

STEP Final Q&A Session Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers for the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Sustainable Transportation Equity Project Solicitation Final Applicant Teleconference

August 13, 2020

Introduction

On August 13, 2020, California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff held the Final Grant Applicant Teleconference to answer questions regarding the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) Implementation Grant Solicitation (Solicitation). STEP, which was approved in the FY 2019-20 Funding Plan for Clean Transportation Incentives, is a new pilot that takes a community-based approach to overcoming barriers to clean transportation. STEP's overarching purpose is to increase transportation equity in disadvantaged and low-income communities throughout California. STEP aims to address community residents' transportation needs, increase residents' access to key destinations (e.g., schools, grocery stores, workplaces, community centers, medical facilities), and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Please note that the funding available for STEP has changed from \$22 million to \$19.5 million. Specifically, CARB has \$1.75 million available for the Planning and Capacity Building Grant and \$17.75 million available for the Implementation Grant. For more information about STEP, see:

<https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/lct/opportunitiesgov/step.htm>

The questions and answers (Q&A) in this document include both questions received via email before the Q&A session and questions asked during the Q&A session. To minimize repetition, similar questions have been combined and answered together. Staff encourages Applicants to read this document as CARB has provided more written detail than what was discussed during the Q&A session. *The following written responses serve as an update to and take precedence over verbal responses provided at the Q&A session.*

The deadline to receive all STEP proposals is **August 31, 2020 at 5:00 pm Pacific Time**. If the Applicant is submitting their proposal electronically, CARB must receive a zipped and signed proposal, including all of the required components, no later than 5:00 pm (Pacific Time) on August 31, 2020 to step@arb.ca.gov. CARB will send a confirmation email to the Applicant within 24 hours of receiving the electronic version of the proposal. If the Applicant is submitting by mail or in person, CARB must receive

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one signed original of, four copies of, and one flash drive with the proposal, including all of the required components, no later than 5:00 pm (Pacific Time) on August 31, 2020 at the California Air Resources Board headquarters at 1001 I Street, Sacramento, California 95814. Once the proposal has been mailed or delivered in person, send an email to step@arb.ca.gov indicating that you have submitted a proposal. CARB will send a confirmation email to the Applicant within 24 hours of receiving the hard-copy of the proposal. See page 39 of the Implementation Grant solicitation and page 30 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitation for more instructions and details about proposal submission.

Technical Assistance

Potential Applicants interested in technical assistance should still fill out the technical assistance survey, even if they missed the July 15 deadline:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZn9n-7gGU7ScAkaBjllPwReXRpkH6ohWUKut8DG4BzUN2tw/viewform>. Estolano Advisors will contact all survey respondents and will determine their capacity to support any potential Applicants that signed up for technical assistance after the July 15 deadline.

Solicitation Errors and Clarifications

In the Applicant tab of Appendix B (for both the Implementation and the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations), the Statement of Qualifications Column G provides a dropdown menu with the options "Complete" or "Incomplete." However, the proposal must include statements of qualifications for each Applicant. Proposals that only fill out the column with one of the dropdown options and do not actually provide a statement of qualifications will not meet the eligibility threshold identified in Appendix C, "Proposal includes all proposal components." Applicants may provide statements of qualifications with one of the following two approaches. Either approach is acceptable; one is not preferred over the other.

- Approach 1: Attach a statement of qualifications for each Applicant in a separate document and indicate when that is complete by filling out the dropdown menu. Title any attachments "Statement of Qualifications" so CARB can easily identify that this information has been provided.
- Approach 2: Remove the data validation that created the dropdown menu in the relevant cells and write the statements of qualifications in the proposal template itself.

In the Timeline tab of Appendix B (for both the Implementation and the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations), the worksheet pulls project cost values from the Budget tab based on the task number entered. This does not include any direct labor

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or direct costs entered. Applicants will not be penalized for following the template. However, it would be helpful for Applicants to include another line in the timeline for direct labor and direct costs and type in the relevant funding amount per disbursement. Work with the technical assistance contractor if you need help with this.

