



# **California Fire Safe Council**

## **GRANTS CLEARINGHOUSE APPLICATION GUIDE**

**State Fire Capacity Grant Programs**

**Fire Prevention Grants for Non-Federal Lands**



<http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org>

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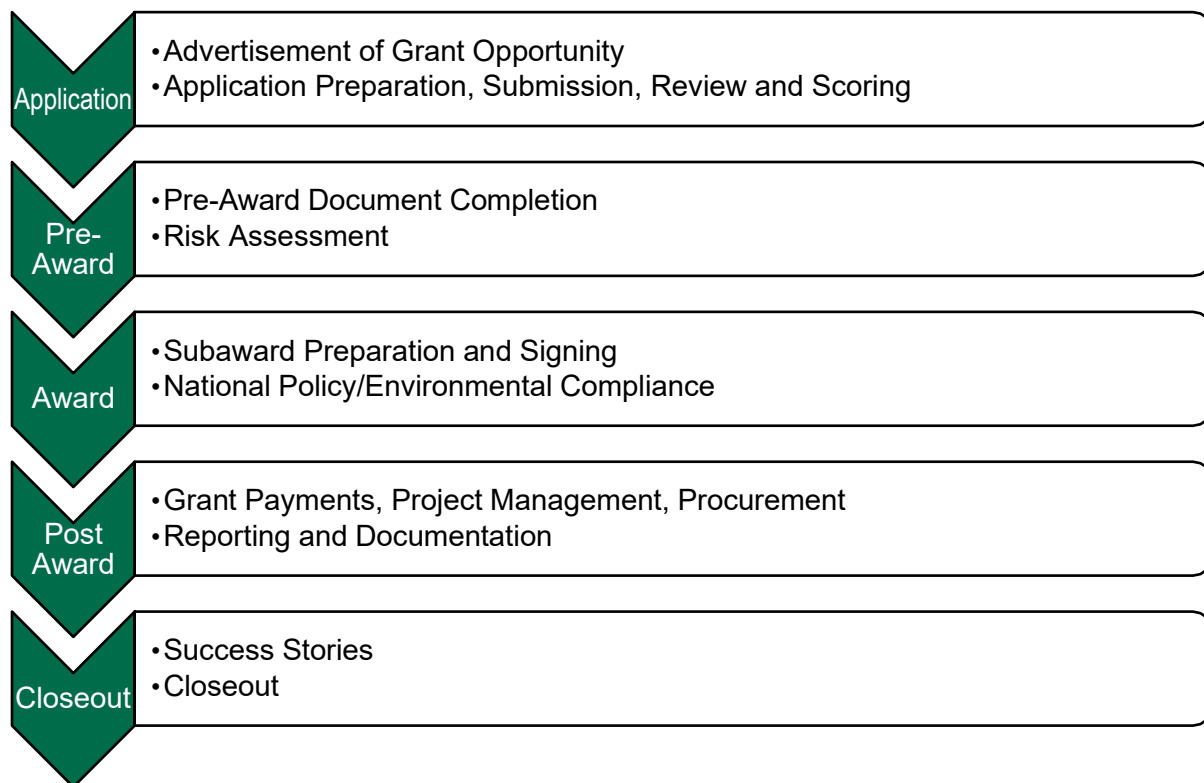
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# California Fire Safe Council Grant Application Guide

## Purpose

This guide serves as a support document for grant applicants and recipients of grants from the California Fire Safe Council's Grants Clearinghouse. It contains information about the grant application process, and requirements for grant recipients during the phases of the grantmaking process.

## Grant Cycle Phases



## Grants Clearinghouse Background

The California Fire Alliance originally assisted California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) in the creation of the Clearinghouse to help achieve the goals of the National Fire Plan by facilitating an open, collaborative process for grant funding. Operated by CFSC, the Grants Clearinghouse is an online grant application process located [here](#).

Following the sunset of the National Fire Plan in 2010, CFSC has continued to receive federal funding to provide grants through the Grants Clearinghouse. The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy which replaced the National Fire Plan and current funding is aligned with the objectives of the Cohesive Strategy and California's Forest and Rangelands: 2010 Strategy Report and 2010 Assessment Report which comprise the California Forest Action Plan.

### Benefits for Grant Applicants:

- Applicants receive the support of a dedicated team of CFSC grant specialists.
- All requirements are found in the NOFO so there is less research and less writing.
- Applications not selected for funding initially are retained in the Clearinghouse for one year in case additional funding becomes available.

### Benefits for Funding Agencies:

- Funders can support local projects without taking on the required recordkeeping, monitoring, and other duties involved with managing grants.
- Funders can prioritize their own projects adjacent to Grants Clearinghouse-funded projects to achieve a wider sphere of fuel reduction.
- Funders have an effective way to distribute grant funds to local areas throughout California and the Tahoe Basin of Nevada.

In its years of grant making, CFSC has provided over 1,200 grants totaling over \$140 million to organizations and agencies located throughout California. Each year, efforts are made to ensure a competitive, equitable, and geographically diverse distribution of the available grant funds.

## Application Phase

During the application phase, opportunities for grants are advertised with accompanying information relating to the source of funding, program description (types of activities that can be funded), important dates, eligibility information, application directions, application review criteria, and contacts for further information about the advertised grant opportunity.

## Request for Application

### Summary

California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) is pleased to announce its competitive application process for 2025 wildfire prevention grants. CFSC has approximately \$702,474 in State Fire Capacity (SFC) grant funds available for 2025 wildfire prevention projects. The maximum request allowed is \$225,000 and the matching requirement is 1:1.5. The U.S. Forest Service provides funding through a master grant #24-DG-11052012-159 to CFSC. The Federal Assistance Listing number and name are 10.698 Cooperative Fire Program. The subgrant grant term will be 24 months beginning in December 2025. Funding is available in these program areas:

- Hazardous fuels reduction on non-federal land.
- Creation of community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs) and other planning or assessment documents.
- Prevention and mitigation education and outreach opportunities for landowners and residents in at-risk communities.

### Application Schedule:

July 2, 2025	Application Cycle Announcement
July 9, 2025	Grant Application Training Workshop
July 11, 2025	Grant Application Period Opens
Aug 31, 2025	Applications Due by 11:59 PM PDT
December 1, 2025	Award Announcement

## Acknowledgements

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California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) is committed to making its materials and programs accessible to all customers and employees. If you experience any difficulty accessing information provided by CFSC, please contact us at [info@cafiresafecouncil.org](mailto:info@cafiresafecouncil.org) or (916) 648-3600. We will do our best to assist you. This may include providing the information to you in an alternate format.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, CFSC is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs. CFSC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

To file a complaint of discrimination:

Complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## Program Description in Detail

This grant program emphasizes fire risk reduction activities by landowners and residents in at-risk communities to restore and maintain resilient landscapes and create fire-adapted communities. Projects may focus on one or more of the categories.

- **Fuel Hazard Mitigation** vegetation treatments such as chipping, thinning, grazing, and mastication.
- **Community Hazard Mitigation Planning** such as CWPP's, Firewise assessments, hazard assessments, and similar types of plans
- **Prevention and Mitigation Education** such as outreach, mailings, workshops, events, PSAs, and other education programs

Programs or activities proposed for SFC funding must meet the following criteria:

- Projects must be located within California and/or the Tahoe region of Nevada.
- Projects must be in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and protecting an officially designated CA Community at Risk. A map of designated Communities at Risk can be found in CFSC's [25 SFA Application Support Site](#).
- Projects cannot be on Federal lands or lands leased/permitted by the federal government, apart from tribal lands.
- Programs, projects, or activities must address areas identified and prioritized in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or equivalent document.
- Proposed projects should align with the applicable primary factors, guiding principles and core values identified in Phase I of the Cohesive Strategy.
- Projects should be used to implement actions *in accordance with Chapter 11 "Reducing Community Wildfire Risk of "California's Forests and Rangelands: 2017 Assessment"*.



It is expected that applicants shall complete their projects within a 24-month grant term. If funded, applicants will be required to report specific project accomplishments, including statistical data and narrative descriptions on a quarterly basis-adhering to CFSC's agreed upon schedule. Photos showing the project before, during and after, a success story about the project, and a closeout report will also be required.

## Available Funding

CFSC has \$702,474 available for wildfire prevention projects under the 25 SFC grant program. CFSC intends to award approximately 3-5 grants with this funding.

Individual applications may request up to \$225,000 in federal funds. Individual applications that exceed \$225,000 in federal funding will be ineligible (\$125,000 for organizations utilizing the services of a Fiscal Sponsor). Individual applicants may submit up to two applications.

Fiscal sponsors may submit two applications and receive up to \$225,000 for themselves plus be awarded up to \$125,000 for sponsoring organizations. To illustrate this, if a fiscal sponsor is sponsoring an organization asking for \$125,000, then they may be funded as the fiscal sponsor for that organization for a total of \$125,000. They may then be funded for up to \$225,000 for their own request. So, a fiscal sponsor can potentially be awarded up to \$350,000.

