

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



PROPOSITION 4 GRANT PROGRAM

Funded by the

Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean
Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4)



Grant Guidelines

DRAFT

Direct all inquiries, correspondence and grant applications to:

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
42-600 Cook Street, Suite 219
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

Last Updated – 7/10/2025

I. Introduction

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (“Conservancy”) was established in 1991 by California Public Resources Code Section 33501 to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley and its surrounding mountains, which include the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and Sand to Snow National Monuments, as well as portions of Joshua Tree National Park. The Conservancy has a history of working efficiently with state and federal agencies, Riverside County, local cities and Tribes, and numerous nonprofit organizations to preserve open space, wildlife, scarce water resources and historical artifacts through conservation land acquisition, habitat management and restoration, and educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond of 2024 (“Proposition 4”) was enacted by the voters on November 5, 2024, to fund \$10 billion in public improvements throughout the State of California. The primary objective of Proposition 4 is to tackle our most urgent climate needs by investing in preventing devastating wildfires, providing clean, safe drinking water and boosting water supplies, and protecting California’s iconic landscapes. Proposition 4 project investments aim to assist communities that have been historically underserved by allocating a minimum of 10 percent of available funds to *severely disadvantaged communities*¹ and a minimum of 40 percent of available funds to *disadvantaged communities*².

II. Overview of the Conservancy Grant Program

The Conservancy has approximately \$11 million available for local assistance grants over the life of its Proposition 4 Grant Program. The minimum local assistance grant amount is \$50,000 for implementation projects. The Conservancy plans to issue one Notice of Funding Availability (“NOFA”) in 2025, with applications accepted continuously thereafter. The NOFA will be posted on the Conservancy’s website, and will be sent to local media, public agencies, Tribes and nonprofit organizations. Conservancy staff will undertake extensive outreach to encourage applications from economically disadvantaged communities.

III. Eligible Applicants

State and local public agencies (including joint powers authorities), nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 tax exempt status and Tribes recognized by the state or federal governments are eligible.

IV. Use of Proposition 4 Funds

¹ Communities with median household incomes less than 60 percent of the statewide average.

² Communities with median household incomes less than 80 percent of the statewide average.

The Conservancy has identified numerous needs in the Coachella Valley related to reducing the risks of climate change impacts upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increasing public access, which cannot be addressed with existing Conservancy bond funds.

- (a) **Funding Priorities.** Projects that implement the following Conservancy objectives as listed below will be eligible for support from Proposition 4.

1. **Objective 1: Reduce risks of climate change impact upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources.** This includes:

I. Acquisition Projects that:

- i. Preserve and maintain natural and cultural areas that are critical to and for species that are endangered or threatened or that are critical to the health of the natural ecosystem.
- ii. Support land conservation, where conserved land reduces greenhouse gas emissions by both preventing emissions and sequestering existing gases.
- iii. Support the 30x30 initiative in acquiring private lands and returning them to conservation or expanding existing conservation areas or create new ones and protect vital ecosystems.
- iv. Support the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan designed to protect the regions exceptional biodiversity and protection of natural habitats, ensuring the long-term survival of species and maintaining ecosystems health in the Coachella Valley.

II. Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Projects that:

- i. Remove invasive plants that contribute to global warming, use excessive amounts of water or harm endangered or threatened species of plants or animals and replace them with native plants.
- ii. Enhance watershed related natural features, such as washes, channels, streams or riverbeds.
- iii. Improve groundwater supply by enhancing flow into the aquifer through washes, alluvia fans, or streams.
- iv. Improve desert ecosystem through restoration work that supports biodiversity, resilience to disturbances, and the ability to support a wide range of plants and animal life, including healthy soil, dust suppression, and clean water.
- v. Prevent wildfire through the removal of invasive plant species to enhance fire prevention by reducing fuel loads, preventing fire spread, and allowing native fire-resistance vegetation to thrive.

2. **Objective 2: Increase Public Access.** Eligible projects include:

- I. Enhancing access to outdoor recreation, including but not limited to:

- i. Visitor-serving improvements (including buildings, athletic and visitor center facilities, native plant landscaping and shade infrastructure), in parks, public open spaces or recreational areas.
 - ii. Trails through urban or natural landscapes, whether for hiking, biking, walking or equestrian use.
 - II. Community access project improvements, such as disabled access improvements, interpretative features that provide education about habitat conservation, cultural artifacts or local history.
 - III. Restoration projects that support natural features and habitat areas that expand public access and enhances access to outdoor recreation
 - IV. Preserving cultural or historical resources, including but not limited to:
 - i. Stabilization or restoration of historically significant buildings, monuments or infrastructure features.
 - Protection of archeological or cultural artifacts.
- 3. **Objective 3: Co-Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities.** Projects that benefit Disadvantaged or Severely Disadvantaged Communities, as identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0³ or a similar tool approved by CVMC, will be given top priority. The Conservancy seeks to invest in these areas to mitigate the disproportionately negative impact to residents, particularly children and senior citizens. The Conservancy will allocate a minimum of 40 percent of available funds to disadvantaged communities and 10 percent to severely disadvantaged communities (as those terms are defined in footnotes 1 and 2) and other areas traditionally underserved by outdoor access or recreational amenities.

