

Background

The purpose of the Water-Wise Garden Mini-Grant Program is to fund innovative projects designed to encourage public acceptance, desire for, and use of water-wise landscapes.

Focus of Projects

Mini-Grant projects must focus on water conservation and increase individual and community involvement in water conservation efforts.

Who can Apply

This Mini-Grant Program is open to nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies.

A final report is due one year after the Mini-Grant is awarded, and a midterm progress report may be required. Copies of receipts for all expenditures using grant funds must be included with report.

To be eligible for funding, proposed projects must be in compliance with all federal, state, and local land use, regulatory and permit requirements; and must be based within the Soquel Creek Water District's service area.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- Repayment of existing debt or preexisting tax liens or obligations
- Payment of organizational debt
- Legal Fees
- Loan or bank fees
- Subsidization of existing contracts

Amount of Awards

The minimum Mini-Grant award is \$250, and the maximum is \$2,000. An applicant may not receive more than one Mini-Grant per fiscal year. Mini-Grant applications will be kept on file for one-year, after which they expire.

Deadline for Entries

There is no deadline for Mini-Grant Program applications. Applications will be accepted year-round until the allocated amount (\$5,000) has been fully disbursed. Proposals may be hand delivered to the offices of the Soquel Creek Water District, 5180 Soquel Drive, or mailed to P.O. Box 1550, Capitola, CA 95010, attention: Conservation Department.

Mini-Grant applications take approximately 6-10 weeks to process depending upon when they are received.

General Conditions

All materials submitted become the property of the Soquel Creek Water District and will not be returned. Funds awarded are public funds and any information submitted or generated is subject to public disclosure requirements.

The District reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to request modifications of the proposal, to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to grant full or partial funding of any request, and/or to cancel all or part of this grant solicitation at any time prior to awards.

For inquiries or clarification of this Mini-Grant Program, contact Roy Sikes at (831) 475-8500.

Submittal Requirements

Please submit one (1) original and two (2) complete copies of the proposal, with all relevant documents attached.

All materials, unless otherwise noted, are to be printed double-sided on letter size paper. The original proposal may be printed single-sided.

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal are the responsibility of the applicant.

Proposal Content and Organization

Unless otherwise noted, a complete grant proposal must include all of the following forms and supporting documents to be eligible for consideration.

- Form A:* Application Cover Page.
- Form B:* Project Summary & Narrative.
- Project Narrative, two single-sided pages maximum.
- Form C:* Project budget.
- Attachments as follows.

Include one copy of the following attachments:

- Attachment A:* Organizational budget for the current fiscal year, indicating revenues and expenses.

- Attachment B:* Governing Board roster, indicating officers, addresses, and affiliations.
- Attachment C:* List of key project personnel.
- Attachment D:* Proof of federal nonprofit status (if applying as a nonprofit).
- Attachment E:* Location map.
- Attachment F:* Site plan.
- Attachment G:* Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Attachment H:* List of plants, shrubs, trees, and groundcovers.

Project Criteria

The project must meet the following criteria;

- Must use native or drought tolerant plants, shrubs, trees, and ground covers.
- Not more than 10 percent of total landscaped area shall be turf.
- Drip irrigation or an approved alternative irrigation system must be used.
- Site must be accessible and open to the public.
- Plants, shrubs, trees, and groundcovers must be identified with signage.

Evaluation Process

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by staff members based on the Review Criteria. During the review process, staff may contact the applicant for additional information or to clarify proposal content, and may elect to interview applicants or conduct a site visit prior to making a funding recommendation.

Staff recommendations will be presented to the District's Board of Directors for approval. The Board of Directors will make final funding approval based on staff recommendation. There is no appeal process for proposals that are not approved for funding.

Review Criteria

All submitted proposals which are in compliance with the Mini-Grant requirements will be reviewed according to using the following factors:

1. Project Conception - Proposal clear and comprehensible with a realistic timeline; project activities well defined and technically feasible.
2. Outcomes - Objectives clearly stated, specific, realistic, and measurable.
3. Organization Capacity - Organization qualified to implement project and achieve stated objectives.
4. Financial Viability - Organization demonstrates sound fiscal management; project budget is realistic and cost effective.
5. Impact - Project utilizes water conservation measures.
6. Educational Potential - Project has educational benefits specifically relating to water conservation.
7. Community Support - Project has collaborative community support and benefits customers and areas served by the District.
8. Longevity - Organization has structure, support, and financial backing to maintain project.

Grant Awards

All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant review process and the District decision approximately six (6) weeks after the receipt of their proposals. For successful applicants, funds will be available for expenditure only after a funding agreement/contract between the Agency and the grantee is signed and fully executed. The District will not be liable for any project costs incurred prior to the legal execution of the contract, unless mutually agreed upon in writing.

The District reserves the right to revoke any grant for which a contract is not executed, due to delays on the part of the grantee, within two (2) months of the award. Funded projects must be initiated within one (1) year of execution of the contract or grant funds will revert back to the District.

For more Information

Please contact the conservation manager at Soquel Creek Water District at (831) 475-8500.