The grant performance period is 24 months. Grant funds cannot be expended, nor match activities completed, after the termination date.

## Cost Share

The California Fire Safe Council requires a cost share match ratio of 1:1.5. For every \$1.00 of federal funding received, the recipient must contribute \$1.50 from non-federal sources.

Example: An applicant applying for the full \$225,000.00 would need to match \$337,500.00 for a total project cost of \$562,500.00.

Cost share or match may be in the form of cash, goods, or in-kind services from the applicant or third-party contributors. Match is subject to the provisions in federal regulations (see: [2 CFR 200.306](#))

Matching contributions must meet the following criteria to be counted towards the grant:

- They shall be **verifiable** from the recipient's records.
- They shall not be included as contributions for any other federally assisted project or program.
- They shall be **necessary** and **reasonable** for the proper and efficient accomplishment of the project or program objectives and **allocable** under 2CFR 200.
- They shall be **allowable** under the applicable cost principles.
- They shall not be paid by the Federal Government under another award or derived under any other federal assistance program.
- Their value shall be determined by using scales and estimates appropriate for the local area.
- They shall not include grant application preparation fees.
- They shall occur within the grant period.

Letters of Commitment are required from all organizations providing matching contributions. There is an exception for Cal Fire grants (see details about how to submit letters of commitment in the "How to Apply" section).

## Allowable Costs

General types of costs that are allowable under these grants include:

- Salaries and wages of staff to manage the project and complete grant reporting;
- Contract costs for project-related services;
- Office related costs, printing and mailing, website publishing costs, and supplies;
- Travel costs related to the project;
- Insurance;
- Tools such as chainsaws, gas or diesel, and hand tools for hazardous fuels reduction;
- Equipment rental;
- Meeting or office space rental costs;
- Personal protective supplies;

All costs must be incurred during the grant period.

## Excluded Costs

- Purchase of vehicles or heavy equipment such as tub grinders and other expensive assets will not be funded or allowed as match (it is suggested to rent or lease these items); \*
- Construction costs such as for water tanks, ponds, fences, office structures and maintenance, and road construction and maintenance are not allowable costs or match;
- Purchase of land with federal funds or use of land purchase value as match are not allowed;
- Items that are not documented with adequate source documentation are not allowed as costs or match;
- Costs that are not related to the scope of the grant are not allowed as federal costs or match;
- Any other items not allowed under [2 CFR 200 Cost Principles](#)

\*Applicants interested in applying for small equipment purchases, such as chippers, must contact a Grant Specialist prior to applying to discuss the requirements. To request the purchase of equipment you must conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding the potential purchase, which would include surveying to see if there is similar excess federal equipment available and providing a cost comparison between leasing and purchasing the identified equipment. The request to purchase equipment must be submitted in writing to a Grant Specialist prior to purchasing.

## Organization Eligibility

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply\*:

- Nonprofit Organizations
- Home/Property Owners Associations
- Native American Tribes
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Municipalities: Towns and Cities and Counties
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Joint-Powers Authorities
- Special Districts
- School Districts
- Counties
- State Agencies
- For-profit Companies

### **Individuals are not eligible to apply.**

Unincorporated groups/organizations without “legal standing”\* must have a Fiscal Sponsor and submit a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter with their application.

\*Legal Standing: By definition, state and local government organizations have legal standing. Non-Profit, For-Profit, or Other organizations must be incorporated to do business in the State of California or Nevada and have a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). Organizations that do not meet these requirements must identify an organization with legal standing to act as “fiscal sponsor” to administer the grant funds for the applicant.

## Other Considerations & Grant Compliance

Written Policies and Procedures: Organizations selected for funding must have written policies and procedures for managing their business processes and duties. These should include written policies for financial management and accounting, procurement, personnel (if applicable), and conflict of interest.

Financial Management Systems: Does your organization have adequate business management systems and internal controls in place that comply with the federal grant regulations? Does your organization have financial and accounting systems in place to ensure proper expenditure and accounting for the grant funds?

Project Management Capabilities: Does your organization have sufficiently trained and knowledgeable staff and/or volunteers with technical expertise to plan and implement the project? Does your organization have access to professionals who can assist in planning and implementing the project?

Environmental Compliance: Before the grant is awarded, your project will be reviewed by the California Fire Safe Council for compliance with four specific federal acts. Those are the:

- Endangered Species Act (Section 7), the
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the
- National Historic Preservation Act.

It is the grantee’s responsibility to ensure that their project complies with these acts, *as well as all applicable state and local environmental laws and regulations.*

***An example of an applicable state law is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). No ground-disturbing work is allowed until environmental compliance assurances have been received by the grantee.***

After the grant is awarded, grant funds may be used to pay for consultation with a qualified expert (such as a California Registered Professional Forester) to determine if the proposed activities could conflict with these Acts. Such consultation may also be available from foresters and other environmental experts employed by public agencies, such as Cal Fire, a county fire department, or a Resource Conservation District. The cost, time required for such consultation, review, and approval must be considered when planning the project timeline and schedule.

Consider adding an item to your budget if you anticipate using the services of a forester or archeologist.

**NOTE: Be sure to thoroughly read and review the grant requirements in [2 CFR 200](#) and those that are highlighted in this guide's "Grant Basics" section before you submit your grant application, so that you will know the expectations that come with accepting a grant.**

## Fiscal Sponsorship

Applicant organizations must be incorporated and have a federal employer ID# to be eligible to apply for federal grant funds. Applicant organizations must also meet the requirements for receiving federal grant funds. If your organization does not meet these requirements, you will need to partner with another organization that can serve as your "fiscal sponsor."

Organizations that do not have legal standing may apply for grants with representation from a fiscal sponsor organization. The fiscal sponsor must meet the grant eligibility requirements and be able to receive the grant award, including meeting all terms and conditions in the subaward agreement on behalf of the organization it is sponsoring. The key role of the fiscal sponsor is to receive and manage the grant funds on behalf of the sponsored organization.

**NOTE: Fiscal sponsor organizations may NOT give subawards or advance funds to the organization they are sponsoring. There must be a process for reimbursement or direct payment of costs to vendors by the fiscal sponsor.**

As the legal entity entering the grant contract, the fiscal sponsor must comply with the applicable federal regulations that govern the grant. The actual grant agreement will be sent to the fiscal sponsor organization and must be signed by both the applicant organization and the fiscal sponsor.

Grant payments will be made directly to the fiscal sponsor's bank account, with only approved signers from the fiscal sponsor organization having access to or authority for spending the funds. Fiscal sponsor organizations will be accountable for the grant funds and how they are spent.

In addition to the accounting services, some fiscal sponsors can also play a role in project management and implementation. The applicant organization and the fiscal sponsor will decide on the fiscal sponsor's role and memorialize the arrangement in a formal agreement.

Fiscal sponsors must sign an agreement with the applicant organization certifying that they intend to serve as a fiscal sponsor for the group(s) they will represent.

As cosigners to the grant, the subrecipient and fiscal sponsor are both responsible for ensuring that the grant progress reports are completed on time and are accurate.

It is the choice of the applicant organization and fiscal sponsor how much project management activities are shared beyond the funds management function of the fiscal sponsor and the fiscal sponsor may charge a fee for their services. The following are activities that are often shared or completed by the fiscal sponsor organization:

- Accounting Services
- Report Preparation
- Project Management
- Bid Solicitation and Contracting
- Processing Invoices or Work Orders

### Fiscal Sponsor Agreement

The fiscal sponsor agreement should define communication, changes to the budget or extensions (major changes require prior approval from CFSC), reporting of grant activities in progress reports and match and expense forms, and any other activities that will be part of the grant.

Changes to the project must be coordinated between the applicant and fiscal sponsor to avoid disallowed costs or deviations from the project scope and budget and to finish the project on time.

Fiscal sponsor costs charged by percent, flat fee, or other methods must be charged in a consistent manner and be described in the grant source documentation when reported.

**NOTE: See the appendices for a [sample fiscal sponsor agreement](#).**

### How to Apply

The information below is an overview of the grant application steps. To see an offline list of every question on the application, you can download the application planning tool document that is available under the grants and funding tab on the [CFSC website](#). The planning tool is not required and is only meant to help with application preparation. The actual application must be completed and submitted in ZoomGrants.

Application Schedule:

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July 11, 2025	Grant Application Period Opens
August 31, 2025	Applications Due by 11:59 PM PDT
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The following steps are required to submit a 25 SFC application:

1. Create a free account with ZoomGrants if you do not already have one. Access ZoomGrants through the California Fire Safe Council [webpage](#). Select “Apply via ZoomGrants” at the bottom of the page. You will be able to create a new account only when there is an open grant opportunity available.
2. The two views available in your account will be your account profile and your applications. Please complete your account profile before working on applications. If you are using a fiscal sponsor, the application may be submitted through your own ZoomGrants account or through the fiscal sponsor’s account (recommended). *Please Note: You can make the view larger (on a PC) by holding ctrl [+].*

Please allow extra time to become oriented to the software if you are new to ZoomGrants. Applicants will use ZoomGrants to create and submit their grant applications. Applicants will also use the site to upload Letters of Commitment and other documents, if applicable.

