project starts on or before June 30, 2026, the project must *end* by April 17, 2028. If the project starts on or after July 1, 2026, the project must *end* by November 30, 2028. Grant-funded expenses must occur between start date and end date.

→ Which describes your organization? (Mark all that apply)

☐ Non-profit corporation ☐ Project of non-profit fiscal sponsor

☐ Government entity ☐ Public school

☐ CA Native American Tribe

→ Are you applying for the Tribal Set-Aside of funds? (Select one) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes," please see #17 for additional required documentation.

Where/how did you find out about this grant program?

Name and title of person submitting proposal (may be same or different from Contact Person):

→ Signature of person submitting proposal:

Date:

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Back to the Application Cover Sheet.

Please include the location(s) where project participants are based, not the location(s) where the project will take place.

For the Project Start Date, the earliest grant project tasks can start is May 15, 2026, and some tasks will need to start by October 1, 2026. Don't put down May 15 if that's not when you need or want to start. It's fine to start in June, July, Aug, Sep. If your project starts on or before June 30, 2026, your grant project can last any amount of time up until April 17, 2028. If your project starts on or after July 1, 2026, your grant project can last any amount of time up until November 30, 2028. I'm sorry this is so confusing! Please keep these different end date requirements in mind when determining your project start date.

Please indicate what type of organization you are. If you're more than one type, that's fine.

Please also indicate whether you are applying for the Tribal Set-Aside of funds. You can refer back to the guidelines for Tribal Set-Aside eligibility. Note that there's additional required documentation, which we'll go over later.

And the last thing I want to note about the cover sheet is that the person who prepared the grant can sign it. It doesn't need to be signed by a director or other high-level

representative.

Read the Grant Guidelines and all the application questions before starting your proposal.

- Use black, 12-point font.
- Please do your best to stay within a limit of 15 pages for Questions 1-11. (The remaining items may exceed that page limit if necessary.) There's no minimum page amount.
- If you already responded to something in a previous question, you can refer us to that question rather than repeating the information. If a question is not relevant to your project, write N/A.
- You do not need to include the text of the questions themselves in your proposal, but do include the question numbers and bolded titles.

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After the cover sheet comes the body of your proposal. At the top of page 2 of the Application, there are some instructions and requests. Please read all the questions before you start. Sometimes people feel like they want to explain something that's not being asked in a question, but if they read further down, they may see that we ask for that information later. In addition to using black, 12-point font, Please stay within a limit of 15 pages for the first 11 questions. If you go a little bit over, we're not going to disqualify your proposal, but do your best to stay within the limit. You don't *need* to use 15 pages if that's not necessary for your proposal. There's no minimum page amount.

If you did answer something in a previous question that you think also answers a later question, you can refer us to the previous question rather than repeating yourself. If there's a question that doesn't apply to your project, you can write N/A for not applicable next to the number.

You can remove the text of the questions, but please keep the question numbers and bolded titles. You can find a blank application form that has instructions and details removed.

BACKGROUND

1. Organization's History

Briefly describe your organization, its history (including the year it was founded), and its mission.

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The application questions are organized into a What, Who, Why, How, When system. It starts with some brief BACKGROUND first.

For the first question, "Organization's History" you can briefly describe your organization and its mission. No need to go into tons of detail for this. You may notice that, throughout the application, some questions ask you to answer *briefly*, and that's a clue to the amount of detail we're looking for.

WHAT

2. Goals and Objectives

List the goals and objectives of your project. (Specific objectives are measurable and relate to what you will do in your project to accomplish the broader, longer-term goals.)

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Next we get into the WHAT of your project. This question asks for your goals and objectives, which, taken together, are a summary of what you hope to accomplish, without all the details. If you receive a grant, you'll be assessing how well you met your objectives when you submit your final report to us.

As used here the terms "goals" and "objectives" are not interchangeable, but they are related. Goals are broader and longer term. Objectives are specific, measurable actions that together will lead to achieving a goal or goals. On the application form, this question includes a link that provides some example goals and objectives, which you can use to get an idea of how you might format them, and the level and type of detail you might include.

