MORRO BAY
NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Community Grant Program Guidelines

BACKGROUND:

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) works to protect and restore the physical, biological, economic, and recreational values of the Morro Bay Estuary and its watershed. To encourage community participation in the stewardship of the estuary and watershed, The Estuary Program offers funding for projects through the **Community Grant 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* (CCMP) .

GOAL:

The Community Grant Program available from the MBNEP supports local projects that engage the community to increase public awareness while implementing an aspect of the CCMP. 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 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. (5) Previously awarded applicants are not eligible to apply for new grants before completing open grants unless prior authorization is received from the grant manager.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS:

Projects must improve conditions within the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed.

DEADLINES: Deadlines for proposal submittals are the first Friday in March and September at 4 pm.

Deadline extensions can be approved on a limited basis at the sole discretion of the grant manager(s). Prior approval required *in advance* of the grant deadline.

Awarded applications will be notified in approximately 10 weeks, with funds usually available approximately 12 weeks from the submittal deadline.

PROJECT FOCUS:

Seven priority issues faced by estuary and watershed have been identified and are highlighted in Chapter 2 of the CCMP. 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 59 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 CCMP. Proposed projects should implement, partially or wholly, at least one Action Plan.

BUDGET& CONTRACT:

Fund requests will be capped at $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, which will be considered a strength in the grant review process. Some examples of matching funds include cash, volunteer labor, donated goods or services, technical support or loaned equipment.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Proposals will initially be evaluated by the Estuary Program staff. Completed applications that sufficiently   meet guidelines will be reviewed by one of two working groups - the Technical Working Group or the Education and Outreach Working Group. Selected proposals will then be reviewed by the Implementation Committee (IC) and voted on by the Executive Committee, with final approval pending Bay Foundation consent.

Working groups and committees review applications on the following criteria:

- Project Goals and relevance to CCMP 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:

Applicants are required to fill out the **Community Grant Program Application,** available online or in the Estuary Program office.

All grant 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 grant award 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 grant projects may be reproduced by MBNEP at MBNEP'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 grant contract.

Narrative Information Section

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper using the provided categories. This section should not exceed five pages.

Project Title:

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

Full Project Description:

Describe in some detail what you will accomplish with this project. 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 grant 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, describe the target audience of the project and how you will reach them (who will be educated, participate in an event, etc) and how many people will be reached.

Benefits:

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

Project Budget:

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 grant cycle. Include and describe the key milestones, their expected dates, and estimated date of completion.

Qualifications:

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. Page 4

Community Grant Application Special Note to Applicants:

If grant 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.