



Cannabis Restoration Grant Program



Qualified Cultivator Funding Opportunity

Concept Consultation Request

Accepting concept proposals and
scheduling consultations from:
August 30, 2021 – December 1, 2022

CONCEPT PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is now accepting concept proposals in preparation for the Qualified Cultivator Funding Opportunity, Proposal Solicitation Notice (Solicitation). The Solicitation is scheduled for release in fall of 2021 and will be open for applying until spring of 2023. Applications will be approved on a scheduled basis.

The concept proposal will outline basic project details and be used to schedule a consultation with CDFW and Cannabis Restoration Grant Program (CRGP) staff. The consultation process is optional but will allow staff and the prospective applicants to discuss the proposed project's applicability and eligibility to the Solicitation prior to the pre-application phase. The Solicitation will include a pre-application and full application phase. This document highlights details of the Solicitation, including eligibility and priority requirements.

SOLICITATION FOR QUALIFIED CULTIVATOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

The Solicitation addresses priorities that will contribute to the objectives of the State of California's Revenue and Taxation code Section 34019(f)(2) as well as CDFW's mission. CDFW will award these funds through the CRGP.

Funding

Funding of proposals submitted under the Qualified Cultivator Funding Opportunity will be subject to availability of funds. Up to \$6 million may be available.

Eligible Entities

The following entity types are eligible to apply under the Solicitation (FGC §1501.5(b)):

- Public agencies (federal, state, local);
- Nonprofit organizations qualified to do business in California and qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code; and
- California Native American tribes, as that term is defined in Public Resources Code Section 21073.

Geographic Focus

Funds under this Solicitation will be available for projects statewide. However, if proposed projects are within a [Cannabis Priority Watershed](#), as defined by the State Water Resources Control Board in coordination with CDFW, and/or identified as a priority stream in the California Water Action Plan, they will receive higher scores during the proposal evaluation process.

Project Priorities and Requirements

1. **Project Priorities** - Applications may be considered under one or both of the following project priorities. Ineligible costs under any of the project priorities includes the fee to submit the permit or license application to the representative agency, and/or the CEQA filing fees, costs required by compensatory mitigation as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15370(e), or mitigation pursuant to a court order or settlement agreement. Projects that include mitigation efforts as defined above may still be considered for funding but applicants must describe how the proposed project will go beyond required mitigation to justify eligibility.
 - Transition from Provisional License to Annual License - To transition to an annual license, provisional licensees must meet all regulatory requirements in Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations, sections 8102, 8105, and 8106. Eligible activities under this project type include, but are not limited to: cleanup, remediation, and restoration, professional services, consulting, and infrastructure. Eligible costs include but are not limited to: compliance costs (except those costs described above), meeting the avoidance and mitigation requirements approved in the project's CEQA document, or county permitting requirements.

If the applicant is representing a provisional license cultivator, actions outlined must lead to the issuance of an annual license from the licensing authority.
 - Sustainable Cannabis Cultivation Practices - Sustainable cannabis cultivation practices should alleviate direct and indirect environmental impacts of cannabis cultivation and enhance environmental stewardship. Activities that may be eligible include but are not limited to: sustainable water consumption, sustainable waste management, integrated pest and disease management, erosion control, and/or riparian protection.
2. **Co-Benefits** - All proposed projects must benefit qualified cultivators as defined below and provide co-benefits. Co-benefits may include, but are not limited to:
 - Habitat improvements and/or species conservation¹- Habitat improvements and/or species conservation may include improvements

¹ Habitat improvements or species conservation may include but not limited to implementation of actions found in State Wildlife Action Plan, California Water Action Plan, state and federal recovery plans, or other relevant conservation plans and programs.

for birds, bats, pollinators, and/or aquatic species; water conservation; minimizing the spread of invasive species; and enhancing native habitat and habitat connectivity.

- Promote Equity – Promoting equity may include participation in or support of, any local equity program as defined by the Business and Professions Code (BPC), Division 10, Chapter 23, Section 26240 (e), which includes prioritizing cultivators that may qualify as equity applicants as defined by local assessments. Equity programs² may include those established by any local jurisdiction to focus on inclusion and support of individuals and/or communities that were negatively or disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization as described by the local jurisdiction's equity assessment.

3. **Qualified Cultivator** - the following qualified cultivator may be represented by an eligible applicant. The qualified cultivator being represented by the eligible applicant must at a minimum have a valid and active provisional license or annual license issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA; now the Department of Cannabis Control).

Qualified cultivation license types are:

- Specialty cottage:
 - "Specialty Cottage Outdoor" is an outdoor cultivation site with up to 25 mature plants.
 - "Specialty Cottage Mixed-Light Tier 1³" only, is a mixed-light cultivation site with 2,500 square feet or less of total canopy
- Specialty:
 - "Specialty Outdoor" is an outdoor cultivation site with less than or equal to 5,000 square feet of total canopy, or up to 50 mature plants.
 - "Specialty Mixed-Light Tier 1" only, is a mixed-light cultivation site between 2,501 and 5,000 square feet of total canopy.
- Small:
 - "Small Outdoor" is an outdoor cultivation site between 5,001 and 10,000 square feet of total canopy.
 - "Small Mixed-Light Tier 1" only, is a mixed-light cultivation site between 5,001 and 10,000 square feet of total canopy.

² Please refer to BPC, Division 10, Chapter 23, Section 26240 and California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, [Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions](#) for more information on local equity programs.

³ "Mixed-light Tier 1" is without the use of artificial light or the use of artificial light at a rate above zero, but no more than six watts per square foot.

Priority will be given to qualified cultivators with ownership and/or financial interest in no more than 10,000 square feet of total canopy. However, cultivators with ownership and/or financial interest accumulating between 10,000-20,000 square feet of total canopy may still qualify to be represented. Cultivators with ownership and/or financial interest in more than 20,000 square feet of canopy will not qualify to be represented by an eligible entity. If a project includes or is involved with an active cultivation license, the Department of Cannabis Control license number, and any associated permit numbers will be required.

4. **Land Tenure/Site Control** - Applicants for all projects that involve access to private property must demonstrate landowner permission to access the site and evidence that the represented qualified cultivator, if not the landowner, has the legal right to occupy and use the proposed location pursuant to Section 8104 of Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations.

CONCEPT CONSULTATION PROCESS

Potential applicants may use the [Project Consultation Request form](#) to submit concept proposals. Once submitted, CRGP staff will be in contact to discuss the project idea and ask questions.

Concept proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until December 1, 2022. Prospective applicants are encouraged to read this document and submit concept proposals, but this is optional.

Next Steps



CDFW will split the formal application into two phases: a pre-application and a full application. The pre-application will be a short application form composed primarily of checklists and short narrative fields. It will be used to assess project eligibility and readiness, and feedback will be provided to applicants. Eligible pre-applicants will be invited back to submit a full application. The full application will include longer narrative fields, such as an explanation of how the proposal addresses the Solicitation and will include items necessary to prepare a grant agreement, such as a detailed budget and scope. After submittal of the full application, the application will be reviewed and scored.

Workshop

CRGP will host a public workshop prior to the release of the Solicitation for the Qualified Cultivator Funding Opportunity, to provide an overview of the concept consultation process and Solicitation. Please check the [CRGP website](#) for more information.

Contact cannggrantprogram@wildlife.ca.gov with any questions.