Example of goals and objectives:

GOALS:

1. Youth will learn about environmental issues and marine and coastal stewardship
2. Youth will make an impact on their community through service-learning projects that connect them to the natural environment and protect and preserve local marine environments.
3. Youth will actively engage with science curriculum in marine biology and environmental studies.

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Here are some example goals and objectives. This project starts by listing several goals. You'll see they're pretty broad, like "Youth will learn about environmental issues and marine and coastal stewardship."

Example of goals and objectives:

OBJECTIVES:

1. By the end of the project, 15 high school students will complete the summer program and demonstrate increased understanding of marine science and ocean literacy principles, via pre- and post-surveys.
2. 15 sixth grade students will participate in after-school workshops and show increased understanding of coastal environments, via pre- and post-surveys.
3. 15 high school students and 15 sixth graders will demonstrate they understand the importance of ocean and coastal protection by participating in habitat restoration and shoreline cleanup projects.

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Those goals are followed by a few measurable objectives that specifically list how the overarching goals will be met. You'll notice that they include how they will be measured, sometimes referencing an evaluation tool like a survey, or through an action like in Objective 3, the students will participate in restoration and cleanup projects.

Example of goals and objectives:

Goal: Provide a meaningful coastal experience and inspire an ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive exploration.

Objectives:

1. Host six interpretive events that encourage community members to explore the wetlands while learning about the region's natural systems and cultural history.
2. Host six stewardship events that teach about and involve participants in coastal wetland restoration, habitat protection, and sea level rise community science through in-the-field workshops and hands-on restoration work.
3. Demonstrate an increased sense of connection to and responsibility for the coastal wetlands through participant interviews.

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Here's another example showing a different layout. This one also lists specific, measurable objectives that will accomplish overarching goals. Objective 3 will use participant interviews as the tool to assess success. You might decide that a qualitative tool like that works best for one or more of your project's objectives.

Example of goals and objectives:

GOAL 1: Improve youth understanding of coastal and watershed ecology.

Objective 1.1: Implement 10 two-hour classroom presentations at each of 3 schools.

Objective 1.2: Increase average score of post-test over pre-test by at least 20%.

GOAL 2: Improve youth interest in coastal and watershed stewardship and restoration science.

Objective 2.1: Lead 10 field trips designed to interest students in coastal environments and active stewardship.

Objective 2.2: Provide at least 15 stewardship and restoration-based internships for local teens.

Objective 2.3: Increase relevant career interest by 10% from pre-survey to post-survey.

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Here, each goal has its own corresponding objectives listed out. Objective 2.3 is, "Increase relevant career interest by 10% from pre-survey to post-survey." So they identify what tool they'll use and how much change will indicate success to them.

How you format the goals and objectives will depend on what makes sense for your project. The main point here is to go for clarity, which will help keep the project on track. The time you put in to develop measurable objectives will lay the groundwork for how you evaluate your project's success.

3. Project Description

- Describe all project elements, such as events, field trips, classroom activities, trainings, presentations, meetings, development of educational resources or tools, or other aspects of your project.
- Describe what participants will do and experience during your project, including details such as the number of days, number of hours per day, and general timing of participant programming as applicable.
- Be sure to discuss your project design considerations such as cultural relevancy, age-appropriateness, accessibility, and/or education strategies.

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Question 3, Project Description, is where you give us the details of what you want to do with this grant.

First, you'll describe what participants will be doing as part of your project. Or if your project is to create a resource or tool, you can describe that here.

We want to know how intensive your program is for individual participants, in terms of days or hours of programming, if that's applicable. Will all the participants take part in all of the project elements, or will different people participate in different activities? Describe that here.

This is the place to talk about how you have designed your project as culturally relevant, age-appropriate, accessible, or using other strategies or expertise, in order to effectively and appropriately engage your audience.

3. Project Description

- If you will create resources or tools or some other kind of product to be used by your organization or by others, explain the product and how it will be experienced or distributed.
- If you will use an existing curriculum, handbook, or other program material, briefly describe it and explain why you have chosen it, and include a copy with your application or a link if it's viewable online. Make sure that we can open any links you include.

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If you're creating a resource or tool to be used or distributed, explain how that will happen.