Page 5 of the Implementation Grant Appendix C says, "Map identifies the STEP Community boundary, the tentative location of each project, and the disadvantaged community or low-income community census tracts within the STEP Community," and "At least 50 percent of the geographic area of the STEP Community is disadvantaged or low-income community census tracts." However, per the requirements of STEP identified in the Fiscal Year 19-20 Funding Plan for Clean Transportation Incentives,¹ the section should read, "Map identifies the STEP Community boundary, the tentative location of each project, and the disadvantaged community census tracts within the STEP Community," and "At least 50 percent of the geographic area of the STEP Community is disadvantaged community census tracts." These requirements are correctly stated on page 20 of the Implementation Grant solicitation.

Page E-12 of the Implementation Grant Appendix E identifies acquisition of right-of-way as an eligible cost. Page E-14 of Appendix E identifies right-of-way as an ineligible cost. To clarify, costs associated with procuring access to the right-of-way are eligible costs and may be funded by STEP. Purchase of the right-of-way is an ineligible cost and will not be funded by STEP.

Page E-3 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant Appendix E and page E-14 of the Implementation Grant Appendix E identify costs for implementing existing policies, plans, ordinances, or programs (e.g., local government staff salaries, supplies, meetings, etc.) as an ineligible cost. To clarify, this was intended to prohibit STEP funds supplanting existing funds for implementing existing projects. It is not meant to prohibit planning or implementation projects that build upon previously developed plans.

Applicants should address the impacts of COVID-19 on their proposed project plans in their STEP proposals. The impacts of COVID-19 are particularly important to consider for planned community engagement activities and transportation services. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they will adapt their project plans depending on the progression of COVID-19 and provide back-up plans for planned activities where applicable.

¹ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/fy1920fundingplan.pdf>

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Applicant Eligibility

1. Question: For STEP Implementation Grants, could you please confirm that only lead applicants can be direct recipients of funding? Is there any possibility for CARB to enter into separate grant agreements with sub-applicants?

Answer: That is correct; only the Lead Applicant for each proposal will enter into the grant agreement with CARB and will be eligible to directly receive funding from CARB. CARB will not enter separate grant agreements with Sub-applicants.

2. Questions:
 - a. We are hoping to apply as a sub-applicant. We are a project of a fiscal sponsor. Who is considered to be the sub-applicant, us or our fiscal sponsor? (We aren't applying as two separate entities.)
 - b. Who should be the sub applicant, the sponsor or the project of the sponsor?

Answer: Per Appendix A, a Sub-applicant is an entity that enters into a Partnership Structure with the Lead Applicant for the purpose of applying for a STEP grant and that is responsible for implementing project or project elements funded through STEP. Assuming that another entity has already been identified as a Lead Applicant, if both the fiscal sponsor and the project lead will have a role in implementing a project or project element funded through STEP, they should both be identified as Sub-applicants. However, this may be dependent on how the partners decide to develop the Partnership Structure. Generally, more information about the partners will help CARB understand the Applicants' readiness to implement the projects when CARB is reviewing and scoring proposals.

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3. Questions:

- a. We are planning to apply as a sub-applicant. We are a project of a fiscal sponsor. Should our letters of support, statement of qualifications, description of organizational readiness to conduct equity work, and declaration of conflicts of interest come from us (the project) or from our fiscal sponsor?
- b. Our fiscal sponsor will be a sub-applicant—who should letter of support come from?

Answer: Per page 13 of both the Implementation Grant and the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations, if an entity that would be the Lead Applicant does not have the administrative capacity to assume this role, they may be a Sub-applicant and partner with another entity applying as the Lead Applicant. In this scenario, all Lead Applicant requirements would still apply. The Lead Applicant would still enter into a grant agreement with CARB and assume responsibility and accountability for the use and expenditure of received STEP funds, but the partnership could be set up so that the Lead Applicant supports the grant administratively and the Sub-applicant leads project implementation. The proposal should contain letters of support, statements of qualifications, descriptions of organizational readiness to conduct equity work, and declarations of conflicts of interest from each Applicant – both the Lead Applicant and all Sub-applicants. This is no difference if one Applicant is acting as the fiscal sponsor for another Applicant.

4. Question: If a project with multiple parts and partners contains elements where one partner would be responsible for implementing one project component and another partner is responsible for another project component, who should be the lead applicant? For instance, if a transit agency is partnering with a city to submit a project with components that must be implemented by the transit agency, must the transit agency be the sub-applicant because it is not an eligible lead applicant or can it be the lead applicant in this case?

