

SFPUC Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant Program

2026 Application Solicitation

Application Deadline

Applications for the 2026 grant cycle open on July 1st, 2026 and are due on **November 16th, 2026, at 11:59pm PST.**

Introduction

The San Francisco Public Utility Commission's (SFPUC) Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant Program (Grant Program) provides funding for community-centered projects that provide a stormwater benefit in one or more of San Francisco's eight urban watersheds. The goal of the program is to empower local watershed stewards to deliver multi-benefit projects that reduce impervious surfaces, implement Green Infrastructure, and/or educate current and future SFPUC ratepayers about the importance of protecting our local watersheds and surrounding waterways. Please visit the Grant Program website at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants for more information on the grant program and to access the Grant Guidebook which should be read before you apply. If you have questions, please contact the grant administrator at WSG@SFWater.org.

Program Tracks

The Grant Program includes two tracks, Infrastructure and Stewardship. Each track has separate applications, requirements, and award criteria. Please review the Grant Guidebook for in-depth information on each track.

Infrastructure Projects will improve urban watersheds by removing impervious surfaces and replacing them with drought tolerant plantings and/or implementing Green Infrastructure (GI) to capture and treat stormwater.

Stewardship Projects will deliver educational programming and/or activate places or programs related to urban watersheds and stormwater

management in San Francisco. Some examples include development and delivery of a place-based watershed curriculum, a stormwater monitoring project, or an educational stormwater mural.

Program Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to receive funding under the Grant Program an applicant/project must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Local Stormwater Benefits

- a. Infrastructure Track: The proposed project must provide a stormwater benefit in one of the eight urban watersheds of the City and County of San Francisco and be publicly accessible or visible. Infrastructure Projects must remove impervious surfaces and/or implement a type of technology that helps manage stormwater.
- b. Stewardship Track: The proposed project must provide a stormwater focused service or program and/or an educational opportunity to San Francisco residents and SFPUC rate payers.

2. Project Feasibility Assessment: All applicants for Infrastructure Projects proposing to implement Technical GI that is designed to manage stormwater from a contributing area must complete a project feasibility site visit with the grant administrator prior to application.

3. Project Team Standing: All project team members must individually and collectively be in good standing on any City grant-funded projects. 'Good Standing' means that all active projects are on-schedule, with deliverables submitted on-time, and are not delinquent on grant requirements.

4. Project Team Qualifications: Technical GI projects that collect stormwater from adjacent surfaces and infiltrate it into the ground will need to have a licensed landscape architect or civil engineer on staff that can assess stormwater flows and design the proposed project to appropriately manage flows.

5. Educational Signage: Infrastructure projects must include a proposal for publicly visible signage that explains the stormwater benefit of the project, provides engaging watershed education for the public, and contributes to the aesthetic quality of the site.

Available Funding

Infrastructure Projects can receive up to **\$250,000** and Stewardship Projects can receive up to **\$75,000**. The grant budget developed as part of the grant application should adhere to the grant award limits and funding caps, and reflect the scale and effort required to implement the project. While applicants should request funding within the stated range, actual awards may be higher or lower depending on available resources.

Application Instructions

To apply for funding from the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program complete the following:

1. Download the Grant Guidebook at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants and read all sections related to the grant track you will be applying for.
2. If applying for an Infrastructure Project that will be implementing Technical GI designed to manage stormwater from a contributing area, reach out to the grant administrator at WSG@SFWater.org to schedule a project feasibility site visit. Although this is only required for Technical GI projects, all applicants are encouraged to reach out to the grant administrator for technical or administrative guidance prior to application. This site visit must be completed before the application deadline for Technical GI projects.
3. Download application materials: The application consists of 5 sections for Infrastructure Track and 4 sections for Stewardship Track. The Project Information Form, Project Budget, and Project Workplan are available for download on the grant website at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants. Be sure to choose the correct Project Information Form based on your project track as requirements vary between the Infrastructure and Stewardship track.

4. Complete the application and all required documents as follows. You can find more information on how to complete each section of the application and an application checklist further down on the grant solicitation.
 1. Project Information Form:
 - Minimum Qualifications
 - Project Information
 - Project Narrative
 - Community Engagement Plan
 - Grant Team Experience
 - Maintenance or Longevity Plan
 2. Project Concept Design & Site Photographs (Infrastructure Projects Only)
 3. Project Budget
 4. Project Schedule
 5. Letter(s) of Support
5. Submit the completed application and all required attachments to the application submittal link on the grant website by **November 16th, 2026, at 11:59pm PST**. Incomplete applications will not be eligible for grant funding. Applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail with the date and time of your application receipt within 5 business days of submittal. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail within 5 business days, please e-mail the grant administrator at WSG@SFWater.org.