In the ZoomGrants account, the homepage screen will display the following menus:

Incomplete	Submitted	Approved	Declined	Archived	Currently Open
Unsubmitted applications from every cycle. This is the default screen.	All applications submitted in every cycle.	All approved and funded applications in every cycle.	All declined applications in every cycle.	Applications that were submitted in previous cycles.	Currently open grant programs. Start here to begin a new application.

Once you have selected a grant program to apply for, these resources will be available within that program, along with the five application tabs:

Description:	Additional Online Resources:	Restrictions:	Library:	Contact Admin:	Announcements:
An overview of the grant program, eligibility requirements and grant criteria.	This section provides online links that may assist you in applying for a grant.	Grant program restrictions will be listed in this section.	Useful documents such as How to Calculate Biomass Volume.	Send an email directly to CFSC Clearinghouse Administrator.	Updates about the grant program.

To start a new application, select the “Currently Open” tab from the Home Page and you

will see the 25 SFC Grants Clearinghouse. Select the hyperlinked text to start a new application.

Once you have opened a new application, you will need to select the “Start Now/Apply” button to activate the form and begin filling it out.

**NOTE: Information entered is saved automatically as you go through the application. There is no “Save” button.**

3. Complete all questions and upload documents under the five grant application tabs. The Application is divided into five parts or tabs – All five parts must be completed to successfully apply:

**NOTE: Be sure to complete all five tabs! Every cycle there is an applicant who forgets to fill out one of the tabs and their application is incomplete.**

#### TAB 1: Application Summary

This tab contains contact information and basic information about the project such as the title and dollar amounts.

#### TAB 2: Organization/Fiscal Sponsor Information

This tab contains organizational information and questions to demonstrate and document the organization’s capacity to receive a grant and to enter fiscal sponsor information if applicable.

#### TAB 3: Project Information

This tab contains the narrative part of the grant application. There are project description questions and a section that covers fuels treatment information for projects that have a vegetation management component.

#### TAB 4: Tables

Tab four includes the tables for the workplan, grant budget, match budget, and grant deliverables. See the planning tool or ZoomGrants page for guidance on how to complete these sections.

#### TAB 5: Document Uploads

This section describes in detail the documents that must be uploaded and submitted with the grant application via ZoomGrants for the application to be considered complete and eligible. These include letters of commitment, the letter of commitment summary letter, fiscal sponsor agreement (if applicable) and Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (when using an indirect rate approved by your cognizant agency).

Use the file upload option only. **Do not use a link to an external location.**

**NOTE: There is a 4MB size limit for uploading documents to ZoomGrants. Please scan at the lowest resolution and/or decrease the size by saving multiple-page documents as one or two pages.**



LOCs are required from all contributors of cash or in-kind match including applicant and/or third-party organizations. Please see the note below for the exception related to Cal Fire grants.

LOCs must be uploaded with your grant application in ZoomGrants. CFSC will not accept faxed, mailed, or emailed LOCs. They must be on an organizational letterhead or as a copy of an email with organizational identification (such as a logo).

A cover letter from the applicant organization must be included that lists all contributing organizations and the value of the contribution from each.

Individual LOCs must include:

- A description and dollar value of the match provided and how it relates to the project.
- Contributors contact information.
- Timing of match provided.
- Type of match (cash or in-kind).
- Signature of an appropriate organization representative.

**NOTE: Cal Fire grants may be used as match if the objectives of the clearinghouse grant application are included within the scope and the active dates of the Cal Fire grant.**

To utilize the Cal Fire grants as match, please ensure that:

- a) The match is listed in the budget and detail is provided to clearly explain how it will be used. The match must be used to support budgeted project costs during the grant period.
- b) A copy of the Cal Fire grant award letter will serve as the Letter of Commitment to the CFSC grant once the Cal Fire grant is awarded. If you are not using the entire Cal Fire grant as match, please include a cover letter explaining the contribution amount.
- c) If the Cal Fire grant has not been awarded at the time of CFSC application, include an explanation in the applicant organization's cover letter that includes a description of the Cal Fire match activities, the dollar amount, and the timeframe for approval. **Be aware that an SFC grant will not be funded until the Cal Fire grant is approved, or an alternative source of match is confirmed.**
- d) The same Cal Fire grant may not be used as a matching contribution for any other federally assisted project or program.
- e) If funded by CFSC, the applicant must submit verifiable records of all matching contributions. **For Cal Fire grants, a copy of the grant award alone will not suffice.** The verifiable records include receipts, invoices, documents, and other items which validate the legitimacy of every grant expense paid with matching contributions must be reported and uploaded with the quarterly progress reports.

**Please consult with your county official that oversees its Title III allocation. Additional information about Title III can be found at:**

**<https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/secure-rural-schools/title-3-faqs>**

*Fiscal Sponsor Agreement (For Organizations Using a Fiscal Sponsor)*

If your organization is required to use a Fiscal Sponsor, you must submit a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter

Upload a copy of the fiscal sponsor agreement, signed by all parties. This is part of the grant application. See the section on fiscal sponsors in the Program and Eligibility section for details and see the appendix for a sample fiscal sponsor letter.

The fiscal sponsor agreement must include these items:

- Recognition of the fiscal sponsor's responsibility to manage the grant funds.
- The communication process between the fiscal sponsor and applicant.
- The process for reimbursement or direct payment of grant expenses.
- The role each organization will have in managing the project.
- How grant documentation will be collected and stored.
- The entity/person who will complete grant related reports.

#### *Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreements (if negotiated)*

If your organization has been given a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a federal agency, a copy of your NICRA must be uploaded to ZoomGrants and you must use this rate on all federally funded projects, including CFSC clearinghouse grants. If you have an approved rate but do not intend to charge that rate as a federal cost to your grant, you must use the rate as match.

#### *De Minimis Indirect Rate of 15%*

Organizations that have never had a federally approved indirect cost rate may opt to use what is referred to as the "de minimis" rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs.

**See the following description to determine your organization's MTDC. Use the example included in the appendix as a model for calculating your Modified Total Direct Costs and allowable indirect costs.**

[2 CFR 200.414](#) Subpart E Cost Principles:

Any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely.

This methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

The following are eligible to use the de minimis rate of 15% of MTDC:

*Non-federal entities which have never held a negotiated rate are eligible to elect the de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)*

The following are ineligible to use the de minimis rate of 15% MTDC:

*State or Local Governments and Indian Tribes. Non-federal entities who have now, or have had in the past, a negotiated indirect cost rate or approved cost allocation plan.*

To calculate the Modified Total Direct Cost for your project:

- a) Total all costs included under the allowed budget costs as outlined in the table. These costs are project specific and based on the direct costs associated with the proposed budget submitted with this CFSC grant application. Allowed and Excluded costs can be found here: [2CFR \(MTDC\)](#).

Allowed in MTDC Calculation	Excluded from MTDC Calculation
Salaries and wages	Matching contributions
Fringe benefits	Portion of each contract more than \$50,000
Materials and supplies	Equipment (over \$10,000)
Travel	
Contractual costs (up to \$50,000 of each contract)	
Items in the “other” cost category that are not on the excluded list.	

Once you have calculated the Modified Total Direct Cost, take 15% of that number and that will be the total that you may charge as indirect cost in the grant budget.

If you are unsure of the correct MTDC for your project, feel free to contact a CFSC grant specialist to verify the amount.


Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs and may not be charged twice.

**NOTE: See a sample chart showing an MTDC calculation in the appendices.**

### *Project Location*

A project location map is required for all projects. Provide the organization name, project title and identifying markers to show the county or regional area of the project.

How to submit your project location:

- Follow the survey link in your ZoomGrants Application (Question #48).
- Enter your Organization Project name.
  - NOTE: Both the organization and project names must match the names in your ZoomGrants Application.
- Enter in your zip code or use the Find my Location button (  ) to go to your current location.
- Place the pin as close to the center of your project area as possible.
- Submit your project location survey.

Please note: Additional detailed maps will be required for selected applications during the pre- award phase.

## SFC Application Checklist

Tab	Application Checklist	Completed in ZoomGrants
1	<b>Application Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Name</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grant Funding Requested</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Match Amount Projected</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Organization Executive Officer Contact Information</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>Organizational Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Organizational Capacity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Sponsor Information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Sponsor Capacity</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>Project Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Description</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning Document Applicability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Effects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fuels treatment</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>Tables</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workplan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Deliverables</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Budget Detail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Match Amount Detail</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>Document Upload</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Commitment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Commitment Cover Letter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Survey</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Certification Uploaded into ZoomGrants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Sponsor Agreement, If applicable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Indirect Cost rate, if applicable</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*This checklist is not required to be completed or submitted and is for individual use & tracking.*

*All items must be completed and submitted through your 25 SFC ZoomGrants Application to successfully submit your 25 SFC Application to CFSC at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/25sfc>*

# Application Scoring and Review Process

## Initial Screening

There will be an initial screening of your application by CFSC staff to determine its eligibility and completeness before it is scored by the Review Committee. The following items are included in the initial screening:

- The applicant/fiscal sponsor organization is eligible.
- Application responses are complete.
- Letters of commitment are complete and consistent with the application.
- A fiscal sponsor letter is included if applicable.
- An indirect cost rate verification is included if applicable.
- A map of project area (or population area) served is included via project location survey.