Answer: It is up to the Applicants to determine which of the Applicants is best suited to serve as the Lead Applicant regardless of which Applicants are responsible for which project components. Transit agencies are eligible Lead Applicants as they are included in STEP's definition of local governments in Appendix A.

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5. Questions:

- a. If the majority of grant funds will be used by the Lead Applicant (a local government) to retain the services of a private transportation service designer & provider to conduct a feasibility study, should the private company be considered a Sub-Applicant or a Sub-Contractor?
- b. Do we need to identify the consultants, suppliers in the proposal? If we include them, would they be considered, "sub-applicants"?

Answer: If you already have identified the contractor, they should be identified as a Sub-applicant. Per Appendix A, a Sub-applicant is an entity that enters into a Partnership Structure with the Lead Applicant for the purpose of applying for a STEP grant and that is responsible for implementing project or project elements funded through STEP. If the contractor is not known, please explain the process that will be used to select a contractor.

6. Question: Is a formal agreement required between a lead and sub-app?

Answer: A formal agreement is not required between the Lead Applicant and the Sub-applicant at the time of application. Page 17 of both the Implementation and Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations begins to outline STEP's partnership structure requirements. The Partnership Structure must describe the partners' governance, legal, and financial relationships, but at the time of application these do not have to be defined via a formal agreement. The Grantee (the Lead Applicant) will ultimately be responsible for ensuring implementation of the grant agreement.

7. Question: For partnership structured governance, can there be some level of hierarchy?

Answer: Yes, the structure of the partnership is completely dependent on what the partners decide together. Applicants should clearly define whatever structure is determined in their STEP proposal.

8. Question: Can Sub-applicants be added later?

Answer: Yes, additional project implementers may be brought on to the project during implementation.

Benefits Quantification

1. Question: How do we calculate vehicles miles traveled (VMT) reduction if we increase accessibility for those who couldn't go there in the first place?
Example of family that couldn't go to the library due to lack of transportation and now they have funded a bookmobile. Do we use an example of reducing VMT if they had gone to the library?

Answer: First, it is important to clarify that STEP only asks Applicants to quantify projects under a Clean Transportation Strategy. Per Appendix E, bookmobiles are considered an element of a local goods movement project, which is considered to be a Supporting Strategy. Second, average expected VMT is only an optional input in the Benefits Calculator. If it is known, it can be input and will override the calculations that the calculator uses to identify VMT and VMT reduction. If it is not known, the calculator will use the other inputs provided (such as average occupancy, number of vehicles, and length of vehicle trip) to estimate the VMT and VMT reduction associated with the project. In this calculation, an adjustment factor takes into account that some riders that may use the new service would not have otherwise driven their personal vehicle (e.g., they may have taken public transit, active transportation, or a shared mobility service already, or they may not have taken that trip at all). The technical assistance providers can help Implementation Grant Applicants complete the Benefits Calculator appropriately.

2. Question: What do year 1 and final year mean?

Answer: The Definitions tab of the Benefits Calculator (Appendix I) provides definitions of all inputs, including Year 1 and Final Year. Year 1 is the first year the project will be in operation or in use. The Final Year is the last year that the project will be in operation or in use based on available funding and the life of the vehicles or infrastructure.

3. Question: Why does the Benefits Calculator ask for the number of vehicles in Year 1 and in the Final Year?

Answer: Some projects may roll-out slowly or plan to expand over time. Differentiating between the number of vehicles in Year 1 and in the Final Year helps account for these circumstances. If this is not the case for a particular project, the number of vehicles entered into these two fields may be the same. This is described in the Definitions tab of Appendix I.

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4. Question: In the benefits calculator, there is not an appropriate vehicle type for our service or a way to indicate months rather than years of application. How should we input the values to best calculate these benefits?

Answer: Identify and provide the input that most closely aligns with the reality of your project. If selecting between two options, CARB prefers that the more conservative option (the option that will result in a smaller reduction in greenhouse gas emissions) be selected. The technical assistance providers can help Implementation Grant Applicants complete the Benefits Calculator appropriately.

5. Question: The benefits calculator defines "ridehailing" as "Does the project provide on-demand ride services where rides are arranged online to connect a passenger with drivers using their personal vehicles?". Would this be considered ride-hailing: a program that provides on-demand rides through mobile or phone to connect a passenger with a service that employs the drivers and the service owns the vehicles?

