



**FY 2020 – 2022
COMPANION DOCUMENT
for the
RESILIENT SIERRA NEVADA
COMMUNITIES
GRANT GUIDELINES**

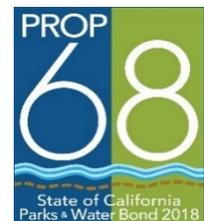
Directed Grant Program



**Sierra Nevada Watershed
Improvement Program**

Funded by Proposition 68

**California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal
Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018**



The Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California.

sierranevada.ca.gov

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Background	3
III.	Program Priorities for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022	5
	Additional Considerations.....	6
	Engagement with California Native American Tribes.....	6
	Disadvantaged Communities	6
	Geographic Distribution of Funds	6
	Applicant Eligibility	6
	Project Eligibility	7
IV.	Program Process.....	8
	Project Development.....	8
	Schedule	8
	Evaluation Process	8
	Evaluation Criteria.....	9

I. Introduction

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is pleased to announce the next funding cycle for the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Directed Grant Program, effective July 1, 2020.

The [Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Grant Guidelines](#) (Grant Guidelines) released in 2019 is the governing document for the program. This Companion Document describes the program priorities for this funding cycle. It is intended to provide specific details for this funding cycle but should be considered in conjunction with the Grant Guidelines.

SNC anticipates the availability of \$1 million for the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Directed Grant Program in this funding cycle: Fiscal Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. However, the amount of funding available is subject to change.

II. Background

The mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. The bipartisan Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act (Act), enacted in 2004 and commencing with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 33300, established the SNC; Sections 33343 and 33346 set forth the authority for SNC to award grants of funds in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. The statute that created the SNC emphasizes the importance of carrying out the mission in an integrated and complementary manner and the important role an organization providing strategic direction and resources to the Region can play. The SNC's activities fall under seven statutorily mandated program areas:

- 1) Increasing the opportunity for tourism and recreation in the Region
- 2) Protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
- 3) Aiding in the preservation of working landscapes
- 4) Reducing the risk of natural disasters such as wildfire
- 5) Protecting and improving water and air quality
- 6) Assisting the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program
- 7) Enhancing public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

The [SNC Strategic Plan](#) (Plan) is developed in accordance with the Act and provides direction for SNC activities and the Grant Guidelines (Guidelines). The Plan identifies five Regional Goals:

- 1) Healthy Watersheds and Forests
- 2) Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities
- 3) Vibrant Recreation and Tourism
- 4) Strategic Lands Conserved
- 5) Impactful Regional Identity

The SNC recognizes the unique challenges that face rural, resource-dependent communities in the Sierra Nevada. The Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities goal is intended to increase the environmental, economic, and social resilience of Sierra Nevada communities.

California voters passed [Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018](#), on June 5, 2018.

Proposition 68 added Division 45 to the Public Resources Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for purposes identified in the Act. Proposition 68 recognizes the critical importance of California’s rural communities and directs funds to be used to support natural resource-based economies. Section 80110(9) allocates \$30 million of these funds to SNC for purposes specified by its governing statute.

III. Program Priorities for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022

The Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Directed Grant Program is a multi-disciplinary grant program that will provide resources for capacity building and technical support to local agencies, organizations, and tribes. These funds can be used to design, manage, and implement projects that will increase community resiliency against, and recovery from, natural disasters and ecological and economic challenges.

Threats to Sierra Nevada communities have escalated over the last several decades. Wildfires now occur on a larger scale and with increased regularity, affecting more acres and public health. Unhealthy watershed conditions surrounding these communities make them particularly susceptible to drought and resulting impacts. In addition, a changing climate will likely exacerbate the situation with increasing temperatures and more extreme weather. Economically, many Sierra Nevada communities are experiencing a shrinking tax base, a reduced workforce, and changing demographics. While recreation, tourism, and working landscapes remain important elements of local economies, many communities are struggling with economic diversification and job creation. The result is that significant portions of the Sierra Nevada now meet the definition of "disadvantaged".

The specific focus area of the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Directed Grant Program for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 is projects that directly address the nexus among:

- 1) Environmental Needs,
- 2) Economic Needs, and
- 3) Community Needs.

The program will support the planning and implementation of projects that are specifically designed to confront issues that impact the environment, economy, and communities. This may include a broad array of projects, such as the protection of public infrastructure from wildfire, workforce development through the implementation of natural resource management activities or the development of community resource facilities, the implementation of climate adaptation initiatives, or wildfire recovery efforts for current and future community resiliency.

Consistent with the requirements of Proposition 68, all projects must either plan for or implement capital improvement projects that will provide long-term benefits California citizens.

SNC anticipates the availability of \$1 million for the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Directed Grant Program in this funding cycle, pending state budget authorization.

Additional Considerations

Engagement with California Native American Tribes

The SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes as early as possible in the development, planning, and implementation of projects. SNC staff can assist project proponents with identifying Native American tribes whose ancestral homelands may be in the project area and help provide contact information for those tribes. The SNC will notify the appropriate tribal contacts regarding all eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area. SNC may prioritize projects in which tribal communities are involved.

Disadvantaged Communities

Proposition 68 states that at least 20 percent of the funds available pursuant to Chapter 8 shall be allocated to projects serving severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC). (§80008[a][1]). SNC may prioritize projects that serve SDACs. Please visit the California State Parks website for a [map of community designations](https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

Geographic Distribution of Funds

SNC strives to achieve an equitable balance in the distribution of grant funds across the Sierra Nevada Region, appropriate to program priorities and the variety of needs across the region. SNC may take the geographic distribution of funds into consideration when developing projects.