If you're using an existing curriculum or program material, include a copy with your proposal. You can link to it if it's viewable online.

If you include a link within your application, make sure that anyone who clicks on it will have access. If we can't access something, we won't be able to consider it when reviewing your grant proposal. We *do* carefully review curriculum and program materials you include.

WHO

4. Participants

- Describe who you will directly engage with your project, *in as much detail as you can*, such as number of people, location, income, and other demographic descriptors and/or identities.

If working with schools, include the school name(s) and district if possible.

43

Now we get into the WHO. Question 4 is all about who you're going to engage with your project.

You'll want to recall from our Scoring Criteria, that strong proposals will engage communities that face barriers accessing marine education and stewardship opportunities. The information you provide in this question will guide that scoring, and the more specific you're able to be in terms of numbers or percentages, the better. If you're working with schools and you already know which ones, tell us.

4. Participants

- If your project reaches an *indirect* audience, briefly describe and quantify that wider group.
- Describe your plan for recruiting your participants, or a description of how you have already recruited them.

(Please note that if selected for funding, your final report must include detailed information on who you engaged with your project.)

44

We ask about your indirect audience, but if there's not a clear indirect audience for your project, there's no need to stretch to find one.

You'll describe how you will reach your intended participants.

If you receive a grant, you'll be required to provide details on your participants in your final report.

5. Partners

If any partnerships are integral to your project, describe them.

45

The next question asks about any partnerships integral to your project. If there aren't any, you can write Not Applicable. If you already addressed partnerships, like perhaps in question #3 in your project description, you can refer us to that rather than repeating yourself.

6. Organization and Staff

- Explain whether and how your organization identifies as part of the community you plan to reach.
- *For Tribal Set-Aside:* Provide a brief description of your organization's relationship to the California Native American Tribe(s) or tribal communities you will engage.
- Explain why and how your organization and staff is particularly suited to working with your participants to carry out the project.

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#6. We want to understand whether and how your organization identifies as part of the community you're planning to reach.

If you are applying for the Tribal Set-Aside, be sure to explain your organization's relationship to the California Native American Tribe(s) or tribal communities you will engage.

We also want to understand why and how your organization and staff are particularly suited to working with your intended participants to carry out your project.

6. Organization and Staff

- Describe the key staff members who will carry out the project: their positions, their specific roles in the project, and their relevant qualifications and experience. Be sure to include the people who will interact directly with participants, including volunteers if they will lead your programming. If positions are not yet filled, explain the qualifications for those positions.

47

You're asked to describe your key staff. This is your chance to talk about who will be carrying out the project, their roles, and their relevant qualifications and experience. Staffing is a key factor for project impact – here is where you can talk about how your staff will contribute to your project's success. If you have yet to hire staff, you can explain the process for filling the positions and the qualifications you will be seeking. If volunteers are the ones doing the work, tell us about them. We do really want to understand the people who will be interacting with your participants, or doing the work of your project. If you feel that it's important for us to know the background of your director, that's great, but if others are doing the on-the-ground work, be sure to include them.

WHY

7. Why are you proposing this project?

Explain your “why” as an issue, interest, or need that your project will address and explain why this project is suited to be successful in that effort. How did you come to identify and understand this issue, interest, or need? Why is this project of value to the community you want to engage?

If this idea arose from the community, be sure to talk about that here.

48

Now we get to the WHY of your project. #7 asks for the issue, interest, or need that your project is addressing. Explain why your project would be of value to the community you want to engage.

If it arose from the desires of the community, be sure to talk about that. This question is not about the financial needs of your organization.

HOW

8. Project Future and History

- If your project is funded, will you continue it past the grant period? If so, briefly explain the longer-term funding plan.
- If your proposal is for an existing project, how long has it been operating, how was it funded in the past, and what results have you achieved?
- If this project was previously funded by a Whale Tail® Grant, include a brief summary of what was accomplished through the previous grant and how the new proposal relates to the previous work.

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Now we're getting into the HOW. Question 8 is about what came before and what might come after your grant.

If you receive funding, will this project continue after the grant period? If so, how will you cover any associated costs?

If your proposal is for a project that already exists, tell us a little about its history and impact, and how it's been funded in the past.

