
James Cary Smith Community Grant Program – Cycle 2 Request for Applications Frequently Asked Questions - Updated November 4, 2024

Please note:

- Updated FAQs documents will be posted to the Air District’s website periodically during the grant application period.
 - The deadline for submitting questions regarding the Cycle 2 Request for Applications is **Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 5:00 PM.**
 - All responses to application questions will be posted by **Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 5:00 PM.**
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1. Are we able to collaborate with other nonprofits in Alameda, Sacramento and/or Santa Clara counties?

Partnerships are welcomed – however, projects must be located within the Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s jurisdiction. Our Air District includes Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, but not Sacramento County. To view the Air District’s boundaries, please see this interactive map:

<https://arcg.is/abX4W>.

There is an opportunity for applicants to share information about existing or planned partnerships through the grant application process. Question #5 on the grant application asks applicants to: “Provide a brief description of existing or planned partnerships with any other community-based organizations and leaders, public agencies, or other collaborators, detailing what they are providing to the proposed project (subcontracting, outreach collaboration, translation assistance, etc.)” (Please see page 19 in the [James Cary Smith Community Grant Program Cycle 2 Request for Applications](#).)

2. How many grants is this particular grant going to provide? How many slots will be available to nonprofits? Will it be distributed evenly or equitably across the board, from Gilroy to San Jose? Is there any additional funding expected to continue the work?

The Air District anticipates that this will be a very competitive grant cycle. The exact number of slots will depend on dollar amounts requested in the grant applications. We anticipate awarding between six to 11 grants, depending on applications received. In terms of geographic distribution of the grants - the application review panel will evaluate all completed applications that meet all minimum requirements. The review panel will take geography into consideration, given the limited number of spots.

Unfortunately, we can't guarantee that every environmental justice community in the Air District's jurisdiction will receive a grant or will receive the same dollar amount. However, the review panel will do its best to ensure that no area is over-represented. For more information about the review of applications, please see page 11 in the [James Cary Smith Community Grant Program Cycle 2 Request for Applications](#).

3. In terms of the grant, should we apply for the three-year term, or does the application only cover the two-year term?

In the application, organizations can indicate the total number of years of funding they desire, up to a maximum of three years. It could be one year, two years, or three years. The amounts requested per year could vary. Some organizations may choose to request a larger amount for the first year and then

reduce it in subsequent years, perhaps because they have other funding sources or anticipate changes in their project's needs. The application review panel will review the project narrative to understand the reasoning behind those requests.

4. *Community organizing and active participation sound very similar to me. Do we have to pick one track? How do we differentiate between them?*

There is a lot of overlap between the two program categories. Applicants can mark both program categories on their application and integrate different strategies through funded projects. The project narrative provides an opportunity to explain the planned approach and to describe the communities in which the projects will take place.

5. *Can religious organizations apply?*

If a religious organization has 501(c)(3) status, it can apply for a grant. If the organization doesn't have this status, it can work with a fiscal sponsor to apply. (Please see page 6 in the [James Cary Smith Community Grant Program Cycle 2 Request for Applications](#).)

6. *If we are a current grantee, can we apply to continue the same/similar programming?*

Yes, current/Cycle 1 James Cary Smith grantees are eligible to submit applications to continue the same or similar programming during Cycle 2. We recommend that project narratives include clear language about how the proposed project would build on the success of and be different than the Cycle 1 project, including how it will expand or deepen capacity-building work.

7. *What other environmental justice issues will be considered?*

We leave that to the applicants to highlight in their project narratives, making a strong case for the environmental justice issues relevant to their project.

8. *Will preference be given to projects in communities awaiting Assembly Bill 617 designation over those that are not, yet still have an EnviroScreen score greater than 70?*

No, there is no preference for Assembly Bill 617 communities over communities with a CalEnviroScreen score greater than 70, or vice versa. For more information about preferential geographies, please see pages 6-7 in the [James Cary Smith Community Grant Program Cycle 2 Request for Applications](#).

9. *Is the grant reimbursement-based?*

No, the grant is not reimbursement-based. It operates under a deliverables-based contract. Typically, the Air District provides some seed funding to each grantee after the contract is executed. After that, grant payments would be issued approximately every four months after staff receive and review progress reports and deliverables from grantees.

10. *If an organization is doing larger projects in two different counties, should they submit one application or two?*

Each applicant is limited to one proposal for Cycle 2 of the program. Please submit one application, with a clear explanation of the communities involved. The narrative should detail who will benefit from the project, why the project is needed, and why it makes sense to run it in two different counties.

11. I tried to find information on communities awaiting Assembly Bill 617 designations in the resources provided on your website and alongside the grant RFP. I could find lots of information for Northern San Mateo County, but not specifically this. Where do I find this information?

Please allow the Grants Team to obtain additional information to thoroughly answer this question. We will provide an update as soon as possible – we appreciate your patience.

12. Could we potentially partner with other government agencies too? Let's say we want to do air quality and open spaces or something like that. Would it be okay to reach out to other government agencies? What's allowed in terms of partnerships with them, whether it's a letter of support or if it can be a greater commitment?

Please note the Air District does not require or accept letters of support or references for this grant application. However, we do encourage partnerships. Applicants should include any information about existing or planned partnerships in Question 5 of the Project Narrative. There is also a requirement to submit a budget. Other government agencies can be listed as subrecipients of grant funds.

Alternatively, if other funding from public agencies or entities is supporting the project, that information should be included. The budget is a required component of the application, but is not scored.

13. Would projects in Sonoma County be considered?

The Air District's jurisdiction includes part of Solano County and part of Sonoma County. For more details, please see the interactive map here: <https://arcg.is/abX4W>. Proposals can be submitted for projects anywhere within the Air District's jurisdiction, but preference will be given to those in the top 30th percentile of CalEnviroScreen 4.0, indicated in pink on the map. If you have any questions while exploring the map, please contact our team at communitygrants@baqmd.gov before December 4, 2024 at 5:00 PM.