V. **Project Requirements**

- (a) All projects must comply with applicable environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- (b) All applicants must agree to comply with the state audit requirements applicable to Proposition 4 funding, including that the grantee retain for at least three years following final payment, satisfactory financial records relating to the project and make them available to the Conservancy upon request.
- (c) All projects must comply with applicable federal, state and local permitting requirements.
- (d) Projects involving construction, demolition, restoration and similar activities must comply with prevailing wage requirements (except to the extent certified conservation corps or volunteer services are used), and if applicable, public contracting laws.
- (e) Any acquisitions must be from willing sellers for a price that does not exceed the fair market value of the property as determined by a Conservancy-approved

³ A tool that shows cumulative impact in California communities by census track, face disproportionate health disparities due to poor air quality, exposure to harmful pollution, and lack of public amenities and services.

- appraisal, and the property acquired will be encumbered with a deed restriction in favor of the Conservancy that requires perpetual use of the property for conservation or other purposes consistent with the Conservancy's mission.
- (f) Projects are encouraged to include the California Conservation Corps or certified conservation corps where feasible such as the Urban Conservation Corps.
 - (g) No funds will be granted to complete environmental mitigation requirements of other projects, except where the grant funds would support only aspects of the project that exceed the minimum mitigation requirements of the applicable permit condition.
 - (h) Staff costs and expenses that are related to the funded projects and are included in the approved project budget may be paid with grant funds.
 - (i) Grantees whose projects are funded must execute a grant agreement with the Conservancy that includes all provisions required by Proposition 4 and state law, as well as the Conservancy's standard insurance and indemnification provisions. *(Copies available upon request.)*
 - (j) Grantees who receive funding for acquisitions and conservation easements are required to provide spatial data to the California Conserved Areas Database and/or the California Conservation Easement Database (<https://calands.org/>). These Geographic Information System (GIS) databases inform state planning and policy, including the state's goal to conserve 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030 (also known as the State's 30x30 Initiative). Grantees can submit spatial data or request help via email to cpad@calands.org. Grantees can work closely with their grant administrator to discuss additional confidentiality measures to protect data and culturally sensitive information, particularly California Native American Tribal Grantees. Grantees must submit proof of reporting to the Conservancy before the end of the grant term.
 - (k) If applicable, Grantee must provide at least one sign, denoting the grant funding source ("Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, Proposition 4 Grant Program"). The cost of the sign should be included in the approved project budget to be paid with grant funds. Grantee shall also include the grant funding source in all social media and press releases.

VI. Application and Review Process

Applications will be accepted continuously beginning on a future date to be determined after public comment period. The first step in the application process is for the applicant to complete the pre-application form. The Pre-Application Form is included in these guidelines as Exhibit 1. Pre-Application Forms must be emailed to communications@cvmc.ca.gov. Conservancy staff will review the Pre-Application Form and will contact the applicant to discuss the project. Applicants whose projects are deemed eligible will be notified to complete the full application and narrative ("Full Application"). The Full Application requirements are set forth below, under "VI. Contents of Full Application." Applicants whose projects are appropriate for conservation corps participation should also use the [CORPS CONSULTATION PROCESS](https://ccc.ca.gov/collaborate/consultation/) (<https://ccc.ca.gov/collaborate/consultation/>). A confirmation letter or application must be

submitted from the Urban Conservation Corps (UCC) or California Conservation Corps (CCC) confirming consultation and collaboration.

Submitted applications/proposals will be reviewed and evaluated for compliance with grant guidelines by staff, and, where appropriate, with Tribal consultation, biological consultation, and independent professionals with relevant expertise. CVMC will recommend or require Tribal consultation when appropriate. Staff will then recommend grant awards for consideration to the Conservancy Board. The board meetings are public in accordance with the Bagley Keene Act, and applicants may address the board regarding their applications.

Projects that meet evaluation criteria as described above will be eligible for funding, but the board retains discretion to reject any and all eligible projects. Implementation grant awards shall be made after compliance with CEQA has been achieved.

Contents of Full Application

The Full Application consists of an application and certification form and a required written narrative not to exceed 10 pages (exclusive of exhibits such as photos, charts, schedules, staff resumes and support letters), that addresses the following:

1. **Project Description.** Provide a detailed explanation of the project, along with accompanying exhibits (e.g., conceptual designs, charts, etc.).
2. **Project Location.** Include a map with enough detail to allow a person unfamiliar with the area to locate the project, along with photos as needed to depict the current condition of the site as applicable. If the applicant does not own the land, please document site control or describe a plan for obtaining it.
3. **Schedule.** List proposed estimated starting and completion dates, together with significant milestones. In the alternative, the applicant may list the time periods required for each stage.
4. **Budget and Cost Effectiveness.** Detail the costs of the entire project and sources of all funds, including those requested from the Conservancy. Describe any use of the California Conservation Corps, volunteers or similar resources.
5. **Organizational Capacity.** Describe the applicant's staff capacity and record of accomplishing similar projects. Highlight local projects and achievements. Attach resumes of lead staff persons or contractors.
6. **Benefits to Underserved Communities.** If applicable, explain how the project will serve disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities or areas otherwise documented to be underserved by outdoors access or recreational amenities. Projects that are located in or adjacent to, and/or benefit and serve, a

disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community as defined by [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) tool, should document that in their application.

