

# 2022 REGIONAL FOREST AND FIRE CAPACITY PROGRAM

## FINAL GRANT GUIDELINES

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Conservation



For additional information, please contact:

Department of Conservation

<http://conservation.ca.gov/>

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## At-A-Glance: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program is designed to support the development and implementation of regional priority plans to improve forest health and fire resiliency consistent with the recommendations of the [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#). This program is administered by the [Department of Conservation](#).

### Critical Dates

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## Section 1: Introduction and Program Summary

Public Resources Code section 4208.1 establishes the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program to support regional leadership to build local and regional capacity and develop, prioritize, and implement strategies and projects that create fire adapted communities and landscapes by improving ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and wildfire resilience. The Department will provide block grants to regional entities (Regional Block Grantees) and to eligible coordinating organizations (Statewide Block Grantees) to support the statewide implementation of the program.

To accomplish the RFFC Program's objectives, block grants will be utilized by recipients to support the growth, sustainability, and effectiveness of collaborative networks of stakeholders, agencies, and organizations working to improve natural resource conditions and the socio-ecological resilience of communities, and to elevate, integrate, and expand wildfire and forest resilience work within four major geographic regions identified by the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force).

Through the program, Regional Block Grantees serve as backbone organizations and constituent partners, supporting and coordinating the efforts of the regional partnerships, building and sustaining the capacity of their partners and the network as a whole, and enhancing the region's capacity to identify, develop, and implement wildfire and forest resilience projects consistent with the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), [Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forests and Rangelands](#), the [California Forest Carbon Plan](#), and [Executive Order B-52-18](#).

### Prior Rounds of Funding

These guidelines build off lessons learned from earlier iterations of the RFFC Program that focused on:

1. Promoting and supporting collaborative planning and implementation of wildfire and forest resilience, management, and restoration efforts at the landscape or watershed level.
2. Coordinating and integrating management of wildfire and forest resilience, management, and restoration efforts at the regional scale.
3. Identifying, prioritizing, and implementing forestry and wildfire projects that meet regional and statewide public safety, ecosystem, and public resource goals.

### California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and Action Plan

Building on important work of the past decade, state and federal policymakers and agencies came together in 2018 through the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) to bolster efforts and expand investments to address the key drivers of catastrophic fires, significantly increase the pace and scale of forest management, and improve the resilience of increasingly threatened communities.

In 2021, the Task Force issued its Action Plan and, among other strategies, committed to a regional approach designed to strategically accelerate efforts to restore the health and resilience of California forests, grasslands, and natural places; improve the fire safety of communities; and sustain the economic vitality and the quality of life of forest dependent communities and rural forested areas.

## **Regional Framework**

The RFFC Program is a key component of the regional framework adopted by the Task Force in recognition of the essential diversity of California's biological, social, and legal geographies, and the need to bring together local and regional stakeholders to solve local and regional challenges.

The regional framework provides a structure for state, federal, and local entities to coordinate their efforts in each of four major geographic regions of the state (see Appendix A), to enhance regional leadership and capacity to respond to wildfire and forest health crises within their region, and to increase the pace and scale of forest and fire stewardship through landscape scale, multi-benefit planning and project implementation coordinated by regional partnerships.

Through the identification of these four regions, the Task Force seeks to provide a functional scale to coordinate scientific and ecoregional tools and analyses, policy, and management. Within the regional framework, the Task Force and its partners are responsible for:

- Coordination of strategies, policies, and programs to advance critical scopes of work, such as the beneficial use of fire and post-fire reforestation.
- Developing science, data, tools, and working with regional partnerships to integrate and deploy strategies, data, and tools at the regional scale.
- Aligning funding sources, such as planning and implementation funds from State and Federal agencies, to achieve holistic benefits consistent with the state's wildfire and forest resilience objectives.

Regional partnerships supported by RFFC will be supporting the regions and assisting with communicating with the Task Force or other state and federal partners. Regional Block Grantees will be working within their region using information and structure provided by the Task Force and will be communicating details and expertise about the region back to the Task Force. In the context of the regional framework, Regional Block Grantees and their partners will be responsible for:

- Developing and enhancing partnerships.
- Coordinating regional forums.
- Integrating, accelerating, and scaling local forest and fire priorities and projects.