Answer: Yes. The Benefits Calculator incorporates deadhead miles into calculations for ridehailing vehicles. It is important to take these deadhead miles into account regardless of who owns the vehicle for any services where a driver will drive the vehicle significant distances without a passenger (e.g., to pick up a passenger).

Budget and Timeline

1. Question: Can you walk through the budget tab in the template. What is envisioned under direct labor expense for grant implementation vs direct labor expense for each project? What about consultant costs for a specific project?

Answer: Labor costs should be the costs of all employees or entities implementing aspects of the grant. Labor costs under the Grant Implementation heading in the Budget tab are labor costs that directly relate to grant implementation as defined on page 32 of the Implementation Grant solicitation and page 28 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitation (grant implementation costs are the direct and indirect costs for administrative activities related to implementation of the grant). Labor costs for each project in the Budget tab are labor costs directly associated with the project. Consultant costs for a project may be entered as labor costs for the project. Generally, Applicants should make sure that all of the proposal costs are represented somewhere in the Budget tab. CARB will work with the preliminary Grantees during the grant agreement process to update any cost categorization necessary.

2. Question: It looks like column H of the Timeline tab in Appendix B was set up to grab the amount of funding in its totality (via a vlookup). If there is a task that spans the entire project but starts in disbursement 1, do you want these tasks to be displayed by timeframe? For example, a telematic service which extends through the duration of the grant timeline—do you want us to divide it up? How much detail? How many tasks?

Answer: The proposal's score will not be impacted if the Applicant uses the proposal template and formulas as they currently exist. However, ideally, CARB would like to know how much funding will be requested within each disbursement request. There are two possible approaches for this: (1) Enter the recurring task number in each disbursement request section in the Timeline tab, delete the formula in column H, and enter the appropriate amount of funding for that task for each disbursement request OR (2) create a task in the BUDGET tab for each disbursement request and keep the Timeline tab the way it is.

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3. Question: What does disbursement #1 mean?

Answer: Disbursement request #1 on the Timeline tab of Appendix B is the identification of the first time that the Grantee will submit a request to CARB for reimbursement based on the tasks completed thus far.

4. Question: For labor that is on the salary, how should that be noted?

Answer: Divide the annual salary by the number of hours you expect the staff to work to come up with an estimated hourly wage for salaried staff.

5. Questions:

- a. Is there a min or max of community engagement activities funding?
- b. Is there any minimum or maximum budget threshold for community engagement for implementation grant? For example, minimum 5% of grant request should be for community engagement activities.

Answer: No, there is no minimum or maximum amount of funding that can be used for community engagement for either grant type.

6. Question: Can a community partner be in the budget for contracted services?

Answer: Yes, the budget may include funds for Community Partners. See the Community Inclusion Guidance linked in Appendix F for best practices regarding funding for Community Partners, along with other community stakeholders.

7. Question: How specific do you need to be in the Planning Grant budget when it comes to outreach? We don't know yet who it will be etc. It will be a combination of community partners.

Answer: The more detail the Applicant can provide the easier it will be for CARB to understand the proposal and score it appropriately. However, we understand that there will likely still be some unknowns at the time of application. If there are unknowns, please provide information in the proposal about how you plan to make those decisions. For example, if you are not sure which Community Partners will be conducting outreach, please explain how you will identify those Community Partners.

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Process

1. Question: Has the \$19,500,000 funding amount for STEP been finalized? If not, when can we expect to receive the finalized budget amount?

Answer: Yes, we have confirmed that STEP has \$19.5 million available for this solicitation.

2. Questions:

- a. Are you still expecting about ten Planning Grant awards?
- b. Before the total funding amount for the STEP program was reduced, it was mentioned that Planning and Capacity Building Grant awards would be around \$200k each, max. With the reduction, should all projects reduce their project budgets accordingly, or will there just be fewer projects funded?

Answer: We anticipate potentially awarding fewer planning grants to mirror the slightly lower amount of funds available (from \$2 million to \$1.75 million). STEP does not have a minimum or maximum amount of funding set for any projects or proposals. Applicants should apply for the amount of funding they actually need to complete their proposed project(s). The number of awards will ultimately be determined based on the amount of funding requested by the highest scoring proposals.

