



Meeting Summary for Safe Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program - Public Input Session #2

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Quick recap

The Water Foundation introduced the draft Safe, Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program in collaboration with Los Angeles County Public Works, which will provide funding for public education and community engagement activities in support of the Safe Clean Water Program. This first cycle of the Grants Program has a total of \$8.5 million to give out. The team encouraged feedback from the participants to improve the draft program before it is finalized. The meeting also discussed the application process, eligibility criteria, and the evaluation matrix, which will be used to assess proposals.

Summary

Safe, Clean Water Grants Program Discussion

Alex Paxton and Ava Farriday from the Water Foundation introduced the draft Safe, Clean Water Grants Program and sought input from the participants to improve it. They clarified that while they would consider all suggestions, not all could be incorporated due to program objectives, administrative challenges, and legal or policy considerations. Ava also disclosed the use of Zoom's AI meeting summary feature and noted that the meeting recording and program materials would be posted on the Water Foundation's website. The meeting began with an acknowledgment of the program's location on Indigenous land.

New Grants Program for Stormwater Management

Alex introduced the new Grants Program that will provide funding for public education and community engagement efforts in support of the Safe Clean Water Program. The Grants Program, a collaboration between Los Angeles County Public Works and the Water Foundation, was developed in response to the county's water management challenges and the need to invest in underserved communities. The four objectives of the Grants Program are to increase community awareness of the Safe Clean Water Program, support community members in envisioning their own stormwater solutions, engage community members in active stewardship of neighborhood green stormwater infrastructure, and increase community understanding of stormwater management in LA County, particularly in communities most impacted by climate change. This Grants Program will be funded as long as the Safe Clean Water program is active.

Grants Program Details and Eligibility

Ava presented the details of the draft Grants Program, which includes a Notice of Funding Opportunity for a total of \$8.5 million. The program divides funding into three tiers based on the scope and duration of the activity. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, federally recognized Tribes, municipal agencies, and school districts. Ava also outlined the types of activities that are eligible for funding, such as community meetings, project-specific community outreach, and Tribal engagement. Ineligible activities include lobbying, electioneering, and any activities that would trigger CEQA review. Ava also presented an evaluation criteria matrix for assessing proposals with three categories: Safe Clean Water Program alignment, feasibility, and communities served.

FAQs

Alex clarified some of the FAQs that she and Ava have received so far. She said that multiple entities could apply to do the same project together, but that if possible, applicants should submit separate proposals so that the Water Foundation can directly grant to each organization individually. She also mentioned that it was still being decided whether organizations with a Watershed Coordinator contract or who have representation on Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) would be eligible to apply, and that they are consulting with County Counsel to determine the best way to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Website Information, Timeline and Feedback Process

Ava and Alex presented an overview of the Grants Program page on the Water Foundation website. Ava highlighted the website's features, including an FAQ section, and encouraged participants to sign-up for periodic email updates via the interest form on the website. Ava also outlined the upcoming timeline for the Grants Program, which is set to launch in early September with a rolling application period. The program will evaluate grant applications and award funding every 2-3 months, with the final application period closing in May 2025. Ava emphasized that the program is still in the feedback stage and encouraged participants to provide their input either verbally, through the zoom chat, or by email before the deadline on August 5th. Alex confirmed the three ways to provide feedback and reminded participants of the comment deadline.

Public Input, Questions, and Discussion

Ava and Alex facilitated a discussion with participants on the call, taking feedback on the draft program and answering clarifying questions.

The team discussed the application and funding process for their grant program. Alex explained that proposals would be evaluated every few months, and if recommended for funding, the applicant would be notified and a grant agreement would be entered into. Cesar inquired about the funding numbers for different project tiers, and Alex clarified that the tiering system was open to feedback. Cesar also inquired as to whether Water Foundation was thinking about how to

ensure proposal funding gets spread out, so as to not disadvantage someone applying at the end of the rolling application period. Alex said that she and Ava are open to feedback on how to instate this, and that while it is hard to predict how many proposals will come in and for what funding amount, the intention is to spread out the funding so there is enough available for everyone.

Ava and Alex also confirmed that Indigenous organizations and Tribes are eligible to apply, and that tribal engagement is an eligible grant activity. They also clarified that the reason why only Federally recognized Tribes are eligible as opposed to state-recognized tribes is due to their tax status, and there being restrictions on who Water Foundation can make grants to as a public foundation. They confirmed that non-federally recognized Tribes/Indigenous organizations with 501(c)(3) or (4) status or who have a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor would still be eligible as well.

They also addressed questions regarding the upcoming K-12 education and workforce training programs. Alex clarified that the program is not a workforce training grant program, but that there may be some areas of overlap with what this grants program can fund versus what the schools program can fund, which are yet to be determined. Details about the rollout of the other two educational programs, K through 12 and workforce training, remained uncertain, and the Water Foundation clarified that they are not involved in the other two programs and could not provide any definitive answers on their status.

At the end of the meeting, attendees discussed various other suggestions for improving program accessibility and outreach. Ava reminded attendees to provide feedback via email and share program information widely to reach a broader audience, while Alex emphasized the importance of signing up for email notifications on the program via the Water Foundation's website.

Next steps

Ava and Alex will consider feedback from the meeting and from comments sent via email, and incorporate suggestions into the final version of the Safe Clean Water Grants Program as appropriate. Meeting attendees may submit any additional input on the draft program to SCWfeedback@waterfdn.org by August 5th at 5:30 PM.