The regional framework approach is intended to provide support throughout the regions in a timely fashion and allow the state to adaptively manage its wildfire and forest resilience efforts.

## **Program Funding**

The grants funded with these Guidelines utilize the \$110 million of General Fund monies appropriated to the Department for the RFFC Program. This funding is available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2026, with full liquidation until June 30, 2028. Up to 5.17 percent of the appropriation may be used by the Department for administrative costs.

Should additional funding consistent with the purposes of the RFFC Program become available in future years, the Department may, at its discretion, make new grants or allocate funding to increase grants funded under these Guidelines.

**Confidentiality and Publicity**

Details, documents, and any other materials related to this program, such as applications, grant agreements, reports, expenditures, photos, etc., are public records that may be publicly released in accordance with the California Public Records Act (Cal. Gov. Code §§ 6250 et seq.).

## Section 2: Scope of Work

### Program Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the RFFC Program is to increase regional capacity to develop, prioritize, and implement wildfire and forest resilience projects that have broad involvement from stakeholders in and affected by the region, and to develop regional priority strategies that will restore health and resilience to communities, forests, and other wildfire prone landscapes. To that end, block grantees will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase capacity, support strategic collaborative planning and coordination, and accelerate wildfire and forest resilience, management, and restoration efforts at the landscape level.
- Strengthen regional leadership on wildfire and forest resilience actions in coordination with key state and federal agencies.
- Build a pipeline of forestry and wildfire protection projects. Identify, prioritize, plan, make ready projects that meet regional and statewide public safety, economic resilience, ecosystem, and natural resource goals.

### Regional Block Grantee Essential Program Activities

Working with and through their regional partnerships, Regional Block Grantees are required to engage in the following core program activities, which are described in more detail below.

- Conduct **regional priority planning**.
- Administer **project development activities**.
- **Build capacity and sustainability** among regional partners.
- Lead **outreach and engagement**.
- Participate in Task Force efforts to **coordinate regions**.

RFFC Program activities and deliverables are expected to differ for each regional partnership due to varying geographic, biophysical, and social characteristics throughout the state. Unless specified, program activities and deliverables do not need to be developed or completed in a specific format or medium, and it is expected that every regional partnership supported by the RFFC program will need to adopt solutions and formats fitting the regional needs.

For example, specific activities and deliverables may be developed under one unified effort for an entire regional partnership, while other work may be developed on a subregional basis. In all cases, RFFC Program activities and deliverables should be integrated into a larger regional effort through collaboration and coordination of a shared set of priorities, strategies, assessment methodologies, or other guiding principles. All activities and deliverables are encouraged to incorporate existing resources, data, and plans (e.g., Community Wildfire Protection Plans). Essential program activities and deliverables are designed to be flexible and should be appropriate to the region and the stakeholders' needs. Regional Block Grantees will have the opportunity to collaborate with the Department to determine details of their program activities and deliverables in the development of the workplan.



## **Regional Priority Planning**

Regional Block Grantees must develop or update a Regional Priority Plan (RPP) that identifies, coordinates, prioritizes, and advances wildfire and forest resilience projects and initiatives.

Regional Priority Plans are expected to serve regional partnerships to:

- Identify, prioritize, and plan for wildfire and forest resilience needs within their region.
- Coordinate planning and management efforts with an “all lands” approach across jurisdictions and ownership.
- Build strong regional support for the partnerships, plans, and projects through broad inclusion of stakeholders and partners.
- Organize and communicate regional prioritization consistent with Task Force goals and strategies.

The following activities must be included in the Regional Block Grantees’ regional priority planning efforts:

- Developing broad-based partnerships among stakeholders, implementation partners, and decision-making entities capable of effectively forwarding large scale, multi-benefit programs of work across land types and ownership, over extended time frames.
- Utilizing the best available science, local and traditional knowledge, and statewide strategies to develop priorities and decision-making strategies which respond to environmental and social conditions within the region.
- Incorporating principles of collaborative governance into planning and decision-making processes.
- Revisiting and updating the RPP based on new information, activities, and conditions.
- Identifying potential priority projects and management activities based on desired landscape conditions, and compiling projects into landscape portfolios.