Remember to review the Grant Guidebook and utilize the application checklist at the bottom of this document, prior to submitting your application.

Application Sections

1. Project Information Form:

The project information form gathers important information about the proposed project including minimum qualifications, project narrative, community engagement plan, grant team experience, and the maintenance or longevity plan. See more information on each section outlined below.

- **Minimum Qualifications:** this section outlines all minimum qualifications for grant application. The applicant should be able to answer yes to all minimum qualification questions.

- **Project Information:** This includes the project name, requested grant amount, and other important information.
- **Project Narrative:** In this section of the project information form, provide a description of the project activities, the local stormwater benefit they will provide, and the community you are serving. This section should include the scope of work, describe what deliverables will be developed, and outline the community's involvement in the project
- **Community Engagement Plan:** In this section the project information form, identify the project location, describe the surrounding community and how your project will address this community's needs. Include a detailed plan for how the project will engage community members in the design, planning and implementation processes if awarded a grant.
- **Grant Team Experience:** In this section of the project information form, describe your organization and/or project team's background, experience, and capacity to deliver the proposed project. All teams should demonstrate experience with grant administration, project management, community engagement and organizing. For Infrastructure Projects implementing Technical GI you will need to demonstrate sufficient technical expertise on your team, including having a licensed Landscape Architect or Civil Engineer that can assess stormwater flows on site and create technical designs for the proposed project. To the best of your ability, identify any subcontractors that you plan to work with to deliver the grant project in this section.
- **Maintenance or Longevity Plan:** For Infrastructure Projects, outline a detailed 5-year maintenance plan to be implemented after project completion. The plan should list all maintenance and stewardship activities for the completed project, how frequently they should be completed, and who will be responsible for completing them. If funding is required for maintenance, explain the plan for funding these maintenance tasks outside of the grant award. For Stewardship Projects, provide a longevity plan that outlines any plans and funding sources beyond the grant term to continue or preserve this work into

the future. This plan should show the ongoing impact the project will have on the community and watershed, beyond the grant investment and timeline.

2. Project Concept Design & Site Photographs (Infrastructure Projects Only):

For Infrastructure Projects, you will need to include a concept design as an attachment to the grant application. This should be a 10% conceptual design to show existing conditions and your proposed project site plan. This concept design must show an understanding of existing site conditions and how stormwater moves onsite. The 10% concept design shall include photographs showing the existing conditions of key locations, focusing on proposed location of project facilities. These photographs will help reviewers visualize your project by providing the context of what already exists in its place. See page 14 and 15 of the Grant Guidebook for items that must be included as part of the concept design.

3. Project Budget

Develop a grant budget using the required grant budget template available at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants. Project budgets should be well informed, reasonable, and show responsible use of grant funds. If awarded funding, this budget will become part of your grant agreement and will define your approved spending. As part of the grant budget template, you will outline other resources that support this project. These may include grants, donations, in-kind contributions, or volunteer labor. Note whether the resources are committed or pending.

Please note that grant funds can only be used to cover costs related to the implementation of the approved grant project - including planning, design, construction/implementation, and outreach/activation of the project. Grant funds cannot be used to pay for non-approved stormwater related elements of the project such as play equipment, furnishings, food and beverage, ongoing maintenance costs, etc. If you have questions about eligible and non-eligible costs when creating the grant budget, please review the information below, and reach out to the Grant Administrator for guidance if needed.

Ensure that you are using the budget template provided and are meeting the budget requirements outlined below.

Budget Requirements for Infrastructure Projects

1. At least 50% of the proposed project budget for Infrastructure Projects must go towards construction costs.
2. Project management and administration costs shall be no more than 15% of project budget.
3. Expenses must fall under the approved budget categories listed on the budget form, though variations from these approved costs can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with approval by the grant administrator.

For example eligible expenses see page 17 of the grant guidebook.

Budget Requirements for Stewardship Projects

1. At least 50% of the proposed project budget for Stewardship Projects must go to implementation and activation costs.
2. Project management and administration costs shall be no more than 15% of project budget.
3. Expenses must fall under the approved budget categories listed in the budget form, though variations from these approved costs can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with approval by the grant administrator.

For example eligible expenses see page 17 of the grant guidebook.

4. Project Schedule

Develop a schedule for your project using the required project schedule template available at [SFPUC.gov/WSGrants](https://sfpuc.gov/WSGrants). The schedule should include grant administration, stakeholder engagement, design/development, and key implementation/construction milestones. The schedule must propose starting project activities within 6 months of grant award. For Infrastructure Projects, the schedule should assume that SFPUC will take a maximum of 30 days to review each design deliverable (50% and 90% Construction Drawings) and must propose starting construction within 24 months of grant agreement execution.