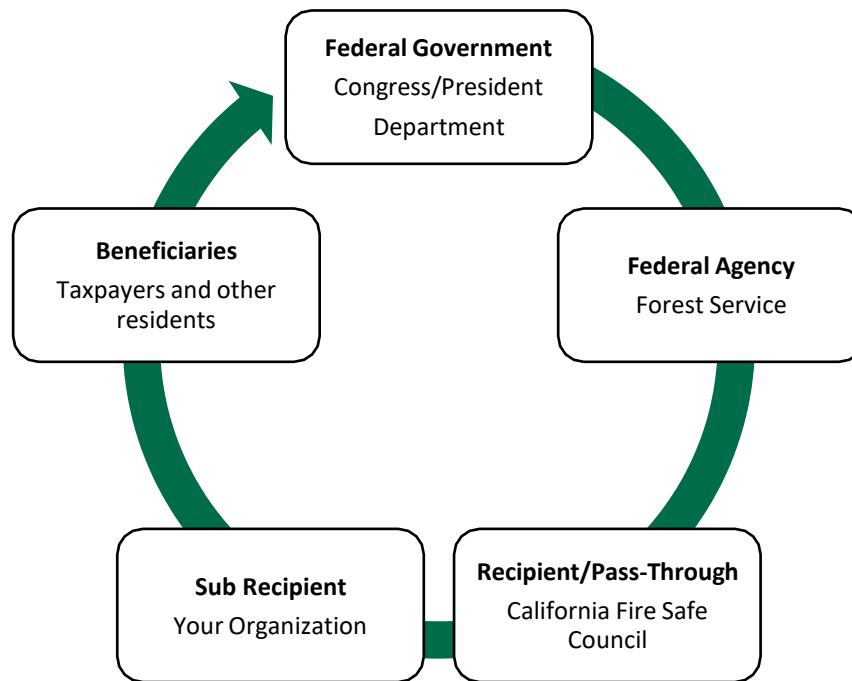
Eligible applications that meet the screening criteria are scored by a panel of volunteers who have expertise in reviewing grants and in the wildland fire mitigation space. In addition to the numerical score of the application, applications are ranked based on how well they achieve a geographical spread of funding throughout the state or relative to population.

SCORING CRITERIA	Points
The applicant/fiscal sponsor has a history of successful completion of similar projects and has shown there is reasonable likelihood of success. The applicant/fiscal sponsor can feasibly add and complete an additional project without overtaxing its resources and workload.	5
The application appropriately addresses the wildland fire risk through fuels hazard mitigation prevention education or planning within the project area.	5
The application demonstrates specific advance planning for long-term sustainability of the project deliverables following the conclusion of the grant period.	5
The project will create or is linked to an interagency Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), collaborative community fire plan or an equivalent.	5
The project will improve wildfire survivability in a community appearing on the current California Fire Alliance "communities at-risk" list.	5
The project is within the wildland urban interface (WUI) as defined by the relevant planning document and is within an area designated by CAL FIRE as a "Very High Severity Zone".	5
The application goals and objectives are consistent with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy goals.	5
The detailed project description is realistic, clearly written, and easy to understand. It demonstrates involvement of key partners in terms of matching funds and technical assistance. "Key partners" can be relevant federal agency staff, local fire and/or other government agencies, and/or other sources of significant resources for the proposed project.	5

Costs are reasonable in proportion to the proposed deliverables. The total amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project. Staff costs (personal/contractors/benefits) should be considered direct project expenses.	5
Possible Maximum Score	45

# Federal Grant Basics

## Federal Grant Overview



Federal grant funds are made available through appropriations at the federal government level, typically by Congress enacting legislation (laws or acts). The legislation defines specific grant parameters including match requirements, eligibility information, reporting requirements, and program objectives. The legislation also identifies the federal agency that will be the grantor of the federal grant funds.

The federal agency receives the appropriated funds as part of its budget. The agency then awards grants from those funds to the recipients. The recipients must follow all of the grant regulations and implement projects within the grant parameters.

The federal agency may or may not have the capacity to track a specific program directly, in which case the agency awards the grant to a recipient that is a “pass-through organization”. The pass-through organization will make “subawards” from the master grant to “subrecipients” which are eligible organizations that will serve the beneficiaries of the grant.

The recipient (or the pass-through organization) is the official grantee of the federal agency.

The subrecipient is the grantee of the pass-through organization, NOT the federal agency.

California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) is a pass-through organization. CFSC receives a master grant from the federal agency and makes subawards to eligible organizations to meet the objectives of the grant program. CFSC is legally responsible for the entire master grant term. CFSC must follow ALL federal grant regulations and requirements and meet the program requirements of the federal grant program. CFSC is also responsible for the entire subawarding process, from the application to final reports.

As a pass-through federal grantee, CFSC must pass down ALL the applicable federal grant requirements to the subrecipients since the origin of the grant is federal. The grant funds



do not lose their “federal identity” once they are passed through CFSC. The subrecipient must comply with these federal grant regulations and program requirements.

The subrecipient receives a subaward to complete a project or manage a program. To be eligible to receive the subaward, the subrecipient must have legal standing\* and meet the minimum requirements for receiving grant funds. Applicant organizations that do not meet these minimum requirements must find a fiscal sponsor organization to receive the grant on their behalf.

The beneficiaries include the public since it is their tax dollars that fund the grant. Beneficiaries also include specific groups that are directly and indirectly supported by the grant program activities like the residents of the community.

Terminology that is often used interchangeably:

Award = Grant = Subgrant

Grantee = Subaward Recipient = Subrecipient

## The Role of the Subrecipient

The subrecipient is the organization that conducts a grant project with funding from the pass-through entity. The subrecipient includes the applicant organization and, if applicable, the fiscal sponsor organization.

The subrecipient enters into a subaward agreement with the pass-through entity, which outlines the requirements and expectations for the subrecipient. The subrecipient signs the agreement therefore acknowledging that the organization will abide by ALL applicable grant regulations, terms, and conditions.

The subrecipient is responsible for the successful implementation of the project AND the proper management of the grant. Both factors are equally vital for determining the success of the grant. Think of “project implementation” as the content of the activity (measurable results), and “grant management” as the structure under which the activity happens, with the focus on documentation and processes (complete documentation).

Proper grant management includes understanding and complying with all of the grant requirements, completing all required reports on time, maintaining adequate documentation for all grant activities, spending grant funds in accordance with federal requirements, and ensuring accurate accounting.

Project implementation includes finalizing the project plans, selecting, and working with the necessary contractors and participants, tracking the accomplishments of the project, monitoring the project through photo documentation, and ensuring that the project meets the grant objectives as approved.

Two Factors for Success	
Project Implementation	Proper Grant Management
Accomplish the grant objectives Implement the project as approved Monitor and track accomplishments Follow standards for funds management	Follow all grant requirements Provide complete reports on time Meet all deadlines Document all expenses and match

The subrecipient will work with third-party organizations (“cooperators”) to conduct the grant activities. Cooperators may include contractors, vendors, volunteers, match contributors, and more. These organizations or individuals are part of the scope of the grant project and their involvement should be clearly defined in the grant application. They should also understand their roles within completing the grant project.

The subrecipient must include certain clauses when entering contracts with third-party organizations. The required clauses vary based on the cost, type of activity, and the type of subrecipient organization (nonprofit or government). The subrecipient should include a statement in the contract that the requirements of the statutes must be met. A detailed list of the required clauses can be found in [2 CFR 200 Appendix 2](#).

Remember that, as a recipient of federal grant funds you are spending tax dollars, and you are taking on the expectation of accountability that comes with any government spending.

Accountability includes spending the funds in accordance with the grant agreement and ALL grant requirements. It also includes being responsive to your grantor (CFSC), completing the grant requirements, and maintaining adequate documentation.

## Federal Grant Regulations

The federal grant regulations are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Since the grant funds awarded through the Grants Clearinghouse originate from the federal government, all subrecipients are required to comply with the applicable federal regulations. Penalties for noncompliance may include termination of the grant, disallowance of costs, and repayment of the grant funds (even if they have already been spent).

Subrecipients are subject to the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200 as adopted and supplemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2 CFR Part 400.

### [Code of Federal Regulations for Grants \(2 CFR 200\)](#)

CFSC strongly recommends that applicants take the time NOW to read the federal regulations applicable to their organizations in 2 CFR 200 to familiarize themselves with what will be expected if awarded a grant.

