



Morro Bay National Estuary Program Community Project Program Guidelines

BACKGROUND:

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program (Estuary Program) works to protect and restore Morro Bay and its watershed by conducting monitoring and research to track the health of the estuary, repairing natural habitats to protect water quality and wildlife, and educating residents and visitors on how to be good stewards of the bay. To engage our community in caring for our bay, the Estuary Program offers funding for projects through its **Community Project Program**. This program supports community-based projects that help to implement the Action Plans identified in the Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (Management Plan).

GOAL:

The Estuary Program's Community Project Program supports local projects that increase public awareness of issues affecting the bay while implementing an aspect of the Management Plan. An additional goal of the Community Grants Program is to foster creative partnerships among community members and groups and to promote opportunities to connect with as many people as possible in preserving our unique habitats and rich cultural heritage.

ELIGIBILITY:

Proposals are welcome from individuals, organizations, and government agencies in the Morro Bay watershed, including the following:

- (1) nonprofit organizations (i.e., either 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) Internal Revenue Service status);
- (2) governmental or public agencies that work within the Morro Bay watershed (i.e., environmental commissions, planning boards, public works, parks, etc.);
- (3) private businesses and professional organizations whose activities affect the Morro Bay estuary and watershed; and
- (4) educators in the Morro Bay watershed with projects that can serve as models for others.

Please also note the following:

- Previously awarded applicants are not eligible to apply for new project funding before completing open projects unless they receive prior authorization from the Estuary Program.
- Applicant **must** contact Estuary Program staff at least two weeks prior to submittal to discuss the proposed project. If the applicant does not complete this step, their application may be disqualified from further review. Contact Estuary Program staff at 805-772-3834 or staff@mbnep.org. This step

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allows Estuary Program staff a chance to offer feedback and guidance before the project is fully developed, which ensures that a project fits our program’s goals and makes the process more efficient for both the Estuary Program and the applicant.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS:

Projects must improve conditions within the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed. Projects must have impacts within this study area (outlined in a dotted red line on the map below) to be eligible for funding.



----- Watershed boundary

DEADLINES:

Deadlines for proposal submittals are the first Fridays in March and September at 4 p.m. Applications should be submitted by email to staff@mbnep.org or delivered to the Estuary Program offices.

Deadline extensions can be approved on a limited basis at the sole discretion of the Estuary Program. Prior approval is required *in advance* of the project deadline.

Awarded applications will be notified in approximately ten weeks, with funds usually available approximately 12 weeks from the submittal deadline.

PROJECT FOCUS:

The proposed project must align with the Estuary Program's goals, as defined by the seven priority issues faced by the estuary and watershed. These are highlighted in Chapter 2 of the Management Plan. These issues include:

- Accelerated sedimentation
- Bacterial contamination
- Elevated nutrient levels
- Toxic pollutants
- Scarce freshwater resources
- Preserving biodiversity
- Environmentally balanced uses

The Estuary Program and its partners have developed 58 Action Plans to address the priority issues of the Morro Bay Estuary and Watershed. The Action Plans are available in greater detail in Chapter 3 of the Management Plan. Proposed projects **must** implement, partially or wholly, at least one Action Plan.

BUDGET & CONTRACT:

The maximum request is \$5,000 per project. The Estuary Program and review committees may choose to provide partial funding for any individual proposal.

Although matching funds are not required, proposals that have secured matching funds and/or in-kind donations denote a level of community support that will be considered a strength in the review process. Some examples of matching funds include cash, volunteer labor, donated goods or services, technical support, and loaned equipment.

Special Note to Applicants: If project funding is awarded, documentation of formal approval to enter into an agreement with the Estuary Program and carry out the funded project must be submitted. This specific documentation will vary based on the applicant (i.e. for a non-profit organization it would be a resolution of the Board of Directors). Applicants who are not associated with an agency or organization will most likely not need to submit such documentation.

