



## **WRCOG Grant Writing Assistance Program Guidelines 2.0**

**Program Overview:** The WRCOG Grant Writing Assistance Program (Program), launched in September 2017, is designed to assist members in preparing proposals for grant opportunities. To provide a Program that best assists WRCOG members, WRCOG staff convened a Focus Group of member jurisdiction staff to provide feedback on Program specifics and develop Program Guidelines, which were approved by the WRCOG Executive Committee on September 11, 2017. The subsequent Guidelines 2.0 have been presented to the WRCOG Planning Directors Committee and Public Works Committee iteratively to ensure the Program continues to benefit WRCOG member jurisdictions.

**Grant Writing Consultants:** WRCOG released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in December 2021 for consultants to serve on a “bench” to provide grant writing assistance to WRCOG member jurisdictions. The bench of consultants is available to members on a first-come, first-served basis when funding opportunities for the selected grants become available. The consultants will assist members with the grant application process only, not with subsequent award management or project implementation. The following consultants were selected to assist our member jurisdictions with grant preparation:

- Alta Planning + Design
- Blais & Associates
- Cambridge Systematics
- KTUA
- National Community Renaissance

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**Program Guidelines:** The Guidelines define the parameters of the Program, including the following items:

1. Eligible grants;
2. Eligible activities;
3. Expectation of member jurisdictions accepting assistance;
4. Linkage to other WRCOG programs;
5. Screening process; and
6. Process to request grant writing assistance.

**#1 - Eligible grants:** The Program focuses on a few select grant opportunities. Eligible grants are as follows:

- Active Transportation Program (<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/active-transportation-program>)
- Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program (Transportation Planning Grants & Adaptation Planning Grants) (<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/regional-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants>)
- Housing related grant programs, for example:
  - Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (<https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/ahsc/>)
  - Transformative Climate Communities Program
  - Infill Infrastructure Program
  - Permanent Local Housing Allocations (PLHA)
  - Transit Oriented Development Housing Program
  - Mobilehome Park Rehabilitation & Resident Ownership Program (MPRRP)
  - Multifamily Housing Program
- Clean Cities related grants (<https://cleancities.energy.gov/>)
- New planning grant opportunities

Some of the grants identified in the “housing related grant programs” section are new additions to the Program and are highlighted in **yellow**. WRCOG is receiving REAP funds through SCAG with the goal of assisting local jurisdictions increase housing production and planning. WRCOG has received approval from SCAG to allocate some of the REAP funds to assist jurisdictions develop grant applications in these identified housing related grant programs to achieve this goal. All of the programs identified in the housing related grant programs will be funded through REAP funds that must be utilized by June 30, 2023.

To maintain flexibility with the Program, “new planning grant opportunities” are included so that other grant opportunities related to planning may be considered. This category enables members to request assistance if any grant opportunities that focus on planning grants become available – such as those that help fund General Plans, Specific Plans, or Community Plans.

*Ineligible Grants: The Program is **not** intended to assist infrastructure grant opportunities, i.e., TIGER, HSIP, FASTLANE, etc.*

Assistance with Clean Cities grants is available for WRCOG Clean Cities Coalition members only. Assistance is available for grant opportunities related to Clean Cities activities, such as electric vehicle charging stations and city / county fleet purchasing. Funding for assistance with these grants will be allocated from Coalition funds. WRCOG administers the Coalition on behalf

of participating member jurisdictions which pay specific Coalition dues. This Program can increase the Coalition's effectiveness by assisting Coalition members attain grant funding.

#2 - Eligible activities and assistance limitations: The Program will streamline the activities it provides assistance to member jurisdictions in order to ensure a fiscally supportable Program. WRCOG staff conducted an evaluation on necessary changes to enable a sustainable Program. This evaluation looked at if the Program can sustain the different components of the Program, how the Program has been utilized, where efficiencies can be created and the process in which assistance has been provided to member jurisdictions.