The federal regulations include a wide variety of topics and provide expectations of the grantee organization. The regulations specify how to properly implement the grant, including detailed information on how to document expenses and match towards the grant.

As a recipient of federal funds, California Fire Safe Council complies with the applicable federal requirements. The entire Grants Clearinghouse process, including the application phase, as well as the requirements passed down to the subrecipients are generated by these regulations.

**Uniform Administrative Requirements:** These regulations establish consistency and uniformity in the administration of those grants and agreements. Topics found under the administrative requirements include standards for financial management systems, equipment, cost sharing/match, and revision of budget and program plans. The Administrative Requirements can be found in Parts A through D of 2 CFR 200.

**Cost Principles:** These regulations establish standards for determining what costs are allowable under federal awards carried out through grants, cost reimbursement contracts, and other agreements. Topics include allowability of costs, direct versus indirect costs, and a list of selected items of cost with details on how to properly evaluate and document the cost. The Cost Principles can be found in Part E of 2 CFR 200.

**Audit Requirement:** Grant recipients are subject to the “single audit” requirements defined in Part F of 2 CFR 200, if the applicant organization or fiscal sponsor spends \$750,000 or more in federal funds in its fiscal year. The single audit is an examination by an independent auditor of an organization’s financial records, internal controls and compliance with regulations governing federal awards. An organization that undergoes single audit should provide a copy of the audit report to CFSC during the pre-award phase and annually thereafter.

Many organizations undergo standard (non-federal) audits annually to evaluate their procedures, accounting practices and internal controls. Copies of these audits should be provided to CFSC each year during the grant term.

## Prepare Now for Grant Success

If you are considering applying for a grant, you should ask yourself if you are eligible AND if you are ready. These questions should be answered by the applicant organization AND the fiscal sponsor.

Subrecipients shall review their existing written policies for compliance with the federal regulations. There is even more emphasis on established processes and written procedures related to procurement, travel, time-effort reporting and more. Additionally, there are changes to dozens of cost items and their allowability.

Make changes to your organization’s policies so that they meet these federal standards. Without compliant policies, your organization will not be able to receive federal funding.

## Financial Management System

Does your organization have written policies and procedures that meet the federal requirements? Does your organization have adequate business management systems in place that comply with the federal grant regulations? Does your organization have financial and accounting systems in place to ensure proper expenditure and accounting for the grant funds?

## Project Management Capabilities

Does your organization have sufficiently trained and knowledgeable staff or volunteers with the technical expertise to plan and implement the project? Does your organization have access to professionals who can assist in planning and implementing the project? Does your organization have experience in successful project management, including meeting project deadlines, managing the workload, and accomplishing clear objectives?

## 2 CFR 200 Purpose, Policies, and Procedures

Federal grantees and subrecipients must have written policies that ensure proper handling of the funds. The policies demonstrate that the organization has internal control to protect, spend and manage the grant funds accurately and in compliance with the grant requirements.

When drafting and/or revising your written policies, refer to the federal grant regulations applicable to your organization. These regulations will direct what stipulations need to be included in your policies. Keep in mind that the federal grant regulations may go above and beyond your existing policies and procedures. If you want to receive federal grant funds, then your policies must meet the federal standards.

- Financial and Accounting: protect the grant funds; determine allowability; maintain accurate documentation.
- Personnel: proper time and effort reporting; consistent, allowable charges
- Procurement/Purchasing: solicitation of services and goods; avoid unnecessary purchasing; allowability of costs.
- Property Management: safeguard equipment; how to acquire/dispose of property.
- Travel: reimbursement/approval of travel; mileage
- Conflict of Interest: procedure for handling conflicts; address Board and Staff

As a pass-through entity, CFSC must evaluate the capacity of each subrecipient prior to making a subaward. As part of this evaluation, each organization will be asked to self-certify that its policies meet the federal grant regulations applicable to the organization type.

## Debarment and Suspension

The federal government maintains a list of the debarred, suspended and excluded parties on the System for Award Management (SAM) database. The list is known as the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS).

Debarred, suspended, and excluded parties may not be participants or principals in Federal assistance awards and subawards. This requirement extends to contracts made under federal awards or subawards. Please check the Uniform Administrative Requirements in 2 CFR 200 for the complete verbiage regarding debarment and suspension.

Prior to receiving federal grant funds, grantees must verify that they have searched for their organization, all principals with authority or involved with the grant, and any known contractors.

Contractors and vendors (and their principals) sought during the grant term must also be checked on SAM prior to entering into any formal agreement to make sure there is no debarment or suspension.

You can search for records on the SAM website: <https://www.sam.gov/> by name of the organization, name of the person, or other identifiers, such as the CAGE (Commercial and Government Entity) number.

Note that when a search result is found, there may be instances where an individual or organization has the same or similar name as your search request but is actually a different party. Therefore, it is important that you verify a potential match by checking other information on the record, such as the address.

## Support for Salaries and Wages

Salary, wages, and fringe benefits are allowable under a grant, following certain criteria. These costs can be used as match towards the grant or be paid for with grant funds.

The Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 explain the requirements for counting salary and wages toward a grant, either as an expense paid for by the grant or a matching contribution. See the applicable federal grant regulation for the full description.

A recent audit report by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) described serious compliance issues related to salary management and administration with Recovery Act grants made to a variety of organizations. It was found that some salary costs were not tracked properly or allocated to grants in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget requirements and federal Cost Principles and did not adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Common audit findings included: lack of salary documentation, or documentation that does not meet federal standards; employees charging salary as budgeted rather than as actually worked; and time worked on multiple grants/projects not recorded separately.

Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits must be reasonable for the services rendered, conform to the established policy of the organization/agency, and be consistently applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities. Costs must be determined and supported with documentation as provided by the applicable cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

Documentation for these costs must meet the federal standards, which may be different from timekeeping and activity tracking procedures of your own organization.

## Grant Funds and Matching Contributions

The project will be funded by two sources: (1) grants funds and (2) matching contributions. Both sources are necessary to complete the proposed work and must meet certain requirements to determine that they are allocable to the grant.

Most federal grant programs require the recipient and the community to invest in the project to be eligible for the federal grant funds. This investment is known as “match” or “cost-share.” The amount of match required is specific to each grant program.

The Uniform Administrative Requirements regarding Matching Contributions and found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart D (200.306).

Matching contributions are budgeted and planned for in the grant proposal in the same way as grant funds. Just as federal expenses are reported once they are incurred, matching funds must be spent for their intended purpose before they are reported in the project budget as match. Costs covered by matching contributions must be just as essential to the project objectives as those covered by grant funds. Costs covered by matching

contributions must be documented, accounted for, and treated in the same way as costs covered by grant funds, in accordance with the same cost principles and grant regulations.

There are two types of match: (1) Cash contributions, including donations, non-federal grants, and state/local appropriations; and (2) In-kind contributions, including the value of donated goods and services, provided by the grantee organization or third-party contributors.

Matching contributions cannot include any goods, services, or time paid for or funded by the federal government. Grantees must check with the match contributor to ensure that the origin of the match is not in any way paid for or funded by the federal government.

Criteria for all expenditure of grant funds, including matching contributions received:

- Allowable: All expenses and matching contributions must be deemed allowable as per the federal cost principles applicable to the grantee organization.
- Allocable: A matching cost that is allocable to a particular cost objective (i.e., a specific function, grant project, service, or other activity) in accordance with the relative benefits received. A cost is allocable to a federal award where it is treated consistently with other costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances and (1) is incurred specifically for the award, (2) benefits both the award and other work and can be distributed in reasonable proportion to the benefits received, or (3) is necessary for the overall operation of the organization.
- Reasonable: The value of the expense or matching contribution should be consistent with the value of similar goods, services, wages, volunteer rates, etc. used at the same location and for the same project objective. Grantees should have a written policy for evaluating reasonableness, and that policy should be adhered to when valuing matching contributions.
- Necessary: Expenses and matching contributions must relate to specific grant objectives and play an essential role in the completion of the grant project. Matching contributions are not “icing on the cake;” instead, they are vital for the project to succeed. Contributions that do not directly relate to specific grant objectives or project tasks shall not be accepted as match or counted toward the project.
- Verifiable: Matching contributions must be thoroughly documented, with invoices for goods or services provided, time sheets for hours worked, receipts for donations accepted, etc.

## Avoiding Grant Fraud

While most subrecipients would state that they would never knowingly commit grant fraud, it is important to understand the many ways that an organization may engage in activities that could be considered fraudulent. Federal Offices of Inspector Generals (OIGs) conduct audits of grantees and grant processes as well as investigations related to fraud and other inappropriate uses of federal funds. They use the term “grant fraud” to describe a variety of improper actions, the most general being:

### *Conflict of Interest:*

Examples include transactions involving undisclosed related parties, purchasing goods or services from a business in which the organization has an ownership interest, making materially false statements to the government, Misstatements, false certifications, failure to maintain adequate supporting documentation, misrepresentation of costs, and attempts to charge unallowable costs.

