

WHALE TAIL[®] Competitive Grants Program

Deadline: November 4, 2024

GRANT GUIDELINES

Funded by:



A project of:



California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 200, Room 228
San Francisco, CA 94105

www.coastal.ca.gov/whaletailgrant

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2024 WHALE TAIL[®] COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

Read these guidelines before beginning your grant proposal. Download the grant application form at www.coastal.ca.gov/whaletailgrant.

INTRODUCTION

The California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL[®] Grants Program funds projects that connect people to the California Coast and its watersheds through education, stewardship, and outdoor experiences. Education and stewardship projects relating to climate change as it impacts the coast and ocean are eligible and encouraged. Adopt-A-Beach[®] programs, as well as other beach stewardship and coastal habitat restoration projects that have an educational component, are also eligible. WHALE TAIL[®] Grants focus on reaching communities all over California that have historically received fewer marine education and stewardship opportunities. [Attachment A](#) contains brief summaries of some recent grant projects.

BACKGROUND

The California Coastal Commission started the WHALE TAIL[®] Competitive 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. In 2021, the state budget provided one-time funding to the program.

The Coastal Commission is a state regulatory and planning agency that operates under the 1976 Coastal Act to manage the conservation and development of coastal resources in California. The Commission's Public Education Program works to increase public knowledge of coastal and marine resources and to engage the public in coastal protection and restoration activities.

OTHER RESOURCES

The Coastal Commission offers a wide variety of free education resources and programs. Find them at www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/directory/educate.html and coastforyou.org.

Learn how to adopt a beach on the [Adopt-A-Beach[®] website](#). Contact us at coast4u@coastal.ca.gov if you want to start a program in an area that does not currently have one. [Adopt-A-Beach[®] Managers](#) are designated by Coastal Commission staff to operate the program locally and serve as the liaison with the Commission.

If you're interested in a grant to purchase a [beach wheelchair](#) and your organization is able to manage a public lending program, contact us at coast4u@coastal.ca.gov.

When appropriate, educators may consider integrating into their projects the [principles and concepts of ocean literacy](#), California's [Environmental Principles and Concepts](#), and applicable [California State Content Standards](#).

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **Size of Grants:** You can request any amount up to \$50,000. At least 25% of funded projects will be small grants of up to \$20,000. Approximately \$1,500,000 will be distributed.
- **Categories of Grants:** Projects must relate to the coast and ocean and fall into one or more of the following categories: 1) youth education programs, 2) programs for educating the general public or adults, 3) climate change education and stewardship, 4) shoreline cleanup and enhancement programs with community involvement (such as Adopt-A-Beach®).
- **Priorities:** We strongly encourage projects that engage communities that have historically received fewer opportunities for coastal and marine education and stewardship, and applicant organizations based in and composed of the communities they are engaging. We strive for a broad geographic distribution of projects across California.
- **Deadline and Submission Process:** The deadline is 8:00pm November 4, 2024. Download the WHALE TAIL® Grant application form from www.coastal.ca.gov/whaletailgrant. There are three options for submission: email, file upload, OR postal mail. **Choose one.**
 - **Email.** Send your packet as one or more attachments to whaletailgrant@coastal.ca.gov by 8:00pm California time on November 4, 2024. Do not zip your files. Do not submit your proposal as a cloud document link, such as a Google Drive link. Do not attach more than 30 Mb to an email. You may send attachments in multiple emails if needed. If your grant proposal is a PDF, save it as “Reduced Size PDF” to reduce your file size. If you still have items larger than 30 Mb, consider using the upload option rather than email.
 - **Upload.** If you prefer to upload your packet, make sure all files have your organization name in the file name and upload them to this [Dropbox folder](#) by 8:00pm California time on November 4, 2024. Uploading a folder rather than separately uploading multiple documents is best. Do not zip your files. Coordinate with your team so that one person is responsible for uploading your documents. We recommend that you not wait until the last minute to upload your proposal, because uploading files may take time.
 - **Postal Mail.** If you choose to use postal mail, your package must be *postmarked* no later than November 4, 2024. You do not need to pay for rush shipping. Mail application to:
Whale Tail Grants
California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 200, Room 228
San Francisco, CA 94105
Do not include binders, folders, plastic overlays, or other extra packaging. If you want to email or upload your packet but have a curriculum sample or other supplementary material that you need to mail, you can do that separately (by the same deadline as above). Include a note with the applicant organization name and project title.
- **Project Selection and Notification:** After reviewing all proposals, we expect to make funding recommendations to the Coastal Commissioners at their February 2025 public meeting. We will notify all applicants by email and postal mail following the Commission vote. If your project is recommended for funding, you will be notified by email prior to the Coastal Commission meeting. Emails will be sent from whaletailgrant@coastal.ca.gov.