If this *project* was previously funded by a Whale Tail Grant, briefly tell us about that, and how your new proposal relates to the previous work.

9. Tracking and assessing your impact

Describe your project evaluation plan.

- How and when will you track and assess your project outcomes and success relative to your project goals and objectives? Possible examples of outcome indicators might include participant satisfaction with the project experience; changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviors; and changes to the environment.

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Question #9. How you track and assess your impact should be closely linked to and planned around project goals and objectives. Many of our grantees do this work themselves, but some hire external contractors. Either is fine and your choice will depend mainly on budget considerations and in-house capabilities, as well as the scope of your specific project.

9. Tracking and assessing your impact

- Consider whether quantitative methods such as pre-tests/post-tests and surveys; qualitative methods such as interviews, observation, and focus groups; or a combination of methods is most appropriate for learning about your program and its impacts.
- How will you use what you learn to improve your project in the future?
- If you already have specific tools you plan to use (such as surveys or tests), include them as attachments.

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Listed in this question are some general examples of methods of assessing your impact. Your chosen methods may be quantitative, qualitative, or both. Describe in your proposal the methods you will use. Remember from our example goals and objectives, many of them specifically reference the tools and methods for assessing success. Please tell us how you expect to use what you learn, and if you already have tools you plan to use, like surveys or interview protocols, be sure to include them with your application.

10. Permits required (if any)

If permits will be required for your project, explain whether you already have them or whether you will need to acquire them during the project timeline.

Possible examples include:

- Collection permit from Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- Construction permit
- Ecological restoration (permission from landowner)
- Event permit

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Most projects won't require a permit, but in case yours does, then Question 10 is the place to list it. Here are a few examples of types of permits sometimes associated with Whale Tail Grant projects.

WHEN

11. Task timeline

Grant project tasks must begin between May 15 and October 1, 2026. If your project begins on or before June 30, 2026, your project must end by April 17, 2028. If your project begins on or after July 1, 2026, your project must end by November 30, 2028.

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Next is the timeline. Again, note the allowable grant timeframe. This timeline is only for work done as part of the grant, within the grant period. Please don't include anything in your timeline outside of the grant period.

It's up to you what you want the task timeline to look like. There's a link within this question in the application to some example timeline formats.

Example of task timeline

August 2026

- Outreach to community organizations
- Outreach to families

September 2026

- Location scouting
- Instructor planning

October-November 2026

- Conduct two weekend overnight trips with families

December 2026

- Evaluation

January 2027

- Final grant report

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It can be a very simple bullet list like this example...

Example of task timeline

Project Stage	Date	Tasks
Program Prep	June-Dec 2026	• Meet with teachers and administrators to refine curriculum and field trip dates • Logistical planning with partners and field trip hosts • Identify and compile supporting materials required for experiments, demonstrations, journals, presentations, and trips • Introduce program at Back to School Night
Program Implementation	Jan-May 2027	• Introduce students to the program • Implement pre-test • Implement 10 in-class lessons • Conduct 3 field trips • Facilitate student communication projects: presentation to parents, presentation to City Council
Evaluation/Follow-up	May-June 2026	• Implement post-test • Compile program reports • Conduct focus groups with teachers to determine satisfaction with program, what worked best, what needs improvement

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...or a table like this, or another format that works for you.

Form is on page 6 in the Application

12. Budget details

Use our Grant Budget Form or your own document that includes the same information. The form is available at the end of the application or as a downloadable [Excel form](#).