SELECTION PROCESS:

The project review process is as follows:

1. Estuary Program staff will review applications to ensure that they are eligible and relevant.
2. Completed applications that sufficiently meet guidelines will be reviewed by one of two working groups.
 - The Technical Working Group reviews projects involving restoration or monitoring.
 - The Education and Outreach Working Group reviews project involving communication and public education.
3. Selected proposals will then be reviewed by the Implementation Committee, which makes a recommendation on funding.
4. Proposals are voted on by the Executive Committee.

5. The Bay Foundation of Morro Bay issues final approval.

Working groups and committees review applications based on the following criteria:

- Project Goals and relevance to Management Plan Action Plans & priority issues
- Community engagement
- Likelihood of success
- Urgency and timeliness
- Cost effectiveness
- Short term and long-term benefits
- Public support and impact
- Regulatory feasibility
- Link to other projects

FORMS & REPORTS:

All project recipients will be required to submit a final report upon completion of the project, as well as copies of all press clippings or other printed materials related to the project and a final product itself (i.e. brochures, videos, manuals), as per award contract. 10% of the funding awarded will be retained and included in the final payment. Final payment will be made after all project deliverables are submitted to the Estuary Program office. These may include a final report, copies of press clippings, photos, etc.

All projects, concepts, artwork, photos, videos, and other products of the projects may be reproduced by the Estuary Program at the Estuary Program's discretion. Materials may be used with no additional purchasing rights costs. All produced materials should also carry an approved Estuary Program logo and credit language as well as any additional language described in the project contract.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please carefully review the application steps to create a competitive application.

Community Project Application Process:

1. Review the program eligibility requirements to ensure that you are eligible.
2. Communicate with your organization and partners to develop a project idea.
3. Contact Estuary Program staff to discuss your potential project. Communication with staff prior to submittal of an application is mandatory. If you have not met with staff prior to submitting your application, your project may be ineligible for funding.
4. Complete the Community Project application, which includes the Community Project Application Cover Sheet and Narrative Information Section.
5. Submit your application to the Estuary Program prior to the deadline. Deadlines are the first Friday in March and the first Friday in September at 4 p.m. Pacific Time. Send all application materials to staff@mbnep.org or deliver to the Estuary Program offices.

Morro Bay National Estuary Program Community Project Program Application

COMMUNITY PROJECT APPLICATION COVER SHEET:

Complete the [fillable Community Project Application Cover Sheet form](#).

NARRATIVE INFORMATION SECTION:

Please answer the following questions on your own paper. This section should not exceed five pages. If possible, please save the Narrative Information Section document as a PDF.

Project Title:

Give your project a descriptive name that we can use to easily reference it.

Full Project Description:

Describe in some detail what you will accomplish with this project. Please address the following:

- What steps are involved?
- Who will accomplish which tasks?
- What partnering organizations will be involved?
- What vendors will be used, etc.?
- Provide sufficient detail for application reviewers to fully understand how you will accomplish your goals and create a successful project.

Community Engagement:

Describe how members or groups of the community will be involved to implement the proposed project.

Audience:

If your project has an education and outreach component, please describe the following:

- Who is the target audience of the project?
- How you will reach them (who will be educated, participate in an event, etc.)?
- How many people will be reached?

Benefits:

Tell us specifically how this project will improve the health of the estuary and its watershed.

Project Budget:

Please include the following:

- Show the estimated total project cost. If applicable, break down your budget into categories such as personnel costs, materials, printing, subcontractors, and travel. Attach quotes/bids from

subcontractors including those from printers, graphic artists, etc.

- List any other funding sources that will be used to complete the project, including in-kind and volunteer contributions.

Evaluation:

Describe how you will determine whether or not the project has been successful. For example, the number of students that will participate in the program, the number of publications distributed, etc.

Schedule:

Describe the project schedule assuming funds are awarded in this application cycle. Include and describe the key milestones, their expected dates, and estimated date of completion.

Qualifications:

Provide information that illustrates your ability to successfully complete the proposed project:

- Describe your ability to perform the work, including the staff or other resources that will be used for implementation of the project.
- List past experiences that may be relevant.
- If other agencies or organizations are participating, list them and describe their roles.