IMPORTANT RULES AND ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICANTS AND PROJECTS

- **Eligible Applicants:** Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, projects of a non-profit fiscal sponsor, public schools or districts, government entities, Federally Recognized Tribes and other California Native American Tribes as defined by Governor's Executive Order B-10-11.
- **Participants:** Projects funded by WHALE TAIL® Grants must engage people in California.
- **Things we can't fund:** Grants will not be awarded 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, prizes, incentives, gift cards, cash gifts, or items that will be sold. WHALE TAIL® Grants are for defined projects, not for an organization's general, ongoing administrative costs. Habitat enhancement projects must be ecologically responsible.
- **Educational Focus:** The WHALE TAIL® Grants Program focuses on education about coastal and marine environments. If a project will take place in an inland area or on a bay, the proposal should address how the project includes coastal and marine educational content, including how the connection to the coast and ocean will be emphasized.
- **Reimbursement Grant:** Grant funds are not available in advance. Expenses will be reimbursed no more than once per month upon submission of an invoice by the grantee, for hours already worked or purchases already made. Grantees must submit receipts for expenses when invoicing.
- **Project Timing:** Grant project tasks must *begin* between March 19 and June 30, 2025. Project funding must *end* by April 15, 2027.
- **Funding Credit:** You must credit the California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grants Program as part of your project implementation, such as when doing outreach for, promoting, or presenting grant-funded programming. You must put the [funding credit logo](#) on any printed or online content produced for the project, including linking from the logo to the Commission website as appropriate.
- **Liability:** You must agree to hold the California Coastal Commission harmless.
- **Project Administration:** You must assume responsibility for administering the project, including employing any necessary staff or consultants, maintaining complete accounting and time records, providing fiscal management, and submitting progress reports and a final report. Refer to [Attachment B](#) for administrative requirements if a grant is awarded.
- **Current Grants:** If you have an open, competitive WHALE TAIL® Grant, do not apply for a new grant until after you've completed your project and submitted your final grant report. No preference is given to previous grant recipients during the review of new grant proposals.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GRANT RECIPIENTS (out of 100 points)

Grant proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria, using the information you provide in your application.

1. **Educational Impact and/or Environmental Improvement (25 points)**

Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which they:

- demonstrate educational impact featuring the marine or coastal environment and/or improvement of coastal or marine habitats through community involvement.
- include methods and pathways for achieving positive outcomes, such as experiential, hands-on learning and stewardship; positive nature experiences; longer and/or repeated experiences with opportunities for reflection; pre-field trip preparation; age-appropriate content and delivery; strategies for long-term positive impact (which might stem from educational outcomes, or elements such as leadership development opportunities or family involvement); and/or strong evidence for ecological need and projected improvement with community involvement.

2. **Audience (15 points)**

Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which they engage communities that have historically received fewer marine education and stewardship opportunities, such as communities with low incomes; Black communities; Indigenous communities; communities of color; speakers of languages other than English/dual language learners; people with disabilities; youth in the foster system or transitioning out; LGBTQ2S+ communities; and residents of under-resourced rural and/or inland areas.