3. Question: I see that the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) grant program is listed as a pilot. We are reviewing future funding opportunities for planning purposes - do you know if there is any plan in place to offer additional cycles of the STEP program? If so, do you know when the next round of funding would be announced?

Answer: There has been no funding identified for future STEP solicitations. Until more funding is identified in future fiscal years, we cannot guarantee that STEP will have another solicitation.

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4. Questions:

- a. May confidential information be submitted? If so, are there protocols for submitting confidential information? Is confidential information subject to Public Records Act (PRA) requests, or will it remain unshared?
- b. Can documentation for in-kind matches by a private company be considered confidential? For example, salary details.

Answer: Generally, CARB discourages Applicants from submitting confidential information as part of their proposal. If, however, an Applicant views confidential information as critical to their proposal, the Applicant must clearly mark the information as confidential and explain the reasons for providing that information. While CARB is subject to the Public Records Act (Government Code Section 6254 et seq.), CARB may withhold certain information in response to a Public Records Act request if it falls under one of the applicable exemptions under the Public Records Act, such as under Government Code Section 6254(c), 6254(k), or 6254.7.

5. Question: In light of COVID impacts to local agency staffing capacity and resources, does ARB have any plans to postpone the deadline for STEP planning funding applications?

Answer: No, CARB does not plan on postponing the August 31, 2020 deadline for the STEP solicitation. STEP has a legislative requirement to encumber all funds by June 30, 2021. CARB needs to maintain the current proposal deadline to make sure grant agreements are executed by that deadline.

6. Question: We are looking for the questions and answers from the previous teleconferences that the solicitation announcement indicated would be on the CARB website but we could not locate them at the address provided. Can you direct us to that resource, if it is available?

Answer: Question and answer documents from the previous teleconferences are linked in the righthand column in the Applicant Teleconferences table on STEP's Moving California webpage:

<https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/lct/opportunitiesgov/step.htm>.

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7. Question: I am reaching out to see if there is a limit to how many applications an applicant can submit for this grant. For example, if there is a City that is working on submitting a grant for a bike share project, would they also be able to work on a separate grant for a community connectivity shuttle?

Answer: There is no limit to the number of proposals that may be submitted by a single Applicant. However, the Implementation Grant is structured to be able to fund a number of different projects in a single community, so Applicants are encouraged to combine projects within a single proposal where appropriate.

8. Question: Can you have the same application for IGs and PGs?

Answer: While the proposal templates and solicitation requirements differ between the Implementation Grant and the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations, STEP does not prohibit an Applicant from applying for funding for the same project within both an Implementation Grant proposal and a Planning and Capacity Building Grant proposal.

9. Question: For the two corrections/adjustments to the submission template that were described at the beginning of the teleconference session, can this description be provided as written instructions? This will help when we move the materials we are working on into this template.

Answer: Yes, all of the clarifications that we reviewed at the beginning of the Applicant Teleconference are listed in the section Solicitation Errors and Clarifications at the beginning of this document.

10. Question: Can you confirm that we are NOT allowed to manipulate the text response boxes in sizing and must only provide a response that fits within the text box as provided?

Answer: No, Applicants are allowed to manipulate the response boxes in the proposal template. This may be necessary based on the length or format of responses.

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11. Questions:

- a. Some portions of the application template require an attachment and others don't. Under threshold 2 (is 31 megabytes ok)?
- b. If we are able to provide additional attachments in order to further respond to any given narrative question, what is the format you would like that to be provided (i.e., all additional responses provided in a single document, or an individual document attachment for each response).
- c. How should attachments be labeled and what format (PDF, Word, etc)?

Answer: The Instructions tab in Appendix B for both the Implementation and Planning and Capacity Building Grants states that you may include attachments in response to any of the questions in the template. While CARB appreciates succinct responses, there may be situations where your responses need to be longer than the template allows or where your responses require formatting that is not supported by this template. Please include the file name of any attachments submitted in the relevant "Responses" box of the proposal template. STEP has no required or preferred format for proposal attachments. Attachments must be able to be delivered with the rest of the proposal to CARB by the proposal submittal deadline and must be able to be opened by CARB staff to review during the proposal review process.

12. Question: Can you clarify your response to the last Q&A question? The solicitation (Page 3, Section A) says "if additional funds become available and eligible proposals submitted in response to this solicitation remain unfunded, those proposals may be funded without reissuing a solicitation. If additional funding becomes available, the expenditure timeline of those new funds may extend the grant term end date beyond that listed in this solicitation". Are you saying that applicants will need to resubmit for eligible projects submitted this time to qualify for consideration in the next cycle?