To ensure consistency, communicability, and short- and long-term utility of RPPs, three key elements must be included in all RPPs:

- Geography & Governance
- Assessment & Methodology
- Landscape Portfolios of Projects

Information is provided for each element in the sub-sections below.

RPPs are intended to be living documents, and on-going investments in regional priority planning throughout the process is expected.

### ***Geography & Governance***

RPPs must consider and respond to the unique geographic, biophysical, and social characteristics of their region. RPPs must include an analysis of the key geographic characteristics and governing structures that will affect decision-making and implementation of wildfire and forest priorities within their jurisdictions. RPPs must work to advance policies and programs that enhance coordination, collaboration, and effective natural resource management within their region.

RPPs must be developed with broad participation of regional communities, California Native American tribal governments, tribal-led organizations, cultural practitioners, public and

governmental agencies, community-based organizations, collaboratives, and other organizations. Regional Block Grantees will coordinate the development of the RPP for their partnership, working directly with organizations in their region throughout the process.

### *Assessment & Methodology*

RPPs must include:

1. An assessment of the landscape conditions informed by the regional profiles and resource kits developed, respectively, by the Task Force's Science Advisory Panel and an interagency research team. The assessments should characterize the regional landscape with respect to core pillars of wildfire and forest resilience. The regional resource kits provide a starting point for these analyses, but RPPs may include local knowledge, region-specific data, and/or other appropriate tools to characterize the regional landscape.
2. A methodology for decision making, project identification, and prioritization that is appropriate for the region, the partnership, and consistent with state and federal strategies including strategies and key actions recommended by the Task Force.

NOTE: The term “pillars of resilience” is used to denote a model that assesses multiple factors or dimensions (pillars) of socio-ecological resilience in a holistic manner. RPPs are not required to utilize a specific model or set of pillars in their assessments, and different pillars are expected to be prioritized differently in different contexts, but it is expected that all RPPs demonstrate a holistic consideration of socio-ecological resilience.

### *Landscape Portfolios of Projects*

RPPs must include a collection or collections of priority projects by landscape that, taken together, respond to identified conditions and priorities within that landscape. Portfolios of priority projects should:

- Be geographically explicit, with delineable boundaries for projects and activities.
- Provide multiple benefits consistent with regional, state, and federal priorities for wildfire and forest resilience.
- Identify organization(s) that would be responsible for project implementation.
- Have broad support from stakeholders in the region.
- Include projects at different stages of readiness suitable for implementation in sequence.
- Be cross-jurisdictional where appropriate, aligning efforts and needs across ownerships, land types, and areas of responsibility to complete the plan's goals.

### **Project Development**

Regional Block Grantees must use a portion of this funding to support preliminary project development and permitting activities for the priority projects identified in their RPP or projects that were identified prior to development of the RPP and already have regional support.

Project development activities should be comprehensive enough to ensure that projects are ready to receive implementation funding. These projects should contribute to the desired outcomes for priority projects identified in each RPP and increase ecosystem and adaptive capacities, fire resilience, health, and human safety. Regional Block Grantees must work in collaboration with their partners and/or subgrantees to develop and permit projects. Project

development strategies should be equitable, including supporting areas, communities, and organizations with lower capacity.

NOTE: Project development and permitting may occur in parallel with the development of the RPP. Eligible project development activities include design, permitting, outreach and engagement, partnership development, and other tasks needed to create and sustain a pipeline for multiple years of implementation-ready projects.

### **Building and Sustaining Capacity**

Regional Block Grantees are expected to use a portion of the funds from this program to build and sustain capacity throughout their region. Activities to build and sustain capacity should help grantees and their partners manage increases in project development and implementation workload.