WHALE TAIL® GRANT PROJECT BUDGET FORM

PERSONNEL EXPENSES		
Job title #1:		
Rate (\$/hour):	Time (hours):	Total (Rate x Time): \$
Job title #2:		
Rate (\$/hour):	Time (hours):	Total (Rate x Time): \$
Job title #3:		
Rate (\$/hour):	Time (hours):	Total (Rate x Time): \$
<i>(Add additional positions as needed. Include title, rate, hours, and \$ amount.)</i>		
Total Benefits requested ⁽¹⁾ : \$		
1. Total Personnel Expenses requested (all positions plus benefits): \$		
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Supplies/Materials ⁽²⁾ : \$		
List your anticipated major purchases of supplies/materials and estimated costs:		
Travel ⁽³⁾ : \$		
Briefly explain any proposed travel costs:		
Food ⁽⁴⁾ : \$		
Briefly explain the purpose of this food or beverage request:		
External Contract(s): \$		
Briefly explain the purpose of the contract(s):		
Other operating expenses (participant stipends, admission fees, fiscal sponsor fees, etc.)		
Type of expense:	Amount: \$	
Type of expense:	Amount: \$	
<i>(Add additional types of expenses as needed, with dollar amount for each.)</i>		
2. Total Operating Expenses requested: \$		
3. Indirect Costs/Overhead requested ⁽⁵⁾: \$		
Total Budget Request (add 1, 2, and 3): \$		

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Next we come to the budget, which should explain what you want to spend the grant money on.

On page 6 of the Application, there's a budget form that you can use, seen here, or you can use the link in Question 12 to download an Excel budget form. Either is fine, or you can submit your own budget sheet, as long as it includes all the information we're asking for here. We don't want you wasting time on formatting challenges, so if you have trouble inputting information into this form or using the Excel spreadsheet, you can send us your own document instead.

Whale Tail grants generally reimbursement grants, so keep in mind that for everything in your grant budget, that you're generally going to invoice us *after* you have a bill or a receipt. You can invoice as often as once per month. It can take up to 45 days to receive your reimbursement check from the state. There is the possibility for non-profit organizations and tribes to request advance payment of up to 25% of the total grant amount. Please see Attachment B in the Grant Guidelines for more information on advance payment requirements.

Grants will not be awarded to fund:

- Political advocacy work
- Projects that include religious content in their programming
- Travel outside of California
- Purchase of vehicles
- Purchase of insurance
- Purchase of laptops, tablets, cell phones, or similar equipment
- Purchase of prizes, incentives, gift cards, cash gifts, or items that will be sold
- Only an organization's general, ongoing administrative costs without a defined project

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There are some things that we *don't* fund, which are listed on page 7 of the Grant Guidelines. Grants will not be made to fund political advocacy work; for projects that include religious content in their programming; for travel outside of California; or for the purchase of vehicles, insurance, laptops, tablets, cell phones or similar equipment, prizes, incentives, gift cards, cash gifts, or items that will be sold.

This grant is not for general organizational support – it's for definable projects.

PERSONNEL EXPENSES		
Job title #1: Camp Leader		
Rate (\$/hour): \$20/hour	Time (hours): 100 hrs	Total (Rate x Time): \$ 2,000
Job title #2:		
Rate (\$/hour):	Time (hours):	Total (Rate x Time): \$
Job title #3:		
Rate (\$/hour):	Time (hours):	Total (Rate x Time): \$
<i>(Add additional positions as needed. Include title, rate, hours, and \$ amount.)</i>		
Total Benefits requested ⁽¹⁾ : \$ 300		
1. Total Personnel Expenses requested (all positions plus benefits): \$ 2,300		

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Let's take a closer look at the Budget Form. If you're requesting funding for staff, you'll need to list the positions you want to pay for, their rate of pay, the amount of time you want the grant to pay for, and the total cost for each position. If you want the grant to pay for benefits you can include those as a lump sum. The pay rate should be the *actual* rate you pay your staff. Then you include the total of your personnel request.

OPERATING EXPENSES	
Supplies/Materials ⁽²⁾: \$ 100	
List your anticipated major purchases of supplies/materials and estimated costs: Art supplies \$80; Garden tools \$20	
Travel ⁽³⁾: \$ 900	
Briefly explain any proposed travel costs: Bus for field trip	
Food ⁽⁴⁾: \$ 50	
Briefly explain the purpose of this food or beverage request: Snacks needed for the volunteer workday for 20 people	
External Contract(s): \$ 1,000	
Briefly explain the purpose of the contract(s): Evaluation consultant	
Other operating expenses (<i>participant stipends, admission fees, fiscal sponsor fees, etc.</i>)	
Type of expense:	Amount: \$
Type of expense:	Amount: \$
<i>(Add additional types of expenses as needed, with dollar amount for each.)</i>	
2. Total Operating Expenses requested: \$ 2,050	
3. Indirect Costs/Overhead requested⁽⁵⁾: \$ 230	
Total Budget Request (add 1, 2, and 3): \$	

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Next are any operating expenses you're requesting. If you want to pay for supplies or materials, please list what you want to purchase and their estimated costs. It's ok if this is a general description, like "gardening tools," or "art supplies." However, if you do know that you will be buying a big, specific item like a 200-gallon fish tank and you know exactly what it costs, then be specific.