Answer: This section on page 3 of both the Implementation and Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitations allows CARB the flexibility to fund more projects if additional funds become available. For any future STEP solicitations, Applicants will be asked to submit new or revised proposals. As this current solicitation is a pilot, STEP may change the thresholds and criteria in any future solicitations, which would also necessitate new or revised proposals from Applicants.

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13. Question: I just learned about the program last week, can we still qualify for technical assistance?

Answer: Potential Applicants interested in technical assistance should still fill out the technical assistance survey, even if they missed the July 15 deadline:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZn9n-7gGU7ScAkaBjllPwReXRpkH6ohWUKut8DG4BzUN2tw/viewform>.

Estolano Advisors will contact all survey respondents and will determine their capacity to support any potential Applicants that signed up for technical assistance after the July 15 deadline.

Project Eligibility

1. Question: Is tree planting an eligible project cost? If so must trees be a particular size (e.g. #15 gallon)? Is tree care required and, if so, for what period of time and is this an eligible project cost? Should the project quantify and report GHG and air quality benefits associated with tree planting?

Answer: Appendix E of the solicitation includes a list of eligible projects and project requirements. Urban forestry and greenery to support clean transportation options is an eligible project element under both the Active Transportation and Fixed-route Transit strategies. STEP considers tree planting and tree maintenance during the grant term to be a part of green infrastructure, which is listed as an eligible project cost on page E-12. STEP has no specific requirements for tree size or care. The STEP Benefits Calculator does not quantify the emission reduction impacts associated with tree planting.

2. Question: Is there funding for building renewable or compressed natural gas (RNG or CNG) infrastructure to complement the Carl Moyer infrastructure grant?

Answer: STEP will not fund RNG or CNG infrastructure. Per Appendix E, STEP is focused on funding zero-emission vehicles and associated infrastructure. For more information on available funding, see the California State Grants Portal:

<https://www.grants.ca.gov/>.

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3. Question: In the ineligible costs section, it mentions costs for implementing existing plans, programs, etc. Shouldn't funding for implementation projects be based on existing plans, programs, etc. that have been already supported by the community?

Answer: Clarification regarding this question is provided at the beginning of this document. Page E-3 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant Appendix E and page E-14 of the Implementation Grant Appendix E identify costs for implementing existing policies, plans, ordinances, or programs (e.g., local government staff salaries, supplies, meetings, etc.) as an ineligible cost. To clarify, this was intended to prohibit STEP funds supplanting existing funds for implementing existing projects. It is not meant to prohibit planning or implementation projects that build upon previously developed plans.

4. Question: Neither the eligible or ineligible projects or costs mention trucks and regional goods movement. Can we get clarification on whether a project that includes truck parking restrictions, wayfinding, and enforcement training for truck parking restrictions be funded through STEP?

Answer: The eligibility of these types of projects is dependent on how they address STEP's requirements and criteria. Appendix E includes a list of eligible projects and costs. Projects that are not on the eligible or ineligible lists may be determined to be eligible at CARB's sole discretion. Page 8 of the Implementation Grant solicitation identifies STEP's objectives for the Implementation Grant. These include addressing disadvantaged community residents' transportation needs through resident-led decision-making processes, increasing access to key destinations to benefit residents of disadvantaged communities, and increasing clean transportation options that reduce greenhouse emissions and passenger vehicle miles traveled in disadvantaged communities. Projects will be evaluated in part based on their potential for meeting these objectives. Refer to Appendix D for a full list of the scoring criteria that will be used to evaluate each proposal. Applicants should be able to explain how their proposed projects will address these objectives.

5. Question: Is back-up charging of vehicles eligible?

Answer: Yes. Appendix E includes a list of eligible projects and costs. Per page E-12 of Appendix E, vehicle charging and hydrogen refueling stations are eligible costs. Eligible costs are only eligible if they directly support identified eligible projects and project elements.

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6. Question: Can we add smaller electric vehicles (e.g., tricycles) to move the cargo on fixed routes as an eligible project?