Capacity building efforts may include:

- Investments in partner and local staff development
- Funding new and/or critical positions
- Acquiring or utilizing tools and resources to increase partner capacity for planning and implementation of wildfire and forest resilience projects
- Organizational capacity activities such as access to financial services or legal review and similar due diligence, as applicable, associated with documents and project development
- Developing new pilot projects and programs
- Participation and/or partnership with existing workforce programs (e.g., local Conservation Corps, prescribed burn associations)
- Providing or securing technical assistance for partners
- Fellowships and/or stipends for individuals to participate in trainings and events that enhance capacity and further the objectives of the RFFC program, who otherwise would not be able to participate, especially with regard to underrepresented individuals
- Demonstration projects

Regional Block Grantees should coordinate with partners and stakeholders regarding capacity and sustainability enhancing needs, including watershed coordinators, community-based organizations and collaboratives, county wildfire coordinators such as those funded through California Fire Safe Council, local CALFIRE representatives, and others conducting local and regional wildfire and forest resilience work.

If included, demonstration project(s) may be identified in the RPP or may be a pre-identified, shovel-ready project. Demonstration project(s) should seek to:

- Maximize desired outcomes of the RFFC Program as well as the Task Force strategies and objectives.
- Measurably achieve multiple benefits of the Program.
- Incorporate participation from multiple partners and funding sources.
- Support regional workforce development opportunities when feasible.
- Integrate benefits to the most socially vulnerable communities within the region.
- Implement new, innovative, and/or underutilized techniques, technology, or approaches, which could be scaled up and/or replicated.

Demonstration projects must:

- Include outreach and evaluation components that will allow the block grantee to share results with other regions or practitioners.
- Comply with the Professional Foresters Law (PRC Sections 750, et seq.), if applicable. Projects that directly impact the management and treatment of the forest resources and timberlands of this state are required to use Registered Professional Foresters. Projects implemented on federally managed lands will be permitted to use “qualified but exempt” federal staff to satisfy this requirement.”.

### **Outreach and Engagement**

Regional Block Grantees must seek broad and diverse engagement of communities and stakeholders within each region. At a minimum, Regional Block Grantees and/or their subgrantees should:

- Involve fire and forestry professionals, non-fire-focused professionals (ex: environmental justice, public health, tribes, etc.) and other key stakeholders that can play a role in wildfire and forest resilience within the region.
- Incorporate principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Incorporate methods of engagement that facilitate direct participation and eliminate barriers for communities and organizations to participate, such as translation of meetings and materials, scheduling of meetings at times that are convenient for community members, and engaging community members in information gathering, planning, and decision making.

Regional Block Grantees must document their regional partnership's outreach and engagement strategies, and provide a transparent means for that documentation to be accessed by or shared with the Department, Task Force, and the public.

### **Regional and Statewide Coordination**

Regional Block Grantees will be responsible for coordinating efforts among partners in their region, providing regional leadership, and facilitating communications and data sharing among regional and statewide partners. To facilitate regional and statewide coordination, Regional Block Grantees must:

- Participate in Task Force initiatives, including consultation on regional profiles and resources, collection of data, metrics, and communication materials needed for interagency regional collaboration.
- Coordinate regional forums under the Task Force and facilitate discussions among state and local entities through meetings, prioritization discussions, forums, or data inquiries.
- Provide for the stewardship of spatial, qualitative, and quantitative data produced or collected by the regional partnership, including data collection, maintenance, and communication.

### **Statewide Block Grantee Essential Program Activities**

Statewide Block Grantees will support the statewide implementation of the program through coordination of and technical assistance to Regional Block Grantees, as well as support wildfire and forest resilience efforts and/or offer technical assistance across regions and throughout the state, and at the individual practitioner level.

## **Grant Administration and Reporting**

### **Administrative Activities**

As part of the grant's administration, block grantees must:

- Participate in grant and program orientation with the Department.
- Provide quarterly invoices and reports.
- Coordinate and participate in relevant Task Force regional forums.
- Participate in monthly check-in meetings with the Department.
- Provide monthly project highlights and success stories to the Department.
- Participate in monthly webinars with other block grantees.
- Coordinate with local and regional CALFIRE representatives.
- Ensure environmental compliance for all projects and tasks.
- Distribute necessary funds through subgrants and/or contracts.
- Ensure execution of all project deliverables and requirements within the grant term.

### **Invoicing**

Block grantees must provide a fiscal report detailing how funds have been expended along with each quarterly invoice.