3. **Project Concept (30 points)**

Comprised of:

- **Purpose (10 points):** Projects will be assessed on the degree to which they are connected to a specific issue, interest, and/or need (which might be educational, ecological, social, cultural, etc.), and why the project is likely to be successful in addressing it. Proposals should explain the issue, interest, and/or need; how it was identified for the project audience; and why the project is of value to the community being engaged.
- **Relevant and Creative (10 points):** Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which they demonstrate that the project is relevant and appropriately designed for the audience, and the degree to which it incorporates creative ideas and innovative strategies.
- **Continuing, Building Capacity, or Creating Tools for Others (5 points):** Proposals will be assessed on whether a project will be continued after the grant ends, and the degree to which it builds organizational capacity, builds lasting collaborations, and/or creates useful tools for others in the field.
- **Reasonable Cost (5 points):** Proposals will be assessed on whether they have a reasonable budget that is clearly connected to the project goals.

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4. Proposal Content and Project Implementation (30 points)

Comprised of:

- **Organization and Staffing (10 points):** Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which the organization and staff is suited to carry out the project and work with the intended audience.
- **Project Clarity, Feasibility, and Completeness (15 points):** Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which they demonstrate the project is feasible and fully thought-out with clear, realistic goals and objectives; a realistic plan for reaching the intended audience; a workable project design; and a clear plan for implementation.
A strong proposal will demonstrate how the project objectives and goals will be successfully achieved, will include detailed and accurate cost information with eligible expenses, and will include all applicable elements of the application packet.
- **Tracking and Assessment (5 points):** Proposals will be assessed on the degree to which their plan for tracking and assessing the project's success is appropriate and tied to the goals and objectives. A strong proposal will be clear, complete, and feasible, and will explain how the results will be used.

QUESTIONS?

We will host an online meeting on Thursday, September 12, 2024, from 3:30-5:00pm, for a detailed walk-through of the WHALE TAIL® Grant application and guidelines, including time for you to ask questions about the process. [Register for the webinar](#). If you miss it, the presentation will be posted on the [grant webpage](#).

If you're considering applying for a WHALE TAIL® Grant, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or to discuss your project idea. Contact Annie Kohut Frankel at Annie.Frankel@coastal.ca.gov or Chris Parry at Chris.Parry@coastal.ca.gov.

Brief Summaries of Some Recent WHALE TAIL® Grants

Northcoast Environmental Center	\$16,624
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Project Title: *Bike Justice Humboldt*
Project Location: *Humboldt County*

A series of bike tours along Humboldt Bay and the coast will engage university students and other community members with a lens on environmental justice and increasing bicycle commuting, and provide education on basic bike maintenance, route finding, and civic engagement. At least four of the tours will be co-hosted with other local community groups and tailored to their specific interests.

Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians	\$50,000
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Project Title: *Pomo Indigenous Food Sovereignty Alliance*
Project Location: *Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties*

Youth in Pomo and other California Native American communities will learn about coastal stewardship from an indigenous perspective. They will participate in interpretive events focused on traditional harvesting, wetland restoration, ecology, and sea level rise; and attend community film screenings and discussions.

Mission Science Workshop	\$15,000
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Project Title: *Whale on Wheels*
Project Location: *San Francisco*

In-school programs will bring an interactive whale skeleton to San Francisco elementary schools to teach about whale anatomy, evolution, and conservation. Students will handle and assemble the skeleton themselves.

California Invasive Plant Council	\$41,613
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Project Title: *Shoreline Invasive Plant Professional Development Program*
Project Location: *Alameda County*

Oakland Civicorps participants will engage in a year-long professional development training for early-career professionals in the conservation and restoration fields, including in-depth shoreline ecology education and hands-on restoration experience.

Climate Resilient Communities **\$49,989**

Project Title: *Bay to Sea Youth Educational Program*
Project Location: *San Mateo County*

As part of a six-month Youth Climate Collective, high school students and young adults from North Fair Oaks, Belle Haven, and East Palo Alto will learn about sea level rise, flood zones, and pollution. Participants will go on field trips to coastal, watershed, and wetland locations guided by professionals in the field; take part in environmental career workshops; participate in a career fair; and organize beach cleanups for friends and family.