5. Letter(s) of Support

Include one to two letters demonstrating project support. For projects on property that the applicant/grantee does not own, one letter of support must come from the property owner. If on property that is owned by San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), one letter of support must come from the SFUSD District Architect. If on property owned by the City, one letter of support must come from the City department with jurisdiction over the project area. The second letter of project support is optional and can come from community members and/or local organizations that will be impacted by the project.

Application Review & Award Process

Once the application deadline passes, the grant administrator will first review submissions to ensure they meet the minimum eligibility requirements. If an application does not meet these requirements, the grant administrator will notify the applicant that the application will not move forward in the review process.

Eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of City staff using the evaluation criteria below. Applications will be ranked within their program track, Infrastructure and Stewardship, based on these scores.

Following the application review period, the grant administrator will notify applicants if their project has been selected to receive a grant award. SFPUC may provide partial award of requested grant funds based on review of the project's proposed concept, budget, and eligible cost items. If an application is not selected for a grant award, the applicant may reapply during the next application cycle. Please note that while being selected is an exciting step forward, funding is not guaranteed until a grant agreement is fully executed. If we're unable to finalize an agreement within six months of the award notice, the SFPUC reserves the right to rescind grant award.

We aim to be good stewards of public funds and fair partners to all applicants. The SFPUC reserves the right to adjust funding amounts or reissue this solicitation.

Application Screening Criteria

The following criteria will be used to determine if an application meets eligibility requirements in order to move forward in the review process.

Category	Screening Criteria
Application Completeness	Each question of the application is complete, and all required attachments are included in the submittal.
Project Location	The proposed project or project activities take place in the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF)
Local Stormwater Benefit	Infrastructure Track: The proposed project provides a stormwater benefit in the City and County of San Francisco and is publicly visible or accessible. The Infrastructure Project removes impervious surfaces and/or implements a type of technology that helps manage stormwater. Stewardship Track: The proposed project provides a stormwater focused service or program and/or an educational opportunity to San Francisco residents and SFPUC rate payers.
Project Feasibility Site Visit (For Technical GI Only)	If an Infrastructure Project proposing to implement Technical GI that will be designed to manage stormwater from a contributing area, then a feasibility site visit has taken place with the grant administrator prior to application.
Good Standing	All project team members are individually and collectively in good standing on any City grant-funded projects. 'Good standing' means that all active projects are on-schedule, with deliverables submitted on-time, and are not delinquent on grant requirements.

Category	Screening Criteria
Project Team Qualifications	If an Infrastructure Project is proposing to implement Technical GI, the project team includes a licensed Landscape Architect or Civil Engineer that can assess stormwater flows and design the proposed project to appropriately manage flows.
Educational Signage	If an Infrastructure Project, application includes proposal for publicly visible signage that explains the stormwater benefit of the project, provides engaging watershed education for the public, and contributes to the aesthetic quality of the site.
Property Owner/City Agency Letter	If project is located on private property, a letter of support is required from the property owner. If the project is located on SFUSD property, a letter of support is required from the District Architect. If the project is located on City property, a letter of support is required from the City Agency with jurisdiction over the area. The letter of support must include an accurate description of the project concept in the application.

Application Evaluation Criteria

After applications are determined eligible, they will be reviewed and scored by a panel of City staff using the evaluation criteria for each Track, shown below.

Infrastructure Track Evaluation Criteria

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total 100 Point
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Urban Watershed Benefit	Applications will be evaluated based on the impact the project will have on the local watershed in San Francisco. Successful applications provide a clear and compelling description of what stormwater measures are being installed and how the project will benefit the local watershed.	15
Project Location	Applications will be evaluated based on whether they fall into a high or moderate priority Environmental Justice Area as defined on the following map (select Environmental Justice Communities layer from the Layers List). Full points will be given for projects that will be implemented in a high burden area and half points for projects that will be implemented in a moderate burden area. Projects that are not located in communities with environmental burdens are still eligible but will be given 0 points for this criterion.	10
Community Involvement and Impact	Applications will be evaluated based on (1) How the project will serve the needs of the surrounding community (2) How the community has shaped the project, and (3) How the project plans to integrate the community into project delivery if awarded. Outreach plans are robust, realistic, and include strategies to engage underrepresented voices, and to incorporate their feedback into the project.	15
Grant Team Experience	Applications will be evaluated based on how well the grant team demonstrated the skillset and capacity to deliver a successful project. All projects should have staff with grant administration, project management, community engagement and organizing experience and reflect the values and cultural competency of the community served. For Infrastructure Projects implementing Technical GI, a licensed Landscape Architect or Civil Engineer that	10