7. **Environmental Review.** To the extent possible, describe the proposed environmental review for the project. If you have considered whether the project qualifies for exemption under CEQA or has already been subject to environmental review for a larger project, provide the relevant exemption or project information.
8. **Project Sustainability.** Describe how the future of the project can be sustained to maximize the fulfillment of Proposition 4 objectives, including ongoing maintenance and public access.
9. **Project Support.** Describe support anticipated from interested stakeholders, such as public agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, local businesses or landowners. To strengthen the application, provide letters of support from partnered agencies and community groups. If any significant opposition is expected, please describe that as well.
10. **Response to Project Evaluation Criteria.** Explain in detail how the project fulfills the project evaluation criteria set forth in the next section.

VII. Project Evaluation Criteria

Project applications must also include and address the following which will be the basis of evaluation:

- (a) **Objectives.** The extent to which the project fulfills one or more objectives of the grant guidelines.
- (b) **Technical effectiveness and innovation.** Use of methods and techniques based on best available science, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches and demonstrated readiness to proceed with implementation.
- (c) **Cost Effectiveness.** Efficient use of funds and maximization of value.
- (d) **Leveraged financial support.** The ability of projects to leverage Conservancy funds by including funding or in-kind contributions from other public agencies or private funding sources.
- (e) **Collaboration.** Private/public partnerships or cooperative projects among governmental agencies will be preferred, including use of the California Conservation Corps or certified community conservation corps in appropriate projects. Letters of acknowledgement need to be provided for collaborative and partnered projects.

- (f) **Grantee capacity.** Applicants shall demonstrate relevant technical capability and a proven track record at implementing similar projects.
- (g) **Local economic benefits.** The extent to which a project benefits severely economically disadvantaged communities or disadvantaged communities (as those terms are defined in footnotes 1 and 2) or other areas traditionally underserved by outdoor access or recreational amenities.
- (h) **Public and community support.** Evidence of the level of community and local stakeholder support.
- (i) **Consistency with Established Local Plans.** The extent to which a project contributes to the implementation of existing environmental, recreational, climate change and similar plans, such as the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, the Riverside County General Plan Open Space Element, the Northern Coachella Valley Trails Plan, the Desert Recreation District Master Plan, the California 2030 Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implement Plan, the State of California 30x30 Initiative, Outdoor Access for All, etc.

VIII. **Further Information**

Contact CVMC's project coordinator at (760) 776-5026 or communications@cvmc.ca.gov.

Exhibit 1 – Pre Application Form

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Grant Program



Pre-Application Consultation Information Form

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Further Information

All Grant Program documents, including Guidelines, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact CVMC's Project Coordinator at (760) 776-5026 or communications@cvmc.ca.gov.

Revised 7/2025

Please complete this form and submit it via email at least 3 days before your Pre-Application Consultation at CVMC to communications@cvmc.ca.gov. We fully understand that your project information may be preliminary and subject to change. Our main purpose is to identify information that we will need to discuss the project meaningfully at the consultation.

1. Name of Applicant(s):
2. Representative and contact information:
3. Please attach a brief, one-page project description that summarizes key objectives, work tasks and deliverables.
4. Was the project part of any other project that has undergone environmental review under CEQA or NEPA? _____ If so, please identify the project and type of environmental document.
5. Please attach a map that depicts the location of the project.
6. Does the applicant own the project site? _____ If not, how will you achieve site control?
7. Estimated amount of Grant funding to be requested? \$_____.
Please complete Attachment A, Estimated Budget.
8. Does the project serve *disadvantaged communities* (i.e., with median household income of less than 80 percent of the statewide average)?
9. Have you consulted with the conservation corps about potentially assisting with your project (if appropriate)?
10. Do you have, or are you seeking, matching funding for the project? _____
Projects that provide at least 20% in matching funds are priorities for funding. If so, please reflect that in the estimated budget.
11. Please complete Attachment B, Estimated Schedule.

ATTACHMENT A

PROJECT BUDGET

| Task No. | Task Budget Description | Amount |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | | \$ |
| 2. | | \$ |
| 3. | | \$ |
| 4. | | \$ |
| 5. | | \$ |
| | TOTAL | \$ |

| Leveraged (In-Kind) Match | Amount |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ |

ATTACHMENT B

SCHEDULE

| Task No. | Task | Activity | Start | Finish |
|----------|------|----------|-------|--------|
| | | | | |
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