If you want to pay for travel, please briefly explain that. You might say something like, school buses for field trips, or mileage for visiting project locations. This grant can't pay for any out of state travel, including travel from another state into California.

We can pay for food and drinks, if that purchase is necessary for the success of the project. That might look like snacks during a field trip or lunch during a volunteer workday. If you want the grant to pay for food, briefly explain what it's for here.

If you want to contract with someone, like an educational service provider or an evaluation consultant, explain that here. If you already know who you'd like to contract with, include that information.

And there's space for other categories of operating expenses if what you need isn't already included. Then in space number two, add up all your operating expenses.

To be clear, if you want to request a budget that's all Personnel, or one that's all

Operating Expenses, or one that has both, any of those are fine.

One last item on the budget sheet is Indirect Costs, or Overhead. The Whale Tail Grant is limited to paying Indirect Costs at a maximum of 10% of the Total Personnel Expenses that you're requesting. So if you have only Operating Expenses in your budget, there would be no Indirect Costs included. Using the previous slide's example with the \$2,300 in personnel expenses, the maximum Indirect Costs this proposal can request would be \$230.

And finally at the bottom you add up Personnel Expenses, Operating Expenses, and Indirect Costs for your Total Budget Request.

¹ Pay rates and benefits reflect actual costs. Benefits may not exceed 50.38% of amount requested for wages.

² Grant funds can't purchase vehicles, insurance, laptops, tablets, cell phones, prizes, incentives, gift cards, cash gifts, or items that will be sold.

³ Use of owned vehicles are reimbursed at the federal rate, currently 70 cents/mile. Rented vehicles are reimbursed for rental fee and gas. Travel to or from outside California is not eligible for funding by this grant.

⁴ Maximum reimbursement for food is \$20 per person per meal. No tips are reimbursed for food not part of overnight travel.

⁵ Indirect costs are limited to 10% of Total Personnel Expenses and include, for example, a pro rata share of rent, utilities, and salaries for certain positions indirectly supporting the proposed project but not directly staffing it.

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The budget form has five footnotes. Make sure you read them as they are all important.

#1 tells you the maximum benefits amount we can pay,

#2 lists those items we can't pay for,

#3 explains a little about our travel policy. If you plan to use a private or company vehicle, the state reimburses for mileage only, at whatever the current IRS mileage rate is. If you rent a car for your project, the state reimburses the rental fee and gas, which both require you to submit receipts.

#4 talks about food. We can reimburse up to \$20 per person per meal. Tips are not covered for food that's not part of overnight travel. We do expect that all grant purchases, including food, are made in an economical manner.

The final footnote explains the Indirect Costs.

12. Budget details (continued)

If your total project budget is larger than your grant request, complete the Total Project Budget Form, located at the end of the packet on page 7.

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If it will cost more to complete your project than what you're requesting from the Whale Tail Grant, we ask that you complete a second budget form, that you can find on page 7 of the Application Packet. Only complete that form if your project budget is larger than your grant request. This will help us understand how your request fits into the larger project, if applicable.

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET FORM

ONLY complete this form IF Project Budget is LARGER than your Grant Request. In the spaces below, note the TOTAL amounts needed to complete your entire project.

TOTAL PROJECT PERSONNEL EXPENSES	
1. Total Personnel Expenses for this project (all positions plus benefits): \$	
TOTAL PROJECT OPERATING EXPENSES	
Supplies/Materials: \$	
Travel: \$	
Food: \$	
External Contract(s): \$	
Other operating expenses (participant stipends, admission fees, fiscal sponsor fees, etc.)	
Type of expense:	Amount: \$
Type of expense:	Amount: \$
(Add additional types of expenses as needed, with dollar amount for each.)	
2. Total Operating Expenses for this project: \$	
3. Indirect Costs/Overhead for this project: \$	
Total Project Budget (add 1, 2, and 3): \$	

Please answer the following questions in the box below:

Have you already secured the additional funds (beyond the grant request) needed to complete your project? If not, what is your plan to secure them?

