



2026 Community Stewardship Grants - Application Packet

Release: March 04, 2026

The Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program is inviting grant applications for community-based projects that prevent stormwater pollution, enhance the health of local watersheds, creeks, and the San Francisco Bay, and have a public outreach element.

- Grants are awarded for amounts between \$500 and \$6,000 per project. The total available budget is \$30,000, pending approval by the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program in its Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget.
- Projects must be implemented in Alameda County.
- Eligible applicants include teachers and student groups, service clubs, community and environmental groups, youth organizations, homeowner associations, and non-profit organizations. For-profit organizations and public agencies are not eligible.
- **Submission deadline is Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:00PM (PST).**

Application Timeline and Submittal Instructions

March 4, 2026	Grant Program announced
May 4, 2026, 5:00PM (PST)	Submissions due via Google form: https://forms.gle/PcpvHn3ZAiXi5BR66
July 24, 2026	Applicants notified
August 21, 2026	Contracts signed; first invoice (75% of grant budget) paid
December 18, 2026	Mid-year progress report due
June 14, 2027	Projects completed
June 30, 2027	Final reports due
July 31, 2027	Final invoice (25% of grant budget) paid



Questions

For questions email:

Owen Sowerwine

Countywide Clean Water Program Grant Administrator

owen.sowerwine@acrcd.org

Background

The Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program was established in 1991 to prevent stormwater runoff from becoming polluted before entering local storm drains, creeks, wetlands, and the San Francisco Bay.

The Program's seventeen member agencies (fourteen cities in Alameda County, Alameda County, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Zone 7) are subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region. One requirement of the permit is to raise residents' awareness of stormwater pollution and to encourage changes in behavior that reduce stormwater pollution.

Community Stewardship Grants are an important and effective method the Program has used to raise awareness and involve residents in projects that protect and enhance local creeks and the San Francisco Bay. Community Stewardship Grants provide financial support to community groups, educators, non-profit organizations, and others to conduct projects to support these goals.

Who can apply?

- Teachers and student groups, service clubs, community groups, environmental groups, youth organizations, homeowner associations, and non-profit organizations are eligible.
- For-profit groups and public agencies including Clean Water Program Member agencies are not eligible.
- If the applicant is not a formal nonprofit (501(c)(3)), they must obtain a fiscal sponsor, which is an organization legally qualified to receive checks for grant funds and write checks for the project. Grant funds cannot be distributed to personal checking accounts.

What types of projects will be funded?

- Community Stewardship Grants provide funding for creative and innovative projects that prevent stormwater pollution and/or educate about stormwater pollution prevention.
- Projects must contain a community/public outreach element.



- Projects must be implemented in Alameda County.

Sample projects include, but are not limited to:

- Litter reduction projects
- Outreach and education projects with a stormwater pollution prevention message focused on:
 - Understanding of the local watershed,
 - Proper disposal of household hazardous waste,
 - Litter prevention, or illegal dumping prevention, or
 - Non-toxic/integrated pest management.
- Creation and distribution of outreach materials such as: video, newsletter, web site, brochures, guidebook, etc.
- Planning and production of an event such as an educational or community engagement event, celebration, training, etc.
- Public art projects
- Creekside restoration/re-vegetation projects
- Stormwater detention projects such as rainwater catchment and rain gardens
- Wildlife habitat enhancement projects
- Creek cleanups and other creek enhancement projects

Summaries of sample projects funded in the past can be found on the Program's website (cleanwaterprogram.org/grants).

What funds are available?

- **Individual grant amounts range from \$500 to \$6,000, with \$30,000 of total grant funding available.** In a typical grant cycle 5-7 grants are awarded.
- Grant funding availability is subject to approval of the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program's Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget.
- Upon completion of a contract with the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (the grant fund administrator), grantees will receive 75% of funding for the start of the project, and the remaining 25% upon completion of the final report.

What costs can grant funds cover?