### *Making materially false statements to the government:*

Misstatements, false certifications, failure to maintain adequate supporting documentation, misrepresentation of costs, and attempts to charge unallowable costs.

### *Theft:*

Examples include fictitious transactions, creative bookkeeping, misuse of a credit card designated for grant funded purchases.

Subrecipients must do everything that they can to prevent grant fraud from taking place. Many organizations will need to review their business policies and procedures to ensure that proper internal controls are in place to ensure protection of the federal grant funds. They will also need to increase their standards for documenting match and expense.

For a full report, search the Internet for “Reducing Grant Fraud Risk: A Framework for Grant Training,” a report by Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force Recovery Act, March 2012.

There are numerous examples of organizations that have been found to be noncompliant with certain grant requirements. One example involves a national charity which was found to have overpaid consultants, failed to track the grant funds, and failed to keep proper financial records. The charity is now at risk of having to repay the federal funds back to the awarding agency and may lose current and future funding. These results affected not just the national organization, but also the local chapters which received subawards from the national organization. The local subrecipients may also have to repay grant funds and face potential penalties.

Penalties for grant fraud may include:

- Repayment of grant funds to the awarding agency, criminal prosecution and civil fraud remedies
- Suspension, debarment, and cancellation of current or future grant awards

*Potential and actual grantees need to understand and follow the requirements NOW. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.*

## Common Misconceptions

<p>"I'm just a volunteer."</p> <p>The regulations and requirements apply to ALL grant recipients, regardless of the size and/or complexity of the organization.</p>	<p>"My application was selected, I'm doing everything right, and I'll receive the grant funds no matter what."</p> <p>Successful applicants will undergo Pre-Award evaluations and ongoing monitoring throughout the grant term.</p>
<p>"It's too much of a hassle."</p> <p>If you want to receive federal funding, you must fulfill all the responsibilities of a grantee. If you do not want to do that, do not take the money.</p>	<p>"I did not have to do this on our other grant. I have never seen anything like this before."</p> <p>Increased accountability and transparency have led to increased monitoring and scrutiny of federal grants.</p>

All applicant organizations need to consider whether they are ready to take on the commitment of managing a federal grant. This is especially necessary if the organization is operated solely by volunteers or has a relatively small staff. CFSC encourages participation by volunteer and community organizations but wants to ensure that all applicants are aware of the requirements before accepting the grant. This training is designed to strongly urge every applicant to review and thoroughly understand the expectations of all subrecipients.

You may have experienced less monitoring under a previous grant, but the requirements have been in place for federal grants for many years.

Consider the requirements of the grant and the workload associated with meeting those requirements and deadlines. Design your project and budget to accommodate the documentation and accounting processes that will be required. Make sure you and your organization are prepared to take on the responsibility of managing a project this way.

Subrecipients are also closely monitored during the grant term through quarterly reports, site visits, and desk reviews of grant documentation. If a subrecipient is found to be in noncompliance or fails to meet certain requirements, then the awarding agency may withhold pending and future grant payments and/or terminate your grant based on failure to meet grant requirements for non-performance.



## Pre-Award Phase (The Next Step if Your Application is Selected)

Organizations whose applications are selected for funding must complete additional certifications and provide documentation to establish their eligibility to receive funds. Documentation and certifications relate to the IRS tax status of the organization, insurance, lobbying activities, organization capacity, compliance with documentation standards, policies, and procedures.

Here is a list of documents that you will be asked to submit as part of the pre-award process if your application is selected. Additional documentation and/or information may be required per grant requirements.

- Completed and signed Pre-Award Questionnaire
- IRS determination letter for all IRS-designated “501” organizations (e.g., nonprofit organizations, homeowner’s associations, etc.)
- Insurance certificate (or self-insurance letter) for all forms of insurance (except employee benefits)
- Last two years’ independent audits and all forms of management letters from CPA (if available)
- The last two years’ IRS Form 990 or 990EZ
- Audit reports prepared because of a visit by a federal agency.
- Organization’s by-laws (for nonprofit organizations and HOAs)
- Board of Directors roster (including names, addresses, phone numbers)
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Certification that your organization has written Policies and Procedures for accounting, personnel, procurement, travel, and property management.
- Approved Federal Indirect Cost Rate agreement (for applicants claiming indirect expenses greater than 15%)
- Map(s) of the area(s) to be covered by the proposed project.
- Organization’s Drug-Free Workplace Statement (for applicants with employees)
- Organization’s National Incident Management System (NIMS) adoption (for fire protection agencies only)
- Certification of Debarment Status on Form AD 1048, and copies of searches performed.
- Salary Certification Letter (for applicants with employees)
- Financial Statements covering the six-month period preceding the Pre-Award stage (whether prepared monthly or quarterly)
- Various Federal Assurances and Certifications as required.

## Organizational Capacity and Risk Assessment

As required by 2 CFR 200, grant applicants undergo a risk assessment as part of the pre-award process. The risk assessment is a standardized evaluation based on items such as financial stability, business systems, performance history, audit reports and findings, and debarment or suspension status.

If your project is selected to move on to the risk assessment phase, you will be contacted by a representative from CFSC. As the grantor, CFSC must review the risks associated with each applicant organization and/or fiscal sponsor prior to awarding them a grant. CFSC staff will conduct phone interviews with each organization and/or fiscal sponsor to review its capacity to manage grants in accordance with the federal grant regulations. The assessment interview will include questions about the organization's financial and accounting systems, purchasing procedures, documentation standards, and other processes that demonstrate whether the organization can successfully manage grant-funded projects. A grant will not be awarded unless your organization can demonstrate adequate capacity to manage the grant funds and implement the grant project.

***We strongly recommend that applicants and fiscal sponsors check that their organization-related documents included in the list above can be located easily to prepare for potential funding. It is also important to check that organizational policies and internal controls meet the federal standards listed in 2 CFR 200.***

# Appendix

## Grant Related Contact Information

<b>California Fire Safe Council</b> <b>730 I Street #236</b> <b>Sacramento, CA 95814*</b> <b>Main line (916) 648-3600</b>	
<b>Chris Lozano</b> Senior Grant Specialist Email: <a href="mailto:clozano@cafiresafecouncil.org">clozano@cafiresafecouncil.org</a>	Contact <b>Chris</b> with SFC grant application or project related questions.
<b>Jared Peri</b> Program Manager Email: <a href="mailto:jperi@cafiresafecouncil.org">jperi@cafiresafecouncil.org</a>	Contact <b>Jared</b> with SFC grant application or project related questions.

## List of Acronyms

The following is a list of the acronyms that may be used during the grant process. Please contact the California Fire Safe Council if you encounter any terms that you are not familiar with as you prepare your application.

BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs (United States Department of the Interior)
BLM	Bureau of Land Management (United States Department of the Interior)
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics (United States Department of Labor)
BMP	Best Management Practices
BOF	Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
CAL OES	California Office of Emergency Services
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (formerly referred to as CDF)
CAR	Communities at Risk
CDF	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (currently referred to as CAL FIRE)
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERES	California Environmental Resources System
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
CFIRS	California Fire Incident Reporting System
CFP	California Fire Plan
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CFSC	California Fire Safe Council
COG	Council of Governments
COI	Community of Interest, Conflict of Interest, Certificate of Insurance
CP	Community Protection
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
DBH	Diameter Breast Height (a measurement of tree size)
DFPZ	Defensible Fuel Profile Zone
DMA	Disaster Management Assistance
DMA	Disaster Mitigation Act 2000 (FEMA)
DOI	United States Department of the Interior (also referred to as USDOl)
EF	Emergency Funds
EIN	Employee Identification Number
EIR	Environmental Impact Report (CEQA)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement (SEPA)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Federal Endangered Species Act (also referred to as FESA)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency

FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act (also referred to as ESA)
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
FMAZ	Fire Management Analysis Zone (CFP)
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FOFEM	First Order Fire Effects Model
FR	Fuels Reduction
FRA	Federal Responsibility Area
FRAP	Fire and Resource Assessment Program
FRCC	Fire Regime and Condition Class
FS	United States Forest Service (United States Department of Agriculture – also referred to as USFS)
FSC	Fire Safe Council
FTB	Franchise Tax Board (State of California)
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service (United States Department of the Interior – also referred to as USFWS)
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
GM	Grant Manager
GPS	Global Position System
HFR	Hazardous Fuels Reduction
HFRA	Healthy Forests Restoration Act
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (FEMA)
HMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan
ICS	Incident Command System
JPA	Joint Powers Agreement
LAT	Latitude
LONG	Longitude
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
MBTA	Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDDDB	Natural Diversity Data Base (CDFG)
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFP	National Fire Plan
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service (United States Department of the Interior)
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service (United States Department of Agriculture)
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group