Answer: Yes. Appendix E includes a list of eligible projects and costs. Zero-emission vehicles for new or expansion of mobile and delivery services by small, local businesses, including light and heavy-duty vehicles and cargo bikes is a project element listed on page E-6 of Appendix E under the project type local goods movement to individuals or small businesses to minimize trips in single-occupancy vehicles.

7. Question:

- a. This is regarding the multiple project requirement in a proposal. Our agency already has several projects in-process that could be considered “supporting strategies” such as a master bicycle plan. These are funded and have a lot of community involvement. If multiple projects are included in the proposal does the applicant have to request funding for all of them?
- b. If there are multiple parts of the project, do you have to request funding?
- c. If they already have a project that is funded, can they expand the scope?

Answer: Per page 6 of the Implementation Grant solicitation, a project is defined as vehicles, equipment, infrastructure, operations, planning, and capacity building projects that the Applicants wants STEP to fund. Projects that already have full funding and are already in progress do not meet this definition of a “project” and thus will not be able to help Applicants meet the Supporting Strategy requirement. Applicants do not have to request funding for every project element identified within the project, but, per the definition of the project, they must request funding for at least part of every project. However, funding for expansion of existing projects is eligible for STEP funding. Appendix E includes the full list of eligible projects and costs.

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8. Question: Can funding be used to support the construction of affordable housing options or green spaces (pocket parks, community gardens) along ATP corridors?

Answer: Appendix E of the Implementation Grant solicitation identifies ineligible projects. Transit-oriented development (including affordable housing) is identified as ineligible for STEP funds. Per page E-11 of Appendix E, projects indicated with "*" such as transit-oriented development, while ineligible for STEP funding, likely contribute to the vision for and benefit the STEP Community, so coordination between STEP-funded projects and these other projects is encouraged through scoring of the Connections to Existing Projects criterion.

Resource Contribution

1. Question: Can we swap matching sources we identify in the application after grant award if those grants directly support projects being implemented by the STEP grant, thus freeing up the originally identified match sources?

Answer: The source of a resource contribution committed to in a STEP proposal may change as long as the monetary value of the resource contribution does not change. Per page 44 of the Implementation Grant solicitation and page 35 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitation, in cases where changes may be allowed, they must be approved in advance and in writing by CARB.

2. Question: Would paying for a driver of a ride hailing vehicle count as a resource contribution?

Answer: Yes. Labor costs directly associated with a STEP-funded project would qualify under the resource contribution type project-related labor costs and in-kind labor contributions during the grant term that are not reimbursed or paid for by STEP, identified on page G-2 of Appendix G.

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3. Question: On ineligible costs for Planning and Capacity Building Grants, it mentions childcare, refreshments, etc. While we wouldn't ask for funding for those components, could a Community Partner's in-kind contribution be those items?

Answer: Yes, this would qualify under the resource contribution type project-related materials or assets and in-kind contributions that will be used during the grant term, identified in Appendix G. Examples listed on page G-2 of Appendix G include childcare for event participants and food for events.

4. Question: We would like to use EV charger installation as a resource contribution. The monetary value of the installation is not finalized because we need to first secure the STEP grant before the engineer and design team can look at the site to identify the suitable amount of EV chargers needed for the project, along with construction costs. Can this be used as a resource contribution if we can provide a minimum dollar amount in the letter of commitment? If we are able to use this program as a resource contribution, will we need to provide total project costs after project completion to CARB? Since this would be non-reimbursable, we believe that this is not needed.

Answer: Yes, a minimum dollar amount can be provided in the letter of commitment from the entity providing the resource contribution. If the proposal is selected for funding, this minimum dollar amount must be provided as a resource contribution. CARB will need confirmation that the minimum dollar amount was provided as a resource contribution, but as part of grant implementation the Grantee would not need to provide more information beyond that.

STEP Community

1. Questions:

- a. For our project the service we are proposing brings people in and out of the community a long distance away, so how do we manage this since it maybe outside STEP boundary?
- b. For projects located outside of the STEP community, what type of documentation or justification would CARB like to see in the proposal and/or during project implementation and/or grant reporting purposes?

Answer: Per page 20 of the Implementation Grant solicitation, at least 50 percent of the total proposal budget must fund projects located at least partially within the boundaries of the disadvantaged community census tracts that are located within the STEP Community. However, some proposed projects may be located entirely or partially outside of the STEP Community. In some cases, this may be because of the nature of the project (e.g., a city-wide parking policy update). For projects located entirely or partially outside of the STEP Community boundary, the proposal must explain how the project provides a clear benefit to residents of the STEP Community.

