

CAL FIRE Wood Products and Bioenergy

Business and Workforce Development Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: March 16, 2022



1. *I need to hire and train workers for my business. Would I be eligible for a workforce development grant?*

- a. No. Workforce development projects should be expressly intent on providing training to workers in forest-sector fields. Qualifying workforce development projects generally include the ability to provide recurring training opportunities to unique cohorts of individuals and may include the award of institutionally recognized training certificates. A proposal to hire and train workers for your business could apply as a Business Development project.

2. *Is there a standard format for business plan submissions?*

- a. No. We expect to receive a variety of business plans tailored to each individual proposal. Business plans will likely be a combination of narrative and quantitative (e.g. financial model) information and should address the items identified within the Business Plan Grant Selection Criteria guidance in the Grant Guidelines document on page 7.

3. *Our business plan includes proprietary and confidential information. Will it become a part of the public record?*

- a. CAL FIRE is a State agency subject to the California Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250 et seq.). Unless there is a specific statutory exemption, all records included within applications are subject to the Act, whereby allowing the public access and inspection of public information from government agencies. The Wood Products and Bioenergy Team understands that businesses may have information that is proprietary. Therefore, we recommend that you consult with CAL FIRE Wood Products staff prior to the submission of documents that may contain proprietary or confidential information.

4. Can I count existing equipment towards match?

- a. No, the purchase of equipment made prior to the grant agreement execution are not eligible to be considered towards match requirements. However, documented use of equipment as part of the grant project may be counted as in-kind match toward the project.

5. What are the grant selection criteria for a Research & Development (R&D) grant application?

- a. Eligible R&D projects need to support either business development or workforce development. Submit your application under one of those categories and your proposal will be scored under the applicable criteria.

6. Do R&D grant applications require a business plan?

- a. Yes, if you are conducting the R&D to support your new business activity (e.g. feasibility of utilizing a new species for a wood product). If not (e.g. research by an academic institution), a business plan is not required.

7. Does the 1:2 grant-to-match ratio for business development grants above \$500,000 apply to the entire grant amount, or just the amount above \$500,000?

- a. The required match is 1:1 up to \$500,000 and 1:2 for grant amounts above that. For example, an \$800,000 grant would require a \$1,100,000 match (1x\$500,000 + 2x\$300,000)

8. What is an in-kind contribution for matching?

- a. Matching through in-kind contributions are any non-financial contributions to the project (e.g., volunteer time or employee time) that are funded by another source and contribute to achievement of the deliverables spelled out in the Project Application. CAL FIRE resources may not be used as match.

9. Can you write me a letter of support for my grant application to (other State or federal agency)?

- a. No, our policy is that we do not write letters of support since, as individuals, we may be asked to participate in review panels for grants from other State and federal agencies.

10. When are applications due?

- a. Applications are accepted continuously and reviewed quarterly until funding has been fully awarded. Applications should be submitted by March 31, 2022, to be considered for the first round of funded projects. Proposals not selected for funding have the option of receiving feedback from Wood Products staff. Applicants will need to reapply to be considered in subsequent granting cycles.

11. Can we schedule a meeting with you to discuss our project?

- a. Yes. We receive a lot of requests for pre-application meetings, and we certainly want to accommodate as many as possible. We do request that everyone who would participate in the meeting first go to our webpage. There they will find a link to our grant guidelines and a link to a recording of the virtual grant workshop we presented on Jan 26, 2022. After you review those materials, we would be happy to schedule a short call.

12. Can I apply for both a business development and workforce development grant for my project? If so, how do I apply?

- a. Yes. Your project may be eligible for both, though that situation is not common. See question 1. (above) for information regarding workforce development grants.

13. My organization has several activities and ideas. Can we submit one application that covers multiple projects?

- a. Yes, but we would recommend that you submit separate applications for separate projects. If you do combine, you will need to break out costs and estimated outcomes for each project.

14. Can I apply for one of these grants if I already have, or will be applying for, another CAL FIRE grant?

- a. Yes; however, grants from other CAL FIRE programs are not eligible to be considered as match for Business and Workforce Development Grants. Grants from other State organizations (e.g. California Energy Commission, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research) could qualify as match. Activities to be funded by this grant program may not be reimbursed via another CAL FIRE grant program or an external funding source (aka no “double dipping”).

15. Is my project eligible for an indirect rate greater than 12% according to Temporary Directive 3975?

- a. At this time, the Business and Workforce Development Grant Program is limiting an indirect rate not to exceed the 12% indicated in the grant guidelines. If this changes in the future, the grant guidelines will be revised to allow applicants to request the higher rate in the future.

16. Which of the grant selection criteria categories should I address in the Scope of Work for my Business Development project proposal?

- a. The scope of work for Business Development proposals should address the selection criteria categories that are not fully captured in other portions of the application. Selection criteria to be addressed should include, at least in part, the following: Project Background, Applicant Qualifications, Matching Finances, Restoration Impact, Project Readiness and Job Creation as outlined in the Grant Guidelines.

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