OES	Office of Emergency Services
OMB	Federal Office of Management and Budget
OSFM	Office of the State Fire Marshall
PRC	Public Resources Code
Q1, Q2...	Quarter 1, Quarter 2, and so on... (Quarter is a 3-month reporting period used for project planning, distributing funds, reporting project progress, etc.)
RC	Review Committee
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development
RCD	Resource Conservation District
RFA	Request for Application
RFP	Request for Proposal
RPF	Registered Professional Forester
SAF	Society of American Foresters
SFA	State Fire Assistance
SFM	State Fire Marshal
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office (California)
SNC	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
SOG	Strategic Opportunity Grants
SRA	State Responsibility Area
T&E	Threatened and Endangered Species
THP	Timber Harvest Plan
UBC	Uniform Building Code
UCCE	University of California Cooperative Extension
UFC	Uniform Fire Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOI	United States Department of the Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service (United States Department of Agriculture)
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (United States Department of the Interior)
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VMP	Vegetation Management Plan (CAL FIRE)
WGA	Western Governors Association
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

## Sample Commitment and Cover Letters

### **SAMPLE FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (SAMPLE Letter of commitment)**

PO Box 123

Sample, CA 99999

Phone #: (555) 555-5550

Fax #: (555) 555-5551

*(date)*

California Fire Safe Council

5834 Price Avenue, #101

McClellan CA 95652

RE: Sample West Side Fuel Break Application Letter of Commitment

Dear California Fire Safe Council:

In support of the Sample West Side Fuel Break project the Sample Fire Safe Council will be providing in-kind Personnel time valued at \$13,560 and supplies with a value of \$1,100.

We will also provide a cash matching contribution of \$6,560 to cover the cost of Contractual services and financial management services to be provided by the City of Sample.

Sincerely,

*Primary Contact Signature*

*Organization Primary Contact*

---

Sample Fire Safe Council

PO Box 123

Sample, CA 99999

## DESIGN-A-SIGN (SAMPLE Letter of Commitment)

Of the Times Way

*To Go, CA 41411*

Sample Fire Safe Council

PO Box 123

Sample, CA 99999

*(date)*

RE: Project Name: Sample West Side Fuel Break

Letter of Commitment

Dear *(Sample Contact Person)*:

The Design-a-Sign company will provide printing and installation of 2 interpretive signs marking the fuel reduction that has been created for the Sample West Side Fuel break project. The signs will be installed on Flame Heights Drive during the project. The cost of design and installation is \$750 and will be donated by the Design-a-Sign company.

Sincerely,

***Bill Board***

Bill Board

Design-a-Sign





Mapdot Fire Safe Council (SAMPLE Letter of Commitment)  
PO Box 123  
Wherzat, CA 99999  
Phone: (555) 555-5550.

California Fire Safe Council

*Grant Manager*

*Address*

*(date)*

RE: Project Name: Sample West Side Fuel Break  
Cover Letter and Summary of Letters of Commitment

Dear California Fire Safe Council:

Attached are three Letters of Commitment to this grant. The total value of matching funds and in-kind services to be provided by these organizations is comprised of the following:

<b>ORGANIZATION or INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>MATCHING FUNDS</b>	<b>IN-KIND GOODS AND/OR SERVICES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
APPLICANT: Sample FSC	\$6,560	\$14,660	\$21,220
Design-A-Sign	\$0	\$750	\$750
Cal Fire Grant	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000
TOTALS	\$81,560	\$15,410	\$96,970

The SFC awards will be announced in July. The grant that is being used as match will fund completion of the 60-acre section of road brush clearance to the west of the clearinghouse grant funded project. The value of the matching Cal Fire grant is \$75,000.

Please contact me if you have any questions about these in-kind and cash matching contributions.

Sincerely,

*Primary Contact Signature*

*Organization Primary Contact*

## Using Cal Fire Crews as Match

***This section provides guidance on using CAL FIRE work crew programs as Match for your grant and covers typical crew projects, associated costs, and matching contribution values.***

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is currently authorized to operate and deploy work “Hand Crews” to assist with fuels reduction projects across the state.

CAL FIRE has diversified its Hand Crews through cooperative efforts with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the California Military Department (CMD), and CAL FIRE’s Firefighter I Hand Crews, 149 crews are available for deployment. They respond to all types of emergencies including wildfires, floods, search and rescue.

When not assigned to emergency response or pre-fire project work, crews conduct labor-intensive project work on public and private lands, such as critical hazard fuels reduction projects in support the state and federal fire plans. Additionally, fire crew projects include repair and maintenance of levies for flood prevention; maintenance of local, state, and federal park infrastructures; clearing debris from streams; removing roadside litter; constructing hiking trails; and providing many other important community services.

A typical crew consists of an experienced CAL FIRE Captain, Fire Apparatus Engineer and from 12 to 17: firefighters, CMD Service Members, CCC Corpsmembers, or CDCR Incarcerated persons. They travel to and from project work sites equipped with firefighting tools and other items needed for project work assignments.

### Projects:

These crews can be an important resource for state and local government agencies and non-profit organizations engaged in wildfire mitigation efforts. One of the most common types of project work is hazardous fuel reduction, including fuel break construction and chipping.

There is a high demand for the crews, so we encourage applicants to contact their local CAL FIRE unit staff early in their project planning process to determine if the crews are available. Even if the project is approved, their ability to perform the work as scheduled is affected by weather, the availability of qualified crew leaders, and other firefighting activity.

### Costs:

For California fiscal year 2025-26 the charge for crew work is \$394.32 per day, plus a 13.47% Indirect Cost Rate charge to State and Local government agencies and non-profit organizations, resulting in a total a daily crew cost to the project sponsor of \$447.42.

Direct payments to CAL FIRE can be adjusted if the project sponsor provides goods and services that will assist CAL FIRE in their recovery of operating costs for the project. Such goods and services could include fuel, tires, chainsaw parts and accessories, and similar items related to performing project work. This arrangement should be spelled out in the project “Letter of Understanding” described below.

If your project involves chipping, they may also be able to assist with that, but project sponsors must provide the chipper and any related items.

### Matching Contribution Value:

For FY 24/25, the in-kind Matching Contribution Value of work by a CAL FIRE crew is

\$2,069.89 per day.

Agreements:

To inquire about the availability of a CAL FIRE hand crew to assist you with accomplishing your project, contact the staff of your local CAL FIRE unit and request a meeting to discuss your project. If CAL FIRE decides to consider your project, they will have you submit the appropriate forms based on the type of crew assigned. All forms and documents required will be provided.

Billing for services will come to you on a "Projects Order Form" (FC-80).

## Sample Fiscal Sponsor Agreement

### **Agreement between Fiscal Sponsor and Applicant Organization for Federally Funded Grants Awarded by the California Fire Safe Council**

This agreement is made on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 2025 between the \_\_\_\_ (Fiscal Sponsor) and \_\_\_\_ (Applicant Organization).

The purpose of this agreement is to establish a fiscal sponsor relationship between the two organizations for the fiscal management and/or project management needs of (Applicant Organization), an unincorporated group that may receive a grant from California Fire Safe Council (CFSC). CFSC provides grants that are federally funded and subject to the federal regulations. The proposed project if funded, will be subject to the federal regulations applicable to the Fiscal Sponsor's type of organization.

The sponsoring organization will be referred to as "Fiscal Sponsor" and the unincorporated group shall be referred to as "Grantee" in this document. Both parties are equally responsible for abiding by all of the terms and regulations cited in the CFSC grant agreement. The Fiscal Sponsor and the Grantee are considered "co-applicants" for this grant.

1. The Fiscal Sponsor agrees to assume administrative and financial responsibilities for the purposes of the above CFSC grant.
  - a. They will provide these services at no charge but will provide the required documentation of these free services for use as in-kind match for the grantee.  
OR
  - b. They will provide these services for a sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be paid on the following terms:
2. The Fiscal Sponsor also agrees to assume project management for the Grantee, following the outline and work plan in the application for project. (USE IF APPLICABLE)
  - a. They will provide these services at no charge but will provide the required documentation of these free services for use as in-kind match for the grantee. OR
  - b. They will provide these services for a sum of \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid on the following terms\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Fiscal Sponsor also agrees to ensure that all progress reports, special reports, and final closeout documents are prepared and submitted for the grant as part of this agreement.
4. The Fiscal Sponsor and the Grantee understand that the Grantee shall not be a signer on the bank accounts related to this grant and administered by the Fiscal Sponsor, nor shall any representative of the Grantee organization have access to a debit card connected to the Fiscal Sponsor's grant bank account.
5. The Fiscal Sponsor understands that all accounting and funds related to this grant shall be kept separate from the Fiscal Sponsor's other funds through a process of "fund accounting," by which the income and expenditures of the grant funds can be accurately and clearly distinguished. The Fiscal Sponsor shall clearly document the process by which the funds will be separately managed and avoid any comingling or the appearance of the comingling of the funds.
6. Since the grant funds will be received by the Fiscal Sponsor, the Fiscal Sponsor will include

the grant funds in its organizational accounting system, IRS 990 filings and audits. The Fiscal Sponsor is fiscally liable for the proper use of the funds and for providing accurate and complete accounting records.