Covered

- Wages or salaries for labor (must produce an invoice with staff and hours)
- Materials and supplies
- Equipment rentals
- Media placement such as print ads
- Commercial services, such as printing
- Postage (electronic distribution is encouraged)



- May cover a reasonable portion of costs for transportation

Not Covered

- Food
- Large ticket items (*e.g.* printer, computer, tablets, water monitoring equipment)

What are the grantee requirements?

- **Permissions and permits:** Grantee must obtain the appropriate permissions and/or permits to access areas where the proposed project will be conducted. Documentation must be submitted with the grant application. (Please contact the CSG administrator – Owen Sowerwine (owen.sowerwine@acrcd.org) – or city staff where your project is located if you need guidance on required permissions and permits).
- **Publicity materials produced:** The Program’s name and logo as well as a statement reading “Project funded by the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program” must be included in any publications, presentations, conferences, workshops, signs, public service announcements, websites and other publicity pieces produced as part of the grant funded project.
- **Mid-year report:** Grantee will be contacted (via email) by the grant administrator to provide a brief update on grant project progress, including photos if available.
- **Final report:** Grantee must complete the project by June 14, 2027, and submit a final report by June 30, 2027. The grant administrator will provide a reporting form at the mid-year check-in. The report must include:
 - Photos documenting the project such as before/after photos and community engagement photos, usable for the Program’s website, publications, and social media. Close-up photos of community engagement and grant activity implementation are especially encouraged. Grantee is responsible for obtaining written photo releases for all documented grant activities (form will be provided).
 - A one to two paragraph project summary suitable for posting on the Program’s website.
- **Meeting presentation:** Grantee may be asked to present their project at one of the Program’s meetings (virtual presentation possible).



Selection Criteria

The Program will evaluate all applications according to the following selection criteria. Each criterion has been assigned a weighting value that is reflected in the number following it. Your application should demonstrate/answer the following:

1. How will this project educate the public about stormwater pollution prevention, and does it include a public outreach component? (15)
2. Will the project assess an increase in knowledge or behavior change related to stormwater pollution prevention as a result of the project? (15)
3. Can the organization seeking the grant demonstrate that it is capable of successfully completing the project in a timely and cost-effective manner? (15)
4. Will the project reduce stormwater pollution in the community or local waterways? (15)
5. Will new, innovative approaches to improving water quality be used? (10)
6. Will the project improve and protect fish and wildlife habitats and/or the watershed as a whole? (10)
7. Is this a collaborative effort with other organizations, groups, or classrooms? (5)



Application and Submission Instructions

NOTE: Applications must be submitted online via the following Google form link. Submissions via email, fax, or mail are not accepted.

Proposal submission link (Google Form):

<https://forms.gle/PcpvHn3ZAiXi5BR66>

The deadline for receipt of Google Form submissions is Monday, May 4, 2026 5:00PM PST.

Below are the questions you will find in the online application form.

We highly recommend that you write out your responses in Microsoft Word or a similar program before copying/pasting them into the online form. If you have a Google Account and are signed in, you can save your work-in-progress. However, no Google Account is needed to complete the form.

You will receive an email confirmation and summary of your responses after submitting the application form, to keep for your records.

If you have questions during the submittal process, contact Owen Sowerwine, Grant Administrator, at owen.sowerwine@acr.cd.org.

1. Applicant Information

- Name of Group or Organization
- Address
- Website if applicable
- Application point person: Name, phone and email.

2. Accepting Payment

In order to receive grant payments, applicants must either be a formal nonprofit (501(c)(3)) or obtain a fiscal sponsor.

- If applicable, provide fiscal sponsor information: organization name, contact name, contact information.

3. About your Group or Organization

- When was your organization founded and what is its mission?
- How is it organized (formally/informally)? Please describe. How many employees? How many volunteers? Board of Directors?
- Please describe relevant projects or experience. *Limit answer to three short paragraphs or less.*



4. Project Location

- Project location and address
- Project property owner
- Name of creek, lake, beach, wetland, or watershed, if applicable
- Nearest city or location in the unincorporated County
- **Upload** a map indicating the project's exact location (required)
Screenshot of a Google map or similar is acceptable.