### **Reporting**

Block grantees will be required to participate in monthly meetings with the Department. The monthly meetings are intended to update the Department and address any issues in a timely fashion to help ensure success of each block grant. Quarterly reports will include a narrative summary of work completed, key accomplishments, and, where applicable, collection of data on project development, partnership and community engagement, and other key metrics to be determined in partnership with the Department.

Written monthly highlights and quarterly reports must be submitted in a format provided or approved by the Department.

### **Distribution of Block Grant Funds to Third Parties**

Block grantees may implement Program activities directly or provide subgrants or contracts, and collaborative planning efforts with local entities, including municipal governments, California Native American tribes, nongovernmental organizations, community organizations, fire safe councils, land trusts, resource conservation districts, joint power authorities, special districts, fire departments, residents, private and public forest landowners and managers, businesses, and others, to assist in accomplishing the objectives of the RFFC Program. Block grantees may award subgrants and contracts to fulfill individual tasks or deliverables, or multiple tasks or deliverables, at their discretion and consistent with the recipient's internal contracting or procurement policies and procedures.

### **Environmental Compliance**

Activities funded under the RFFC Program must comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other environmental permitting requirements. Block grantees are responsible for project compliance and grant agreement budgets that may include the funding necessary for compliance-related tasks.

## Section 3: Grant Awards

### Selection of Block Grantees

The Department is awarding block grants on a noncompetitive basis to support implementation of landscape or watershed level forest health projects in the Northern, Coastal-Inland, Sierra-Cascade-Inyo, and Southern California regions, as shown in Appendix A. To best ensure efficient planning and strategic interagency coordination, the geographic extent of these regions may shift slightly over time. Regional Block Grantees will distribute funds to subgrantees and contractors, and work to ensure coordinated and integrated management of wildfire and forest resilience activities throughout their region.

In addition to funding the Regional Block Grantees, the Department will fund Statewide Block Grantees to provide statewide coordination of and technical assistance to Regional Block Grantees, as well as to support wildfire and forest resilience efforts in communities and priority areas not covered by the Regional Block Grantees.

### Statewide and Regional Entities

Statewide and regional entities eligible to receive block grants are local governments, California Native American tribes, state conservancies, joint powers authorities, public agencies, resource conservation districts, special districts, California 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations, and tribally chartered non-profit organizations.

The Department will consider the following factors with selecting Regional Block Grantees:

- Demonstrated ability to coordinate the many entities across their region necessary to meet program goals
- Existing strong regional partnerships, and support and capacity to expand these partnerships
- Demonstrated ability to conduct regional planning efforts
- Fiscal and administrative control systems to adequately oversee the expenditure of block grant awards
- Policy and program expertise relevant to meeting program goals

The Department will consider the following factors with selecting Statewide Block Grantees:

- Experience and expertise in developing forest health and wildfire protection planning statewide
- Experience and expertise in conducting effective and inclusive outreach across diverse communities
- Experience and expertise in developing peer-to-peer and inter-regional sharing of project implementation strategies and skills
- Strong relationships with primary actors in forest health and wildfire protection planning statewide
- Fiscal and administrative control systems to adequately oversee the expenditure of block grant awards
- Policy and program expertise relevant to meeting program goals

### Workplan Development

RFFC Block Grantees must collaborate with the Department to develop grant workplans consistent with the goals and objectives of this program. The Department will hold a post-

award consultation with selected entities to develop a workplan, resource plan, and schedule of key activities before execution of a grant agreement or amendment.

## Section 4: Grant Agreement and Administration

### Overview of Grant Execution

1. The Department will announce awards.
2. Each block grantee must enter into a grant agreement with the Department or amend an existing agreement. The block grantee must sign and return the grant agreement or amendment to the Department within three months of the award date or risk forfeiting their award.
3. Block grantees selected for award will be required to participate in a post-award consultation phase prior to finalizing the grant agreement or amendment. During the post-award consultation, Department staff will assist the block grantee to refine the grant agreement and associated work plan to comply with administrative, statutory, and program requirements.
4. The grant agreement is considered fully executed once the Department's authorized signatory has signed the grant agreement.
5. Once the Department notifies the block grantee that the grant agreement has been fully executed, the block grantee should promptly commence work.