7. The Fiscal Sponsor also understands that since these grant funds are part of their overall financial management, they may be subject to an A-133 audit, if they meet the federal threshold on expenses that would require such an audit. The Fiscal Sponsor shall review the potential impact of an A-133 audit on their organization and determine that should such a situation occur what additional costs, if any, would be imposed on the Grantee for their share in such an audit. This estimate of cost shall be included in the overall charges to the Grantee for the services of the Fiscal Sponsor at the time this agreement is signed. It is understood by both parties that this is an estimated cost that may or may not be incurred but should be budgeted.
8. The Grantee and the Fiscal Sponsor shall each designate a single person from their organization to be the single point of contact for one another and for CFSC.
9. It is expected that the grantee will need to incur expenses on behalf of the project. The Fiscal Sponsor and the Grantee will agree upon a specific procedure for requests for petty cash, advances, and/or reimbursements necessary to accomplish the objectives of the project as budgeted.
10. The Fiscal Sponsor agrees to communicate with CFSC and the Grantee when necessary and shall provide their point of contact and all relevant grant materials whenever a site visit is required by the funding entity, CFSC.
11. Both the Fiscal Sponsor and the Grantee understand and agree that they will safely store all documents related to the CFSC grant until CFSC notifies them in writing that the documents are no longer subject to audit by them or the Forest Service or other governmental agency.
12. The term of this Fiscal Sponsor agreement shall be the same term as the grant agreement with CFSC, which includes the "after grant term" period of 90 days for final grant closeout.
13. Should there be a dispute between the Fiscal Sponsor and the Grantee, CFSC shall be notified immediately and attempts to resolve the situation in a positive manner should be taken.

<b><i>In witness, whereof, the parties hereto have executed this agreement on the day and year first written above.</i></b>	
<b>Accepted for the Fiscal Sponsor:</b>	
<b>Authorized Signer (sign and print):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Accepted for the Grantee:</b>	
<b>Authorized Signer (sign and print):</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## Project Location Survey and Completion Certification

The 25 SFC application will include a project location survey. This must be completed through a survey 123 link and then a certification of submission must be submitted.

### 25 SFC Project Location

Please provide your organization and project name exactly as it appears in your application. The project location should be a point at the central location of the area served or the targeted fuels management area for the project.

**Organization\***  
It must match your ZoomGrants application submission.

**Project Name\***  
It must match your ZoomGrants application submission.

**Project Location\***  
Identify the general project location on the map below.  

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Esri, USGS | County of Sacramento, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USF... Powered by Esri

Lat: 38.435960 Lon: -121.499187

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## Sample De Minimis Rate Calculation

Sample De Minimis Rate Calculation in a Grant Budget Table			
Budget Category	Cost	Modified Total Direct Cost	15% of MTDC
<b>PERSONNEL</b>			
Employee #1	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$2,250
Employee #2	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$1,800
<b>FRINGE</b>			
Employee #1	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$375
Employee #2	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$270
<b>TRAVEL</b>			
Travel Expense #1	\$600	\$600	\$90
Travel Expense #2			
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Chipper	\$11,000	(not included)	\$0
<b>SUPPLIES</b>			
Supply Expense #1	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$210
Supply Expense #2	\$700	\$700	\$105
<b>CONTRACTUAL</b>			
Contract #1	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$2,700
Contract #2	\$130,000	\$50,000 (First \$50,000)	\$7,500
<b>OTHER</b>			
Other Expense #1	\$60	\$60	\$9
Other Expense #2	\$320	\$320	\$48
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>193,380</b>		
<b>MODIFIED TOTAL DIRECT COST</b>		<b>\$102,380</b>	
<b>ALLOWABLE INDIRECT AMOUNT</b>			<b>\$15,357.00</b>

## About SAM Registration

Register on SAM.gov

Your organization must annually register at SAM.gov to remain eligible to receive program financial assistance. To complete the process on SAM, you will need the following information:

- Legal name of your business entity Address
- Phone number
- Name of the CEO or business owner
- Legal structure or type of business (corporation, partnership, proprietorship, etc.) Year the entity was created
- Primary line of business
- Total number of employees (full- and part-time)

Additionally, you will need your organization's Tax Identification Number (TIN) and other data to complete registration and reporting requirements.

If your organization has the necessary information ready, online registration will take about 30 minutes to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of your business entity. It may take 3 business days or up to 2 weeks before your SAM registration becomes active.

If you are updating or renewing your registration information, it will take approximately 24 hours to become active.

## About Unique Entity ID

Previously the DUNS Number was the federal authoritative entity identifier. As of April 3, 2022, use of the DUNS number was discontinued.

If you are registered in SAM.gov now, you have already been assigned a Unique Entity ID (SAM). It is viewable on your entity registration record at SAM.gov. If you register on SAM.gov in the future, you will be assigned a Unique Entity ID (SAM) as a part of the registration process.

The CAGE code is also used and available on SAM.gov registration records. The Unique Entity ID (SAM) and the CAGE code are separate identifiers.

More information regarding the Unique Entity ID (SAM) can be found at

<https://sam.gov/entity-registration>



## Insurance Recommendations

The subrecipient and fiscal sponsor, if applicable, are responsible for all grant funds received through the California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearinghouse and for all assets purchased with grant funds. This responsibility extends to any loss of grant funds attributable to fraud and/or misappropriation by third persons and to any expenditure not allowed by this Contract. Should any loss of grant funds or improper expenditure of grant funds occur, the Subrecipient and its Fiscal Sponsor, if applicable, will be required to reimburse the awarding agency for those amounts.

The subrecipient and/or fiscal sponsor must carry insurance that is enough to protect the grant funds and all assets from any loss or misuse. Coverage should protect against theft, fraud, misappropriation, negligence, and undue physical damage or harm. The subrecipient must provide CFSC with proof of appropriate insurance: 1) during the pre-award phase and 2) prior to engaging in activities for which grant funds or matching contributions are provided. During the grant term, the subrecipient must send the CFSC current proof of insurance upon annual renewal.

Grant funds can be used to purchase appropriate insurance coverage. If the subrecipient is using grant funds to purchase insurance, then the subrecipient shall provide proof of insurance to the California Fire Safe Council within 30 days of obtaining the policy. Failure to maintain insurance coverage or to provide proof of insurance to CFSC, including upon annual renewal, will cause denial of grant payments.

Types of insurance coverage to consider:

- Directors and Officers (D&O): Cover the directors and officers of an organization in the event they are sued in conjunction with the performance of their duties that relate to the company.
- Worker's Compensation: Provides medical care compensation for employees who are injured in the course of employment. All employers are required by state law to provide Worker's Compensation Insurance for their employees.
- Liability: Provides protection from claims arising from injuries or damage to other people or property.
- Equipment: Covers loss, theft, and physical damage, and more, if specified in the policy.
- Errors and Omissions: Protects the organization against claims resulting from mistakes and things that your organization's officers and employees forgot to make.
- Fidelity Bond: Covers policyholders for losses that they incur because of fraudulent acts.
- Criminal Acts: Protects against damage or loss resulting from criminal acts of employees, officers, and contractors. Contact an insurance broker and discuss your potential liability, and the various types of insurance you may need to purchase to meet the requirement of our grant Contract.

## Important Websites

### **California Fire Safe Council**

[www.cafiresafecouncil.org](http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org)

The California Fire Safe Council website contains contact information, notices about funding sources, meetings and events that may be beneficial to your project or other fire prevention activities.

### **ZoomGrants**

[www.zoomgrants.com](http://www.zoomgrants.com)

ZoomGrants houses the clearinghouse grant application and progress reporting system and is the location for downloading and submitting payment requests and grant modification forms. You will access ZoomGrants at least quarterly when you fill out grant progress reports and submit source documentation. Important notices will be sent through the ZoomGrants email system so be sure to keep your account contacts up to date.

### **SAM & UEI**

[www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

The SAM website is used to renew your annual CAGE code and Unique Entity ID. SAM accounts and renewals are free of charge so be sure to renew directly through SAM.gov. Other sites may offer to create or update accounts for a fee but that is not necessary. The debarred and suspended database on SAM.gov can be used to check the status of project managers, those with oversight of the project, and contractors providing \$25,000 or more in goods or services.

### **Code of Federal Regulations**

[eCFR :: Title 2 of the CFR -- Federal Financial Assistance](#)

To access the text of the code of federal regulations for grants, find the reference numbers in your sub award for administrative regulations, cost principles, or audit requirements and search for them by clicking on the code of federal regulations link on the website above.

### **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Process**

[How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint | Home](#)

As part of the grant agreement, recipients are required to provide information on how to file a complaint about program discrimination against the USDA. The website above describes the process for filing such a complaint.

### **California CWPP Guide**

<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/california-cwpp-toolkit>

The CWPP Guide is a key element of the California CWPP Toolkit which provides important guidance and resources for communities to develop and implement plans across the state. The CWPP Guide outlines specific requirements to be considered valid for CAL FIRE approval.