5. Permits and Permissions

- **Permission:** Please describe the nature of your access to the project site on which the project will occur including the term of permitted use (1-yr lease, 5-year lease, permanent access, easement, etc.). If applicable, upload legal permission you have obtained.
- **Permits:** List any permits required for this project (*e.g.* Dept. of Fish and Game, Army Corp of Engineers, Regional Board, or City/County permits)? Have you applied for or obtained the permits? If applicable, upload permits you have obtained.

If you have any questions about permits or permissions, please contact Owen Sowerwine at owen.sowerwine@acr.cd.org.

6. Project Overview & Goals

- Name of the project
- Give a brief description of your project, including the problem or issue the project will address and what the project goal is.
- What are the short-term and long-term benefits of this project to stormwater pollution prevention, the watershed, water quality, fish and wildlife habitats, and the community?
- Describe any new or innovative approaches to improving water quality and/or pollution prevention outreach used in the project.
- How will the project be maintained in the long term? Do you have plans to continue this project after the grant period?

7. Community/Public Outreach

- Describe your target audience including any underserved audiences.
- Describe your outreach plans. How will your project increase your target audience's knowledge or change their behavior related to stormwater pollution prevention?

8. Project Staffing, Schedule and Workplan

- List the project's start and completion dates. Note that projects must be completed no later than June 14, 2027.



- How will your project be staffed? Please describe all staff, volunteers and/or consultants necessary to successfully plan and carry out the work.
- Describe any key partnerships, working relationships or established community support that will support the successful implementation of your project.
- Provide a project workplan. List and briefly describe the primary steps/tasks and sub-tasks involved in the project and a basic estimated timeframe (*i.e.* by month or season) for each major task.

9. Project Evaluation

- Describe how you will evaluate the success of the project, e.g. pre & post survey, number of attendees. The evaluation should assess knowledge or behavior change related to stormwater pollution prevention. Please be specific.

10. Project Budget

NOTE: Applicants are required to use the Program's worksheet template (see preview below for reference) to detail their project's funding request. The template is located [here](#). Use the template to create a budget for your project, then upload your budget document by following the instructions on the Google Form.

- List all labor and materials, supplies, services, rental costs, and other expenses to be paid for with grant funds.
- Be sure to include costs for any outside assistance needed such as expertise (e.g. landscape designer) and equipment rental (e.g. sound system).
- Include all "matching funds" such as volunteer (unpaid) labor and donated materials, supplies, services, rental costs, etc.
- Note that grant funds cannot be used for the purchase of food and "big ticket items" such as printers, tablets etc.



Budget Template Preview

	Grant Funds for Material & Services (requested)	Grant Funds for Labor (requested)	Donated Material & Services (matching funds)	Donated Labor Hours (matching funds)
Item/Services	Materials, services, contracted work, etc. purchased with grant funds	Paid staff time (hours & total cost)	Materials, services, contracted work, donated.	Volunteer labor, estimated hours, donated.
<i>Example: Native plants and seeds</i>	\$600			
<i>Example: Workday Refreshments</i>			\$60	
<i>Example: Planting and irrigation plan</i>		12 hrs (\$360)		20 hrs
<i>Example: Install irrigation & plants</i>		30 hrs (\$900)		45 hrs
<i>Example: Signs - design & production</i>	\$1,300			
Subtotals (example)	\$1,900	\$1,260	\$60	65 hrs
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED	\$3,160 (example)			
Total Donated/ Matching Funds (optional)			\$60 (example)	



12. How did you hear about the Community Stewardship Grant Program?

- Previous applicant or grant recipient
- Communications from your City or Alameda County
- Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program website or social media
- Email from the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program
- Email from another organization e.g. a creek group
- Newspaper (printed or online)
- Word of mouth
- Other, please describe:

[End of application questions]

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