### Performance Period and Grant Term

Regional Block Grantees and Statewide Block Grantees need to complete all tasks and deliverables by March 30, 2028, to ensure payment by the termination of the grant agreement term. The grant term will continue until June 30, 2028. The grant may be extended for an additional time at the Department's discretion and with appropriate budget authorization.

### Funding and Accounting

#### Payment of Grant Funds

- Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis.
- The Department may authorize advance payments up to twenty percent (20%) of the original grant amount to a block grantee, at a time, per Department protocols.
- Grantees shall invoice quarterly, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Department, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.
- Funds cannot be disbursed until there is a fully executed grant agreement between the Department and the grantee.
- Only those eligible costs incurred as outlined in these Guidelines and in accordance with the grant agreement will be eligible for reimbursement.

#### Accounting of Grant Funds

It is essential that complete and accurate records be maintained by grantees. Block grantees must maintain an accounting and record keeping system that reflects sound fiscal controls and safeguards. The accounting information must be sufficient so that the total cost of each aspect of the project can be readily determined and records are readily available upon demand. Block grantees must retain all grant transaction records for a period of four years after final payment.

Any advanced funds must be kept separate in accounting records from block grantee's other funds. Interest earnings shall be allocated to the block grant's advanced funds for use on the project or returned to the Department. Advanced funds that are unused shall be



returned to the Department promptly upon completion of the project or termination of the grant agreement, whichever occurs first.

## **Section 5: Eligible Costs**

### **Eligible Costs**

Eligible costs must be incurred during the grant agreement term. All costs must be reasonable, as defined in Section 6 of these Guidelines. Eligible costs are:

#### **Staff Costs**

Reimbursable staff costs are the salary costs for (1) block grantees, (2) subgrantees, and (3) contractors. This is the salary at an hourly rate, benefits, taxes, and leave.

Administrative costs are not reimbursable as staff costs. Administrative costs should be budgeted separately and must comply with the requirements outlined below.

#### **Administrative Costs**

For the block grantee, reimbursement by the RFFC Program for administrative costs are capped at either (1) twenty percent (20%) of the total block grant award for entities without an active Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), or (2) up to thirty-five percent (35%) of the total block grant award for entities with a current federally approved NICRA.

For subgrantees and contractors, reimbursement by the RFFC Program for administrative costs are capped at either (1) twenty percent (20%) of their direct charges for entities without a current final NICRA, or (2) up to thirty-five percent (35%) of their total subaward or contract for entities with a current federally approved NICRA.

Administrative costs include costs that are sometimes described as indirect costs and include:

- Office space and utilities
- Supplies
- Management oversight
- Prorated general liability, Workers' Compensation, and automotive insurance
- Equipment costs not included as direct costs in the budget

#### **Travel Costs**

In-state travel for block grantees, subgrantees, and contractors as necessary to fulfill the deliverables of the program.

- Accommodation-related travel costs: maximum reimbursement rates based on county as shown here: <https://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/Manualltem/1/2203>, with no option for approval of an "excess lodging rate."
- Mileage for travel directly related to execution of the scope of work will be reimbursed at the *Reimbursement Rate Per Mile for Personal Vehicle* as shown here: <https://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/Manualltem/1/2202>.
- Rental car, train, or airfare will only be reimbursed to attend those meetings outlined in the Administrative Activities section, and then only if it is the reasonable method used to get from one location to the other.
- No other travel-related costs will be reimbursed through this grant program, including per diem.

## **Project Development Costs**

Block grant funding may be used for project development costs:

- Preparing project plans, specifications, and cost estimates that will result in a specific project
- Acquiring permits (including fees) for specific, future on-the-ground projects
- Analysis required for CEQA and/or NEPA documentation
- Performing necessary cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys and/or developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project
- Obtaining implementation funding

## **Demonstration Project Implementation Costs (if applicable)**

Block grant funding may be used for demonstration project costs including:

- Preparation of bid packages and contractor documents
- Performance costs within the scope of the demonstration project including materials, supplies, and equipment
- Labor and other costs necessary for the physical implementation of the project
- Pre- and post-project monitoring and adaptive management, including preparation of long-term management plans

## **Capacity Building, Outreach, Engagement, and Training**

Block grant funding may be used for Capacity Building, Outreach, Engagement, and Training activities including:

