

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION, TOURISM, AND EQUITABLE OUTDOOR ACCESS

GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

June 2025

Companion Document

Directed Grant Program

FY 2025 – 2027 Funding Cycle

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Introduction

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is pleased to announce the next funding cycle for the [Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Directed Grant Program](#), effective July 1, 2025.

The Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Grant Guidelines (Grant Guidelines) released in 2019 and updated in 2025 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.

The SNC anticipates the availability of \$4.1 million for the Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Directed Grant Program in this funding cycle, during Fiscal Years 2025-2027. However, the amount of funding available is subject to change.

Program Priorities for Fiscal Years 2025-2027

The SNC recognizes the fundamental connection between sustainable recreation, tourism, and equitable outdoor access across the Region, the health and resilience of Sierra-Cascade communities, and the ecological health of California's watersheds and forests. Working with partners to strategically implement activities supporting recreation, tourism, and equitable outdoor access will protect these benefits and the resources that are unique to the Sierra-Cascade Region. This program aims to support innovative efforts to enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities and increase access for all to public lands in the Sierra-Cascade Region.

The specific focus areas of the Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program for Fiscal Years 2025-2027 are outlined below. Please note that these focus areas are more limited than the overall program described in the grant guidelines. Projects must fall within one of the focus areas to be considered for funding.

- 1. Build Climate Resilience**

Support the planning, development, and maintenance of recreation and outdoor infrastructure that anticipates or adapts to increased use and pressure from climate change and visitors escaping extreme weather. Projects must clearly have multiple benefits, such as tourism as well as education, recreation infrastructure with water-quality benefits, or recreation with habitat protection.

- 2. Improve/Increase Access for All**

Improve and/or increase access to nature, including for communities that have not traditionally had equitable access through grants which result in either the implementation or identification, prioritization, and preparation for capital improvement projects. Projects must clearly have multiple benefits, such as tourism as well as education, recreation infrastructure with water-quality benefits, or recreation with habitat protection.

- 1. Landscape-scale Assessments**

Support landscape-scale partnerships to develop an assessment of landscape conditions and risks to recreational infrastructure and other assets. Projects must clearly have multiple benefits, such as tourism as well as education, recreation infrastructure with water-quality benefits, or recreation with habitat protection.

Consistent with the requirements of Proposition 68, all projects must either plan for or implement capital improvement projects that will benefit California citizens for no less than 30 years.

Project Types

The Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program supports planning projects and implementation projects, as described below. Each project proposal must identify whether it is a planning or implementation project; the project types may not be combined.

All grant awards will be limited to no more than \$500,000.

Planning Projects

Planning projects include project development and other pre-implementation activities that will result in specific, identified future on-the-ground project(s). Future actions resulting from planning activities should be described in the proposal. Lead agencies for CEQA/NEPA compliance with future actions should be identified, if applicable.

Examples of potential planning project activities include, but are not limited to:

- The development of a recreation and tourism collaborative or partnership that identifies and prioritizes site-improvement projects across a large geographic region.
- Baseline studies, cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys necessary for the implementation of a future on-the-ground recreation project.

Implementation Projects

Implementation projects are the execution of on-the-ground projects. Examples of potential implementation projects include, but are not limited to:

- The implementation of priority projects identified through a collaborative process.
- Trail building and/or improvements.
- Accessible trails or recreation access points.
- Site improvements that minimize impacts to natural resources, e.g. food storage lockers, campsite improvements, toilets, re-routing trails around sensitive areas, trailhead improvements that protect resources.

Ineligible Projects

Examples of ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Planning projects that do not identify specific future on-the ground projects.

- Funding to support ongoing programs that do not result in on-the-ground site improvement.
- Research, education, outreach, or event-related projects, although these types of activities may be included as a small part of the overall implementation of a project eligible for SNC grant funds.
- Grants to service or repay loans.
- Projects dictated by a legal settlement or mandated to address a violation of, or an order (citation) to comply with, a law or regulation.
- Any projects that do not meet the program priorities described in this companion document.

This list is not exhaustive and is offered only as guidance to potential applicants. The SNC will make determinations of eligibility on a project-by-project basis. If applicants have questions about the eligibility of their project, they should consult with their SNC Area Representative.

Additional Considerations

Engagement with California Native American Tribes

The SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes in the development, planning, and implementation of projects and will prioritize projects in which tribal communities are involved. The SNC staff can assist project applicants with identifying Native American tribes whose ancestral homelands may be in the project area and 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.

Severely 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). (Pub. Resources Code, § 80008, subd. (a)(1)). The SNC may prioritize projects that serve SDAC. [View maps of Severely Disadvantaged Community \(SDAC\) areas.](#)

California Conservation Corps and California Association of Local Conservation Corps

All projects that involve an on-the-ground site improvement component shall consult with representatives of both the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and California Association of Local Conservation Corps (CALCC) to determine the feasibility of Corps participation. Projects that do not include a site improvement component do not need to notify the Corps. The Corps has developed a [Grant Consultation webpage](#) that fully

describes the consultation process. The process takes 14 business days to complete after submission of the Corps Consultation Form.

Geographic Distribution of Funds

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

Program Process

Project Development

As the Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access 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 Concept Proposal Form with the applicant and assist in developing the project. Upon review of the Concept Proposal, applicants may be directed to develop a Final Proposal in conjunction with SNC staff.

Schedule

The program will be announced in July 2025. Proposals will be accepted on a continuous basis and considered on a quarterly cycle.

- **December 2025:** Review of Concept Proposals received by December 1, 2025, and direction given to develop Final Proposals.
- **March 2026:** Review of Final Proposals received by March 1, 2026 and decisions regarding continued due diligence activities and potential recommendations to the SNC Governing Board.
- **June 2026:** If due diligence is complete, Final Proposals recommended to the SNC Governing Board for grant award.

The cycle will be repeated every quarter until funds are no longer available.