WRCOG will be implementing the parameters listed below for the Program based on the evaluation and input from WRCOG Committees:

- Jurisdictions will be permitted direct assistance developing grant applications on one (1) application per grant program per cycle.
  - e.g., Jurisdictions will be provided direct assistance developing a grant application for ATP Cycle VI on one (1) submittal.
- Jurisdictions will be limited to receiving direct assistance on grant application development for three (3) grant applications every two-years.
- The Program will provide direct assistance on a grant application resubmittal once. Further resubmittals will not be provided Program assistance.

#3 - Expectation of member jurisdiction accepting assistance: WRCOG member jurisdictions must submit formal request using the Application for Grant Writing Assistance (<http://wrcog.us/DocumentCenter/View/2119>) form to WRCOG. WRCOG will only authorize a consultant to provide assistance if it is determined the project will be competitive based on the initial input provided by the requestor (see Screening Process – section #5).

In order for the Program to run effectively and utilize funds efficiently, the member jurisdiction accepting grant writing assistance must agree to the following:

- Dedicate sufficient resources:
  - Obtain all necessary material on the information checklist provided by the consultant
  - Attend kick-off meeting to ensure consultant has needed information to prepare grant application
  - Respond to inquiries from the consultant in a timely manner
- Be the responsible party for grant submittal, including signatory on application and actual submittal of the application

It is expected that once the member jurisdiction is awarded the assistance for a grant application, and the consultant is selected to assist, all parties will participate in a kick-off meeting to discuss the proposal and share necessary information to begin work on the grant application. The consultant will prepare the grant application and all necessary exhibits, tables, etc., for review by the member jurisdiction staff. The member jurisdiction will then provide comments to be addressed by the consultant, and the consultant will then revise the application based on comments provided. Finally, the consultant will provide the member jurisdiction staff with a final draft for review and submittal.

**If the member jurisdiction does not actually submit the grant application, the member jurisdiction will be required to reimburse WRCOG the costs for assistance.**

#### #4 - Process to request grant writing assistance:

1. Member jurisdiction submits an application, formally requesting grant writing assistance with a specific grant. WRCOG will leave it to the discretion of the member jurisdiction how this request is made, whether it is through the elected body, WRCOG representative, or other party to act on behalf of the City. WRCOG will assume that if it receives a request for assistance from a member jurisdiction representative, that representative is authorized to act on behalf of the member jurisdiction.
2. WRCOG staff and its grant writing professionals will review the applications within seven calendar days and determine whether the request meets the criteria, as noted below.
3. If the Application meets the criteria set in these Guidelines, WRCOG will work with the applicant to select a proper consultant from the list of pre-approved consultants.
4. Kick-off meeting will be held with jurisdiction and consultant.

#5 - Screening process: In order to ensure funds for the Program are utilized effectively and efficiently, an Application must be submitted to WRCOG for review. The application has been updated to ensure a sustainable Program moving forward.

#### Required information to initiate request assistance

- To initiate assistance, member jurisdictions are required to submit an application that will include a project description/parameters to WRCOG.
  - The Program will not provide services to develop a project or conduct research on how a proposed project will score.
- The project description will be reviewed by grant writing professionals. WRCOG will determine if application development assistance will be provided based on the professional judgement of its grant writing professionals and application development schedule.
- Furthermore, a preliminary scoring criterion for the ATP will be utilized to determine if assistance will be provided by WRCOG. The criterion will be assessed by grant writing professionals. Member jurisdictions will need to provide the following:
  - Proposed project's Disadvantaged Community (DAC) score
  - Project description
  - Accident data
  - Status of outreach conducted

The criteria set in these Guidelines, serve as basic standards for proposals to be evaluated. The selection of proposals for grant writing assistance will be at the discretion of WRCOG based on available funding, and WRCOG reserves the right to decide which proposals receive grant writing assistance.

Nothing in this Program will be construed as limiting member jurisdictions from hiring other consultants to prepare grants on their behalf.