- Building organizational capacity to increase pace and scale of forestry activities
- Training costs for block grantee employees or subgrantees
- Costs to attend professional development conferences or events
- Materials
- Facilitation services
- Professional training services for educational events or workforce development
- Participant stipends in compensation for services rendered in the development of community work products, and appropriately documented with deliverables such as sign-in sheets or written surveys
- Transportation stipends and provision of transportation services for community participants, such as a vanpool
- Rental costs of equipment, facilities, or venues
- Provision of childcare services for community participants at sponsored events
- Food and refreshments that are determined to be an integral part of an event. Examples of activities where it would be appropriate to approve food purchase would include a design charrette held in the evening, where the meal is consumed as part of the event and replaces a meal otherwise missed by attending the event

## **Equipment and Vehicles**

For any equipment or vehicles purchased or built with funds that are reimbursable as a direct cost of the RFFC project, the block grantee, subgrantee, or contractor, as applicable, must be the sole owner on title. During the grant agreement term, equipment must be dedicated to the described use in the same proportion and scope as is in the grant agreement and the

block grantee is required to maintain an inventory record for each piece of non-expendable equipment or vehicles purchased or built with funds provided under the terms of a grant agreement.

On completion or early termination of the grant agreement, the Department will either (1) require that the equipment or vehicles be returned to the state, (2) authorize the continued use of such equipment or vehicle within the block grantee's region, or (3) require that grantee refund the Department for the fair market value of equipment that continues to have a usable life but is no longer required for project implementation.

In making that determination, the Department will consider among other things, the useful life of the equipment or vehicle. Equipment or vehicles that remain within the block grantee's region will be required to be maintained in a state of good repair with all licenses and fees paid and made available to government entities in the event of an emergency.

### **Ineligible Costs**

Ineligible costs are:

- Costs that are not related to the RFFC Program.
- Costs that occur outside of the grant agreement term.
- Incidentals, tips, and per diems.
- Incentive/participation gifts.
- Out-of-state travel.
- Legal costs and attorney's fees associated with making or defending legal claims.
- Activities performed and equipment or vehicles purchased that are not identified in the budget/work plan or approved by the Department prior to purchase.
- The following costs associated with community engagement and outreach:
  - Direct cash benefits or subsidies to participants, such as cash subsidies to secure private transportation services
  - Alcoholic refreshments
  - Participant incentives, such as door prizes, which are unrelated to specific community work products
  - General meetings that do not specifically discuss or advance RFFC Program activities and objectives

### **Auditing of Fund Expenditures**

All expenditures of public funds under this program are subject to audit by the State of California. All grantees shall maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence sufficient to properly reflect the amount, receipt, and disposition of all project funds (including state funds, interest earned, and matching funds by the grantee) and the total cost of the project.

### **Purchasing**

Block grantees are expected to adhere to their competitive bid, internal contracting, and purchasing guidelines. Documentation of the grantee's contracting or purchasing guidelines, processes, and project-specific approvals may be requested in the event of an audit by the State of California.

## **Loss of Funding**

Work performed under the grant agreement is subject to availability of funds through the state's budget process.

Actions of the block grantee that may lead to suspension or cancellation of funding include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to execute an agreement within three months of receiving an official funding notification
- Failure to submit required documentation within the time periods specified in the grant agreement
- Change in project scope, schedule, or budget without prior approval
- Failure to complete the project
- Failure to demonstrate sufficient progress
- Failure to submit evidence of environmental or permit compliance as specified by the grant agreement
- Failure to comply with applicable laws or grant requirements

## Section 6: Definitions and Reference Material

### Definitions

*Collaboration or Collaborative:* Partnership or cooperation involving multiple and diverse stakeholders (including agencies, as appropriate) to improve natural resource conditions and the socio-ecological resilience of communities within the same watershed or landscape in ways that do not duplicate efforts.

*Community Wildfire Protection Plan:* A plan developed in the collaborative framework established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by state, tribal, and local government, local fire department, other stakeholders and federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the planning area. A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-Federal land that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure and recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community. A CWPP may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, or structure protection - or all the above.

*Department:* California Department of Conservation.