Applicant Eligibility

Grant funds may be authorized for:

- Public agencies: any city, county, special district, joint powers authority, state agency, or federal agency
- Qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations: "Nonprofit Organization" means a private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC.
- Eligible Tribal Entities: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is one or both of the

following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register; (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe.

NOTE: SNC's governing statute does not allow grants to mutual water companies.

Project Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a grant award from the SNC under this program, projects must meet all the following criteria:

- Be located within the Sierra Nevada Region.
- Be consistent with the Program Objectives described in the [Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities Grant Guidelines](#).
- Meet the focus area described in the Program Priorities section of this Companion Document, concurrently addressing environmental, economic, and community needs.
- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the [SNC Strategic Plan](#)
- Meet all requirements of [Proposition 68](#).
- Be consistent with recommendations of the [2018 California Forest Carbon Plan](#).
- Result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit.

Any additional requirements or restrictions, including those specific to additional funding sources or new state budget requirements, will be included on the SNC website program description.

IV. Program Process

Project Development

As the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities program is a directed grant program, proposals are developed in conjunction with SNC. To initiate consideration of a project, an applicant should contact the appropriate [SNC Area Representative](#) or other SNC staff. The Area Representative will assist the applicant organizer to determine if the project meets SNC criteria. If it is determined that SNC will consider partnering on the project, the Area Representative will share the SNC Concept Proposal Form with the applicant and assist in developing the project. Upon review of a Concept Proposal, applicants may be directed to develop a full Proposal in conjunction with SNC staff.

Schedule

Proposals are accepted on a continuous basis and will be considered on a quarterly cycle, starting July 2020.

- 1) **July 2020:** Program announcement in July 2020
- 2) **September 2020:** Review of Concept Proposals and direction given to develop full Proposals
- 3) **November 2020:** Review of full Proposals and decisions regarding continued due diligence activities and potential recommendations to the SNC Governing Board
- 4) **March 2021:** If due diligence is complete, recommended to the SNC Governing Board for grant award

The cycle will repeat every quarter.

Evaluation Process

The SNC will work closely with applicants in the development of the project and project proposal. As such, project evaluation will not come after submission of a proposal, but instead will occur upon initial discussion and throughout the project development process. The following evaluation aspects will be considerations in project development:

- 1) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by a technical expert for technical merit.
- 2) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by an environmental compliance expert.

- 3) Proposals will be shared with appropriate county/city planning, water agency, and tribal representatives. If there are any privacy concerns related to information in a proposal, please discuss them with SNC staff before submission.
- 4) An SNC Evaluation Team will independently review and meet to discuss the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described in the following section.
- 5) The Evaluation Team will prepare a recommendation for SNC's Executive Team.
- 6) After the evaluation process is complete, including all due diligence and analysis by SNC, funding recommendation(s) will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda at the discretion of SNC's Executive Officer.

NOTE: The SNC will consider the geographic distribution of projects, tribal involvement, project locations related to disadvantaged communities, and project types when considering recommendations to the Board.

Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will not move forward with recommendation to SNC's Executive Officer until the following criteria have been addressed to the satisfaction of SNC and the project proponent:

1) **Alignment with funding and program goals and related state priorities**

The degree to which a project aligns with:

- a. Current Funding Cycle priorities addressing environmental, economic, and community needs
- b. The [SNC Strategic Plan](#)
- c. [Proposition 68](#) or other funding source
- d. State Planning Priorities addressed in the Grant Guidelines, including [Safeguarding California](#) and the [California Forest Carbon Plan](#)
- e. Other local, Regional, state, or federal plans

2) **Community Resilience / Natural Resource Benefits**

The degree to which the project provides multiple tangible, enduring, public benefits with a high likelihood that the benefits will be realized. Is the need for the specific project clearly identified and explained? Are the community resilience benefits reasonable? Will the project benefit disadvantaged communities?

3) **Project Readiness**

The degree to which the project is ready to proceed promptly if funded. Is project planning and coordination complete? Is access secured, environmental

compliance, permitting, or other necessary preparations complete as appropriate? Is all funding identified or secured?

4) **Project Design**

Clarity on the project purpose, goals, deliverables, and schedule. Is the project approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives and deliverables of the project?

5) **Project Budget**

The degree to which the budget is adequate and reasonable to implement the project. Are proposal costs clearly identified, supported, and meet reasonable levels of fees for service?

6) **Long-Term Management**

Is a plan, funding, and the responsible entity in place for carrying out long-term management? How will public benefits be sustained?

7) **Likelihood of Success**

Does the project organizer have the necessary experience and sufficient capacity to implement the project as described?

8) **Community Support and Collaboration**

The degree to which the project has public and institutional support at the local, Regional, or larger scale and the local community or other stakeholders are engaged in project planning or delivery. Was the project developed as part of collaborative? Is there clear and demonstrable community outreach and support for the project and any community economic benefits? Is there tribal support for or tribal participation in the project?

9) **Landscape Level Context**

The degree to which the proposed project is part of a larger plan or coordinated effort. Does the project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect strategic goals?

10) **Leveraging**

The degree to which a project provides in-kind services and/or secured federal, state, private, or local cost share funding. Have non-monetary and/or funding resources of agencies and organizations other than SNC been identified and secured?