

# Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

## Board Policy Manual

<b>District Grantmaking Program</b>	<b>Policy 3.10</b> <b>Chapter 3 – Fiscal Management</b>
Effective Date: 02/28/2018	Revised Date: N/A
Prior Versions: 11/17/2010; 11/14/2007	

### **Purpose**

The purposes of the District’s Grantmaking Program are to a) support projects that further the District’s mission, b) build the capacity of academic and nonprofit institutions in order to sustain and grow the conservation field; and c) facilitate the District’s mission and work by building and strengthening partnerships.

### **Grantmaking programmatic focus areas**

#### *Programmatic priorities*

The District’s Grantmaking Program will include a broad focus to ensure a range of projects are considered and reflect the diversity of work in which the District engages. Grantmaking will be guided by an emphasis on investments that reflect a regional focus and provide avenues for partnership, both with the District as well as among other stakeholders.

Using these guiding principles, eligible project categories will include proposals focusing on applied science; networks, partnerships; and access, education and interpretation. General grant parameters for each grant proposal category are outlined below, with the grant solicitation providing additional detail for each category.

#### Applied Science

Research proposals will include academic or practitioner science projects that support the protection and enhancement of natural resources on District lands. The purpose of this support is to develop and disseminate information that advances scientific understanding of natural processes. Projects with potential to increase the effectiveness of applied stewardship of resources on District lands will be preferentially considered. Types of projects may include applied academic research or proof-of-concept, with focus areas including topics such as integrated pest management, species habitat, restoration, or similar topics relating to natural resource management. Faculty at accredited academic institutions must sponsor research-related projects and field research must take place on District lands. Practitioner science projects other than peer-reviewed research may require faculty sponsorship, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### Network and Partnership Support

In order to broaden its impact and ensure District priorities are aligned with multi-

jurisdictional conservation and recreation plans, grant proposals that cultivate, sustain, or grow established conservation networks will be accepted. Network or partnership support could take the form of facilitation or other consulting support, staff time for network participation, outreach, meeting supplies, etc.

#### Access, Interpretation and Education

Funding for access, environmental interpretation and education will be directed towards ensuring equal opportunity for all residents to take advantage of District lands while fostering an appreciation for open space protection, outdoor recreation, and environmental stewardship. The focus will be on funding projects that encourage access to and use of District preserves by all and in creating and executing nature-based educational and interpretive experiences for children and adults. Funding can be used for staff time to create or execute programming, transportation, educational and interpretive programming materials or supplies, facilitate knowledge of outdoor recreational opportunities, access to the outdoors, and environmental stewardship activities.

### **Grant management and internal controls**

#### *Program administration*

The Grants Specialist will oversee the grant solicitation, selection, and grant management once selected. Other departments, including Visitor Services and Natural Resources, will be brought in for technical expertise to assist in evaluating proposals through a review committee. Once the grants have been selected, the Grants Specialist will oversee the administrative requirements for grant management, with at least one technical content expert from the relevant department assigned to assist in evaluating grant progress.

#### *Proposal solicitation, selection and due diligence*

The District is committed to soliciting proposals from a diverse range of organizations and application solicitations will be broadly disseminated to encourage organizations that reach underserved communities to apply. Additionally, the District will consider past District funding in its scoring criteria in order to increase the competitiveness of organizations that have not previously received District funding.

Eligible grantees will include accredited academic institutions, 501(c)(3) nonprofits, or public entities. Organizations without an IRS-designated status will be eligible for funding if a fiscal sponsorship is established prior to application submittal. A formal evaluation criteria will be used to select proposals for funding, including the organization's ability to administer the grant. Example evaluation categories include the applicant's ability to successfully complete the proposed work in the anticipated timeline and budget, past District funding, fit with District's mission, Board priority, and potential to develop new partnerships.

#### *Grant terms and internal controls*

The maximum award for individual grants will be \$50,000. The award can be expended as necessary within a three-year grant term, contingent on satisfactory progress on grant objectives. Grants will be administered on a reimbursement basis, with up to 15% available up front if the grantee has a demonstrable need. Grantees will be eligible for reimbursement costs

up until the original grant amount, contingent on satisfactory progress toward grant goals.

#### *Grant applications and reporting*

Grantees will be responsible for submitting annual or semi-annual reports that summarize activities and any relevant findings, alongside periodic check-ins with District staff. Additionally, grantees may also be asked to present the grant outcomes to the District staff and/or the Board in addition to formal reporting. Additionally, reimbursement submissions will require expenses to date recorded against the budget, along with invoices and accomplishments and milestones achieved during the reimbursement period.

The application and reporting process will be specific to a) the grant category, and b) the dollar amount awarded. Applications and reporting procedures will have two tiers of requirements (up to \$25,000 and up to \$50,000). This structure will ensure that smaller grantees are not prohibited from applying due to cumbersome application and reporting requirements in relation to the funding received. Additionally, the District will require that grantees make any acquired data, educational/interpretive materials, or conclusions available to the public. The Board will receive updates on the status of the grants and outcomes through an annual report.

#### *Additional grant requirements and process*

- Application solicitations will be released every year or every other year when funding is available and the District Grantmaking Policy will be evaluated every three years and updated as necessary. Grantees will continue to be eligible for additional application cycles, with no funding tenure limit.
- Eligible projects must not result in permanent damage and/or impairment to habitats or natural resources on District lands and will be in compliance with the District's Permit to Enter procedures (required for research projects).
- If indirect costs are costs incurred that do not have directly attributable expenses, they may be charged at no more than 10% of total grant cost. Examples include general and administrative costs, general equipment purchase or maintenance, and salaries and benefits of executive or administrative personnel who may not be directly engaged in the project. Subcontractors are excluded from indirect cost calculations.