*Landscape Scale or Level:* A functional designation of a relatively large, contiguous geographic area scaled to capture ecosystem function, integrity, and diversity, where management plans are integrated into the broader landscape conditions to set appropriate short-, medium-, and long-term goals, including integration of natural processes. Management activities are of sufficient scale to affect biophysical processes and stressor (e.g., fire, bark beetles) behavior within that landscape. Landscapes may vary in size but should be delineable based on defensible geographic characteristics (e.g. Watershed boundaries or Potential Operational Delineations).

*Multi-benefit or Multiple benefit:* A project or activity which, by virtue of integrated design and planning, provides direct benefits to multiple local, regional, state, and federal strategic objectives. Multi-benefit wildfire and forest resilience projects can impact social, economic, and ecological outcomes, including social and cultural well-being, protecting and restoring tribal resources and practices, enhancing water security, forest resilience, biodiversity, workforce development, outdoor recreation and access, and carbon sequestration,

*Reasonable Cost:* A cost that, in its nature and amount, does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. In determining reasonableness of a given cost, consideration must be given to:

- Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the entity or the proper and efficient performance of the project.
- The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; federal, state, local, tribal, and other laws, and regulations; and terms and conditions of this project.
- Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
- Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to its employees, the public at large, and the state.

- Whether the cost significantly deviates from the acquiring entity's established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs.

*Regional Forums:* A venue for information sharing across a region and between entities working within a region to ensure coordination among stakeholders, and to ensure that areas not presently covered in a regional partnership are engaged and have a role in advancing regional priorities. Forums offer opportunities for sharing successes and challenges, enhancing professional networks, learning the latest scientific findings, and participating in a more regional-focused discussion with work groups to understand statewide priorities and to ensure their local needs and concerns are heard at the state level.

*Regional Partnerships:* A large scale collaboration operating with the common goal to elevate, integrate, and expand regional wildfire and forest resilience work within one of the four major regions identified by the Task Force's Action Plan. Regional Block Grantees lead and support regional partnerships.

*Regional Profiles:* Regional profiles are a publicly available resource included in the regional resource kits developed by the Task Force's Science Advisory Panel in 2022. Regional Profiles summarize the socio-ecological context of the region (including vegetation types and distribution, forest management and disturbance history and future projected climatic changes), the current condition assessment, and findings from interviews and surveys about regional stakeholder priorities and concerns for community and ecosystem resilience.

*Regional Resource Kits:* Regional resource kits are sets of key information, mapped data, and resource assessments intended to support the acceleration of regional planning to reduce wildfire hazard and improve forest resilience. The kits will include core metrics, a non-technical description of desired resilience outcomes, an assessment of current conditions in the region, core operational data layers, and identification of treatment opportunities.

*Vulnerable Communities or Socially Vulnerable Communities:* Vulnerable communities or populations are those which experience heightened risk and increased sensitivity to natural disasters, climate change, and other stressors and have less capacity and fewer resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from wildfire and climate impacts due to social, political, historical and/ or economic factors. *There is no discrete threshold for defining a community as "vulnerable" or "not vulnerable", but communities and populations may be characterized as more or less vulnerable based on criteria such as those used by the [CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index](#).*

*Watershed:* All land enclosed by a continuous hydrologic drainage divide and lying upslope from a specified point on a stream, river, lake, or other waterbody. Total land areas draining to any point in a stream.

*Wildfire and forest resilience:* For the purposes of this Program, wildfire and forest resilience refers broadly to social and ecological resilience of landscapes, communities, and resources to wildfire and related disturbances and stresses exacerbated by climate change. Social and ecological dynamics are connected and inherent to forests and communities, including but not limited to biodiversity, water quality, cultural resources, recreation, and forest related economies.

## Reference Material

- [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), January 2021, California Forest Management Task Force
- [Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forests and Rangelands](#), August 2020
- [Executive Order B-52-18](#), May 2018
- [Framework for Promoting Socio-ecological Resilience Across Forested Landscapes in the Sierra Nevada](#), August 2020, Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative

## Appendix A: Regions Map

The following map is a general representation of the four geographic regions that guide funding allocations. Specific Regional Block Grantee jurisdictions within these regions are not identified.