2. Question: In the guidelines it says a shapefile should be submitted for the community map. Could we submit a .kml or .kmz file or does it need to be a .shp file?

Answer: While a .shp file is preferred, Applicants may submit a .kml or .kmz file and this will not impact the proposal's score. We understand that all Applicants may not have the resources available to readily map their STEP Community in GIS. The technical assistance contractor is prepared to help all Applicants map their STEP Community boundary and submit the appropriately formatted shapefile.

STEP Final Q&A Session Questions and Answers

3. Question: For an implementation project, can a STEP community be defined as two distinct geographic areas, so long as the demographics, specific challenges, project activities and community partners in each neighborhood are clearly defined in the application?

Answer: No. Per Appendix A, the definition of a STEP Community states that the community must be represented by a contiguous geographic boundary and contain residents that all use the same community-defined transportation system. Two distinct, noncontiguous geographic areas are two different STEP Communities and should each have their own STEP proposal.

Other

1. Question: We have read the Workforce Development Guidance, but, as we are applying for a planning and capacity-building grant, we are still not clear what content regarding workforce development should be included in the application, since, of course, we don't know what the community will decide.

Answer: Per page 21 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitation, the proposal should describe how the proposed project will contribute to workforce development in the climate and clean transportation sectors, including how the project will help identify funding opportunities and partners to implement workforce development activities in the future for residents of the STEP Community. Applicants should identify how they will incorporate workforce development discussions and activities into their planning or capacity building project; they do not need to identify what the outcomes of those discussions will be yet.

2. Question: Are letters of support from entities or elected officials that are not official Community Partners or Applicants acceptable to include with our Planning and Capacity Building Grant application?

Answer: Applicants may include letters of support from entities or elected officials that are not identified Community Partners or Applicants, but those letters will not be used to evaluate the proposal. For a full list of scoring criteria that will be used to evaluate the scoring criteria, see Appendix D for both grant types.

STEP Final Q&A Session Questions and Answers

3. Questions:

- a. Can a larger project with multiple parts and partners be submitted as a scalable project? In other words, can applicants submit one application with several project components and CARB can choose to fund only some of those project components in 2020, leaving the option to fund the remaining components if additional funding becomes available in subsequent years? OR must applicants submit each application separately?
- b. Question: Could you put in multiple subcomponents, prioritize them and get partial funding? Might we have to reapply later if not awarded in first round? Can you talk about reapplication? What should agencies do in consideration of this strategy?

Answer: Yes, a larger project can be submitted as a scalable project. Per page 42 of the Implementation Grant solicitation and page 33 of the Planning and Capacity Building Grant solicitation, in the event funding has been awarded to the highest scoring proposal and there are remaining funds available, CARB may preliminarily select the Lead Applicant from the proposal with the second highest overall score as another Grantee, and so on. In the event funding has been awarded to the highest scoring proposals and the remaining available funds are less than the amount requested in the next highest scoring proposal, CARB, in its sole discretion, may offer to fund a portion of the next highest scoring proposal, carry the remaining funds forward to the next fiscal year, or direct funding to another project in the Funding Plan. If additional funding becomes available in subsequent years, Applicants will need to submit a new proposal to apply for that funding. As this current solicitation is a pilot, STEP may change the thresholds and criteria in any future solicitations, which would also necessitate new or revised proposals from Applicants.

STEP Final Q&A Session Questions and Answers

4. Question: Page 10 says “Applicants may work with community residents to identify the need for a new carshare service, but may wait to identify the exact locations of the carsharing stations or the functionality of the mobile app that will be used to reserve vehicles until after the grant agreement is executed.” Residents may not know the location of project so if you have charging infrastructure you need to have everything in place but how can you do this if you don’t know yet about the project? We need to engage community to know best locations, this takes time—and there are 2 points at risk? We don’t want to be disqualified if we don’t know where to have the charging stations located.

Answer: Proposals should identify tentative project locations. However, per page 24 of the Implementation Grant solicitation, there is a grace period of six months after the grant agreement is executed for the Grantee to obtain all necessary permits. This gives the Applicant additional time to determine project specifics with the community that have not already been determined, such as final project locations.