

Open Space Authority Urban Grant Program 2020

Frequently Asked Questions Updated 6/3/2020



Below are questions received about the Urban Grant Program. Note that similar or related questions have been combined and that some questions have been condensed or edited for clarity.

Before beginning, we strongly encourage applicants to review both the Grant Guidelines and the ZoomGrants Tutorial, both available by clicking on "Apply" at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban>.

1. Multiple applications

Question: Can an organization apply for multiple grants?

Answer: Yes, an organization can submit multiple applications.

2. Authorizing resolution

Question: I would like to confirm that we do not need to submit a resolution at the time of application, is that right?

Answer: Yes, that is correct. However, if you are awarded a grant, an authorizing resolution will be required in order to create the grant agreement.

3. Field trip destinations

Question: Would the grant cover field trips taking residents of the Authority's jurisdiction to locations outside of the Authority's jurisdiction?

Answer: No, the grant cannot fund trips or other work outside of the Authority's jurisdiction.

4. Zoom grants

Question: Can the application can be saved and worked on over time, or does it need to be completed and submitted all in one session?

Answer: ZoomGrants has an "Auto-Save" feature that will save your work as you go. You can log out and log back in as many times as you need to.

Question: When the online application gives a word or character limit, does that only include letters, or also the spaces between the letters?

Answer: This includes the spaces as well as letters, symbols, and carriage returns. If you are copying and pasting from another location, keep in mind that some online and text editor character counters differ.

5. OSA Site Visit

Question: Does the Authority conduct an onsite visit throughout the funding cycle?

Answer: Yes, there is generally at least one site visit.

6. Funding

Question: Since the grant is given on a reimbursement format, does this mean that no funds are available until after work is complete?

Answer: The Authority reimburses grantees for expenses after they are incurred. Invoices can be submitted monthly and reimbursement typically occurs within six weeks. Disbursements of grant funds are made incrementally, as work is satisfactorily completed. The entire project does not need to be complete before submitting documentation and requesting funds

Question: Would there be any partial funding awarded, or is it all or nothing?

Answer: We expect the grant awards to be for the full grant request, though it is ultimately the Board of Director's decision.

Question: What is your estimate for when we would be able to start the programs if we are funded?

Answer: The grant agreements must be executed before grant-funded work can begin. The earliest we anticipate projects can begin is January 2021 for small grants and March 2021 for large. The actual timing may vary depending on how long it takes for a grant agreement to be executed (signed by all parties).

7. Budget

Question: Do 501c3 organizations need to include our Form 990 for the financial statement?

Answer: Non-profits should provide the most recent IRS Form 990 or internally-prepared financial statements (preferably audited).

Question: Is the budget to be done as a 3 year budget? Will the grant period still be 3 years for the larger grants?

Answer: For large grants, the grant term is 3 years; for small grants the grant term is 1 year. In either case, the budget should cover the entire grant term. For large grants, that means that there would be one project budget covering 3 years.

8. Scoring

Question: Do you need a minimum number of points on 75 (pass/fail) before being considered for bonus points? Is the evaluation a two-step process?

Answer: In order to qualify for bonus points, your application must reach the minimum number of 75 points out of 100. The evaluation is not a two-step process, it will be evaluated as a whole.

Question: Can we review how you scored past projects?

Answer: Staff reviewer scores and Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendations are included in the packet that goes to our Board of Directors for award decisions. To see this information from previous cycles, you can go to the Board meeting packet materials available from <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/public-information/public-meetings.html>. The most relevant meeting packets:

- December 10, 2016 – Urban Open Space awards
- May 9, 2018 – Urban Open Space awards
- May 24, 2018 – Environmental Education awards

9. Timeline

Question: At what points in this timeline do we get feedback?

Answer: There are a few point where feedback is available, depending on what you're looking for:

- Before the applications are due, we are happy to schedule a call to discuss your project. We cannot review your application itself, but we can answer any questions you may have.
- During the review process, we will share the staff and Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) (if applicable) recommendations as part of the meeting materials for our publicly-noticed Board of Directors meetings. This will occur in September for small grants and December for Large grants.
- After the award decisions have been made, we will offer feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Question: Clarification that for large/project grants - if agreement is done by March 2021, then no work can happen before?

Answer: Yes, that is correct. The grant agreement must be executed before work can begin.

10. OSA Preserves

Question: If we'd like to do an educational event on Authority property, how do we go about getting permission for that? Do we need to have specific dates to propose?

Answer: To request an educational event on Authority property, please send a request to Annelyse Dok (adok@openspaceauthority.org) describing the event and date(s). You will be asked to provide information about insurance and any logistics. The Authority staff will review and, once approved, will follow up regarding the event.

11. Covid-19

Question: Can you please provide guidance on COVID-related guidelines that would need to be followed for education programs? If face-to-face program delivery is not feasible due to health concerns, are online program delivery methods considered acceptable?

Answer: The Authority is following Santa Clara County public health orders, and general guidance for our trails and preserves is here: <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/visitors/conditions-safety.html#HealthNotice>

In terms of the program delivery, yes, we will accept online program delivery.

12. Matching Funds

Question: Must matching funds be provided by the organization itself, or can they be from another grant or philanthropic donor?

Answer: Cash matches can be made from the grantee's own funds, cash donations from third parties, and other grants. In-kind matches can include staff time on project, volunteer hours, staff on loan from another organization, use of existing equipment, and goods or services donations from third parties.

13. Program Map and Deep Engagement Communities (DEC)

Question: Where can we find information about DEC locations and any changes from the last grant cycle?

Answer: The DEC boundaries have not changed since last grant cycle. The boundaries are described generally in Appendix C of the grant guidelines. There is also an interactive map that includes DEC boundaries:

<https://scvosa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/StoryMapBasic/index.html?appid=73bf06dc723f441bab7c93c7fead486e>

Question: Is there a map that shows the areas of operations for the grant?

Answer: Yes, it is found in our Grant Guidelines, or here:

<https://scvosa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/StoryMapBasic/index.html?appid=73bf06dc723f441bab7c93c7fead486e>

14. Letters of Support

Question: Is there a recommended number for letters of support? Who is best suited to write a letter of support?

Answer: There is no recommended number of letters of support since it varies by project. Letters can be submitted from any person or group that supports your work, particularly if they can provide their perspective on the benefits of the proposed project.

Question: Due to shelter in place restrictions, people may have difficulty signing and sending letters of support if they don't have access to scanners, electronic signatures, etc. Would it be acceptable to submit letters of support without signatures? Or possibly in video format?

Answer: Yes, we understand that signatures may be difficult and we will be flexible when reviewing these documents. Some options that we will accept: emails, videos, and handwritten letters (though they need to be received by the application due date of July 1, 2020).

15. Program format

Question: Would OSA consider funding for program curriculum development to convert to a distance-learning format (that can also be used after the pandemic)?

Answer: Yes, distance learning is eligible for funding.

16. CEQA

Question: Do we need to complete California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to submission of the grant application?

Answer: For Capital improvement projects, CEQA should be complete (or very close) as this will be considered when evaluating project readiness.