Bird School Project **\$19,990**

Project Title: *Birding with Families on the Elkhorn Slough*
Project Location: *Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties*

Participants will learn about migratory coastal birds and the importance of Monterey Bay in the Pacific Flyway migration route during Spanish/English bilingual catamaran field trips in Elkhorn Slough and community birding events in Watsonville and Salinas.

Hanford Elementary School District **\$18,029**

Project Title: *Be the Author of the Change You Wish to See in the World*
Project Location: *Hanford, Kings County*

Third graders at Jefferson Academy School will conduct research, visit the coast, and collectively publish a bilingual book about animal and plant life on the California coast. Students will host a publishing event to inspire the local community to care for the coast and its inhabitants.

DiverSeaFy **\$30,000**

Project Title: *DiverSeaFying the Underwater World*
Project Location: *Los Angeles County*

Los Angeles area teens will earn PADI Open Water Scuba certifications. Program activities will teach students about the local marine ecosystem with a conservation education focus to encourage students in environmental stewardship. Certified students will participate in dive cleanups as part of California Coastal Cleanup Day, the Black in Marine Science cleanup, and a Catalina Harbor cleanup.

'ataaxum Pomkwaan **\$33,635**

Project Title: *'ataaxum Pomwkaan - Returning to Our Homelands Project*
Project Location: *San Diego County*

Youth from northern San Diego County reservations and their families will be engaged in reclaiming their homelands through habitat restoration projects in partnership with Buena Vista Audubon Society. Youth will take part in coursework on climate change and wetlands, including Indigenous culture and history, and stewardship field trips.

Administrative Requirements

This attachment specifies some of the rules and requirements for WHALE TAIL® Grant awards.

BUDGET AND PAYMENTS

Payment shall be on a cost-reimbursement basis with documentation of all expenses, and the grant agreement shall specify the maximum dollar amount payable by the agency. The grant budget must set forth in detail the reimbursable items, unit rates as applicable, and extended total amounts for each line item. Monthly, weekly, or hourly rates as appropriate and personnel classifications should be specified when salaries and wages are a reimbursable item.

Reimbursable rates for personnel must not exceed salaries payable to State personnel for similar classifications. Any reimbursable salary that exceeds State rates must have a compelling reason for the higher rate and an explanation of how the awarding agency's interests are served by the grant agreement.

Meals and travel shall be reimbursed based on rules specified in the grant award. See the budget form in the grant application for more information. No travel outside the State of California shall be reimbursed.

SUBCONTRACTORS

Grantees shall receive prior authorization in writing by the Commission before reimbursement for any subcontract exceeding \$10,000.00. Grantees seeking contractors to perform any services exceeding the cost of \$10,000.00 shall select those contractors pursuant to a process that seeks three competitive quotations or adequate justification for the absence of bidding.

PROPERTY PURCHASED

Grantees shall receive prior authorization in writing by the Commission before any purchase exceeding \$10,000.00. Grantees shall provide in the request for authorization all particulars necessary for evaluation of the necessity or desirability of incurring such cost and the reasonableness of the price or cost.

Grantees agree to continue using items purchased under the grant agreement for the purposes outlined in the agreement, or similar activities, until fully distributed, damaged, worn-out, or obsolete.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Grant awards will include Standard Conditions and Special Conditions. Standard Conditions include items such as an indemnification requirement, an agreement to be audited, and a

non-discrimination clause. Special Conditions include items such as a requirement to provide funding credit.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Applicants should be aware that Government Code Section 11135(a) states in part that no person shall be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of any program or activity that is funded or receives any financial assistance by the State on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation.

GRANTEE CERTIFICATION CLAUSES

All grantees must sign GCC 1015, which includes clauses such as a drug-free workplace requirement and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.