	can assess stormwater flows on site and design the proposed project to appropriately manage these flows is included on the project team.	
Concept Design	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of their 10% conceptual design. Successful application will include a concept design that shows an understanding of existing site conditions including utilities and soil conditions as well as how stormwater moves onsite. Site photographs shall be provided showing conditions of key locations on the property, focusing on proposed location of project facilities.	20
Project Budget and Other Resources	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the proposed project budget. Successful applications will use the Project Budget template available at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants . Project Budgets should be data driven, cost effective and reflect an understanding of City requirements. Competitive applications will identify and leverage additional resources that enhance feasibility and demonstrate community investment.	10
Project Schedule	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the proposed project schedule. Successful applications will use the provided Project Schedule template available at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants and include grant administration, stakeholder engagement, design/development, and key implementation/construction milestones. The schedule must propose starting project activities within 6 months of grant award and starting construction of the project	10

	within 24 months of grant agreement signing.	
Maintenance Plan	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the provided maintenance plan. Successful applications will outline a detailed 5-year maintenance plan with all maintenance and stewardship activities identified to be completed on a monthly/quarterly/annual basis. All activities should have a responsible party identified to be completing these activities.	10

Stewardship Track Evaluation Criteria

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total 100 Point
Urban Watershed Benefit	Applications will be evaluated based on the stormwater impact the project activities will have. This will be measured through educational content developed, impact of volunteer activities, number of students or SFPUC ratepayers reached, etc. Successful applications provide a clear description of the activities being applied for and how they will benefit the local watershed.	20
Project Location	Applications will be evaluated based on whether project activities will directly impact folks in high or moderate priority Environmental Justice Areas as defined on the following map (select Environmental Justice Communities layer from the Layers List). Full points will be given for projects that will be implemented in a high burden area and half points for projects that will be implemented in a moderate burden area. Projects that are not located in communities with environmental burdens are still eligible but will be given 0 points for this criterion.	10

Community Involvement and Impact	Applications will be evaluated based on (1) How the project will serve the needs of the surrounding community (2) How the community has shaped the project, and (3) How the project plans to integrate the community into the project activities if awarded. Outreach plans are robust, realistic, and include strategies to engage underrepresented voices, and to incorporate their feedback into the project.	20
Grant Team Experience	Applications will be evaluated based on how well the grant team demonstrated the skillset and capacity to deliver a successful project. All projects should have staff with grant administration, project management, community engagement and organizing experience and reflect the values and cultural competency of the community served.	15
Project Budget and Other Resources	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the proposed project budget. Successful applications will use the provided Project Budget template available at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants . Project Budgets should be data driven, cost effective and reflect an understanding of City requirements. Competitive applications will identify and leverage additional resources that enhance feasibility and demonstrate community investment.	15
Project Schedule	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the proposed project schedule. Successful applications will use the provided Project Schedule template available at SFPUC.gov/WSGrants and include grant administration, stakeholder engagement, deliverable development, and key implementation milestones. The schedule must propose starting project activities within 6 months of grant award.	10

Longevity Plan	Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and completeness of the longevity plan. Successful applications will describe the planned activities beyond the project scope that will ensure the success of the project/program into the future.	10
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Application Checklist

Applicants may use this application submittal checklist to prepare and gather items in advance of submitting the application.

Application Preparation

- ☐ I read the Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant Guidebook.
- ☐ I have confirmed that I meet all the eligibility requirements for my application track
- ☐ If applying for an Infrastructure Project implementing Technical GI, I have completed a feasibility site assessment with the grant administrator. For further information, see the Grant Guidebook.
- ☐ I have received a letter of support from the appropriate contact for my project application. For further information, see the Grant Guidebook.

Application Completion

- ☐ I have downloaded and completed the appropriate Project Information Form for my project, Stewardship Project Information Form or Infrastructure Project Information Form, including the following sections:
 - ☐ Minimum Qualifications
 - ☐ Project Information
 - ☐ Project Narrative
 - ☐ Community Engagement Plan
 - ☐ Grant Team Experience
 - ☐ Maintenance or Longevity Plan
- ☐ I have developed all required documentation for my application submittal:
 - ☐ Concept Design & Site Photographs (Infrastructure projects only)
 - ☐ Project Schedule (using standard template)



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- ☐ Project Budget (using standard template)
 - ☐ Property Owner or City Agency Letter of Support & Optional Community Letter of Support
 - ☐ I am ready to submit my complete application with attachments to the application submittal link at [SFPUC.gov/WSGrants](https://sfpuc.gov/WSGrants).