--

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The Total Project Budget Form is a simplified version of our Grant Budget Form. It asks for the *total* project costs, *including* what you're requesting from the grant.

At the bottom of the page there's an additional question to answer about whether you already secured the additional funds needed to complete your project, and if not, what is your plan to secure them. Remember, this page is only for projects with a budget larger than the grant request.

Similar to the Grant Budget Form, you're welcome to submit this information in your own format if that's easier for you.

13. Authorization

A letter of authorization or a resolution from the applicant organization's governing body that contains the following: support for and authority to submit the proposal, authority to enter into a contract with the California Coastal Commission if the grant is awarded, and designation of the applicant's authorized representative—the person who would sign a grant contract (name and title).

If the authority to perform such tasks has already been delegated by the governing body, a letter from the person who has that delegated authority is sufficient.

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Next in your application is a letter of authorization or a resolution from your organization. Public agencies and some nonprofits may require a formal resolution from their board. For some, it can be a letter from a board chair or a treasurer. And for a lot of you, a letter could come from an executive director or a finance director or someone like that who's already authorized to sign contracts and submit grant proposals. Whether the authorization is in the form of a resolution or a letter is up to your organization and how it authorizes grants.

If your organization is the project of a non-profit fiscal sponsor, this document will come from them.

In this question in the application there's a link where you can see some examples of different types of grant resolutions and authorization letters.

This is the only part of your application that may be submitted after the deadline, if that's necessary, for example because of your board meeting schedule.

14. Proof of tax status - For non-profits, proof of 501(c)(3) status in the form of an exemption letter from the IRS. If you are a project of a non-profit fiscal sponsor, this document will be for that organization.

15. Leadership - Names of board members and/or organization leaders. If any are on the staff or members of the Coastal Commission, please note that.

16. Organizational Budget - The organization's most recent annual budget (previous year's budget is fine), including sources of funds. We do not require a specific format - send your budget in the format you have. Not required for public schools or government agencies.

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The application also asks for some basic background information on your organization. Non-profits must include a tax exemption letter from the IRS. If you have a fiscal sponsor, this will be their letter.

Please include a list of your board members or organization leaders. For a public school, this could be your principal, department head/s, and perhaps the superintendent if the district is the applicant. If you're fiscally sponsored, list the leaders of your own organization rather than the sponsor. Affiliation with the Coastal Commission is not necessarily a problem, but we'll want to make sure that we're being fair with who is reviewing or approving proposals so please let us know if there's overlap.

And, we require an annual budget for everyone except public agencies and schools. It's fine if it's the previous year's budget. We don't require a specific format for the budget, just send it in the form you have it in.

17. For Tribal Set-Aside: Proof of Partnership

Proof of partnership or formal support with a brief description of the applicant's relationship to the tribe(s) or tribal communities engaged, such as a signed letter from the tribes' leadership council or chairperson or signed tribal council resolution authorizing and consenting to partnership. If you are a tribe, your letter of authorization (see #13) fulfills this requirement.

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If you are applying under the Tribal Set-Aside of funds, you must provide proof of partnership or formal support with a brief description of the applicant's relationship to the tribe(s) or tribal communities engaged. This could be a signed letter from the tribes' leadership council or chairperson or signed tribal council resolution authorizing and consenting to partnership. If you are a tribe or a tribally-led organization, your letter of authorization fulfills this requirement.

18. Letters of Support and other supporting materials (Optional):

Newsletters, press stories, or letters of support or commitment from project partners or others.

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Finally, any other supporting materials are optional. As an example, letters of support from project partners can be especially helpful to include, like if you plan to work with a school, you can get a letter from them. It does help to know if partners are already on board.

Submit your complete application package by 8:00pm, December 15, 2025, by email to whaletailgrant@coastal.ca.gov or by uploading it to the link in the Application.

If you are not able to email or upload your application, you can mail it with a postmark no later than December 15th.

Read the Grant Guidelines for how to submit your application.

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Next is submitting your application. There are several options, which are described in the Grant Guidelines. An easy way to submit your application is by email, as long as there's less than 30 Mb attached to the email. If you need to submit your attachments in more than one email, that's fine. I do recommend that you reduce the size of any PDFs before submitting them. Another way is to use the link in the guidelines to upload your application to a Dropbox folder instead. You can save all of your application files in a folder on your desktop and upload the folder into the dropbox webpage. Once you do that, wait to see the confirmation message on the webpage that your upload was successful.

It's much easier for us to confirm that we've received your application if only one person on your team is responsible for emailing or uploading the packet. When multiple people from an organization send parts of the packet, it gets confusing, and it takes longer for us to confirm we've got your application.

The deadline is 8pm December 15th. I really encourage you not to wait until the last minute, because internet problems can happen and you don't want your service to fail at 7:58pm when you're about to submit your application. And if you're using the upload option, that can sometimes take a while, so I especially encourage you to not wait till the deadline to do that.

If for any reason you need to use postal mail instead, your package must be *postmarked* no later than December 15th. You do not need to pay for rush shipping. Please don't include any extra packaging, folders, or plastic covers. I will send you an email to let you know we've received your proposal in the mail, but we're not responsible for anything

that's lost in the mail.

If you would like to email your application packet but have a curriculum sample or other supplementary material that you need to mail, you can do that separately (by the same deadline). Include a note with the applicant organization name and project title in the package. Scanned copies or links to online versions are perfectly fine though.

Again, the Grant Guidelines explain how to submit your application for whichever method you choose. Be sure to read that carefully.

What requirements are there if I receive a grant?

- Respond promptly to requests for information needed for your grant contract.
- Wait to do work or purchase items until you have a signed grant contract.
- Recognize the California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grant and OPC as the project funder during outreach and programming, and place funding logos on any printed or online content produced for the project.

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If your proposal is selected for funding, you will need to respond promptly to requests for information needed for your grant contract, such as confirming who is authorized to sign the contract, and reviewing and approving draft contract language. If you're a teacher applying for a grant, figuring out who will sign the contract etc. can sometimes be challenging, so I recommend you understand the process for your school or district before you submit your application.

You will need to wait until you have a signed grant contract to make any grant purchases or do work you want to be reimbursed for.

You will be required to recognize the Coastal Commission and the Whale Tail Grant and, for this particular grant, the Ocean Protection Council as funders on materials and outreach related to the project.

What requirements are there if I receive a grant?

- Maintain complete accounting and time records and invoice us accurately.
- Document your project by taking photos and/or video.
- Depending on the length of your grant project, you may be asked to submit one or more brief progress reports in writing or by phone.
- Submit a written final report at the completion of your project detailing what you accomplished and who you engaged.

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You'll need to save receipts and accurately invoice in order to get reimbursed.

You will document your project through photos and/or video.

You'll likely be required to submit one or more brief progress reports either by email or phone to let us know if the project is progressing as planned or if problems have arisen.

If you have advance payments, you may have additional progress reports.

You'll be required to submit a detailed final report, covering topics such as who you succeeded in engaging with your project, whether you accomplished your planned objectives, any media coverage, etc.

What happens next?

Grant Cycle Milestone	Timing
Application deadline	December 15, 2025 by 8:00pm
Letter of authorization deadline	February 28, 2026
Application review	December 2025 - March 2026
Recommended awards presented to Coastal Commissioners for approval	April 15-17, 2026
Application notification	By end of April 2026
Projects start	Upon execution of the Grant Agreement (May 15 - Oct 1, 2026)

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Here's the timeline for what happens next...

The application deadline is December 15.

Letters of authorization need to be submitted by February 28, 2026

And the review process happens Dec through March. We'll have funding recommendations by early April, at which point we'll notify the recommended applicants.

The Coastal Commission will vote on the final funding decision at its meeting in April.

The grants being recommended for funding will be posted on the meeting agenda webpage prior to the meeting date.

After the meeting, we'll notify all applicants.

And grant can begin when grant contracts are drafted and signed between May 15 and Oct 1 2026.