Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Grantmaking Program

February 2019

Introduction and Purpose

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (Midpen) Grantmaking Program will make $250,000 in funding available to public agencies, nonprofits, K-12 schools and academic institutions, and private organizations to:

- Support projects that further Midpen's mission;
- Build the capacity of academic and nonprofit institutions in order to sustain and grow the conservation field; and
- Facilitate Midpen's mission and work by building and strengthening partnerships.

Who We Are

Midpen is an independent special district that has preserved over 63,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves. Its purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. Midpen's mission is:

To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

Funding Priorities

Grantmaking will be guided by an emphasis on investments that reflect a regional focus and provide avenues for partnership, both with the Midpen as well as among other stakeholders. Applicants will be directed to apply for one of the three funding categories described below, although multi-benefit projects are encouraged.

1. ## Applied Science

   Proposals under the Applied Science category should focus on academic or practitioner science projects that support the protection and enhancement of natural resources on Midpen lands. The purpose of this support is to develop and disseminate information that advances scientific understanding of natural processes. Proposals submitted in this round must focus on *Our Changing Ecosystems*, described below.

   Our Changing Ecosystems
   A host of challenges face our world today. Climate change is impacting ecosystems in a myriad of known and unknown ways, from increased variability in precipitation and vulnerability to fire, to changes in species distributions and dispersal patterns. As a result, ecosystems are facing a combination of accelerated and new stressors, inhibiting the ability to rebound from any one event.

   Proposals should focus on research that seeks to understand these changes, with an emphasis on how to improve land and resource stewardship practices in response. Types of projects may

include applied academic research or proof-of-concept, and may focus on a variety of topics relating to our changing ecosystems, including, but not limited to climate change and carbon sequestration, habitat fragmentation, fire ecology, drought and flood management or watershed function, plant pathogens, population shifts, or species responses to habitat loss or climate change.

Example projects:

- Research that examines the ecology and potential mitigation strategies to combat the spread of Phytophthora;
- Vegetation mapping that contributes to an understanding of how ecosystems are changing (e.g., fine-scale fire risk mapping that results in a coordinated approach to vegetation management), or;
- Regional carbon sequestration planning or implementation on working lands.

2. Network and Partnership Support

California's largest and most pressing challenges require working together to discover and implement innovative solutions. Landscape-scale stewardship is critical to ensuring solutions are scalable and have broad impact. Consequently, this funding category focuses on grant proposals that cultivate, sustain, or grow established conservation networks.

Although future funding rounds may allow for establishment of new working groups or networks, in this round only projects submitted by established groups or networks will be considered. Groups or networks should be primarily oriented towards topics that relate to land management, conservation, or public access to outdoor recreation. Proposals should focus on developing organizational capacity or implementing projects to engage the group on working together towards developing shared priorities, exchanging best practices, or collaborating on research or educational outreach and education/interpretation, etc. Types of support can include but are not limited to meeting facilitation or other consulting support, staff time for network participation, outreach, meeting supplies, etc.

Example projects:
- Development of a data sharing system for a network;
- Consulting and staff time support to build a strategic plan for a working group to coalesce around a shared understanding for how participants will work together;
- Consulting or staff time support to build organizational capacity to devote time towards building the network and dedicate time towards regular communication and collaborate under a joint vision; or
- Support to organize convenings to share research and best practices related to natural resource management.

Please note that funds cannot be used for policy or advocacy and therefore lobbying support is not an eligible project type.

3. Access, Interpretation and Education

Funding for access, environmental interpretation, and education will be directed towards facilitating equal opportunity for all residents to take advantage of Midpen lands while fostering an appreciation for open space protection, nature study and appreciation, cultural resource understanding, and environmental stewardship. Proposals should focus on projects that contribute understanding and appreciation of our natural systems, facilitate opportunities for outdoor engagement and nature-based experiences, especially for underserved communities, or provide nature-based educational and interpretive experiences for children or adults.

Funding can be used for staff time to create or execute programming, provide transportation to opportunities for outdoor engagement or nature-based experiences, facilitate knowledge of outdoor recreational opportunities, access to the outdoors, environmental stewardship activities, etc. However, transportation-related projects must be to and from Midpen preserves.

Example Projects:
- Public access or educational programs for families or students;
- Develop and/or improve interpretive signs and services along trails;
- Complete gaps in a regional trail system that connect communities to trails and open space; or
- Outreach and activity programs that encourage outdoor engagement and nature-based experiences in underserved communities.

Funding

A total of $250,000 in grant funding is available in FY18-19. Two funding tiers are available in this round:

- Sprouts Program for projects up to $25,000; and
- Roots Program for projects up to $50,000.

Applicants should select the program that matches the amount of funding requested. All three funding priorities are eligible for either the Roots or Sprouts Programs. Application and reporting requirements will vary between the two programs, with the Roots Program requiring additional detail in the proposal during proposal development and reporting (see Grant Agreement and Reporting for detail).

General Requirements and Grant Restrictions

Eligible organizations

Eligible applicants must be a public agency, K-12 school or academic institution, or non-profit organization (501(c)(3). Applicants with eligible projects that are not one of these entities such as a private organization may work through a fiscal agent to apply as long as the fiscal sponsorship is established before application submittal and the project has a primarily charitable, scientific, or educational purpose.

Faculty at accredited academic institutions must sponsor research-related projects; practitioner science projects may require faculty sponsorship and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Grants Officer prior to application submittal to establish whether a faculty sponsorship will be required.

Project Location

Projects without a field work component need not take place within the Midpen's boundaries but all projects must support the Midpen's mission. All proposed field work must take place on Midpen preserves and transportation-related projects must be to and from Midpen preserves. Please work with the Midpen staff prior to application submittal to discuss potential projects.

Grant period

The project performance period is three years after the grant agreement is executed (anticipated September 2019).

Eligible Costs and Funding Restrictions

Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used to cover expenses related to the implementation of proposed events or programs. Matching funds are not required but we encourage applicants to look for creative ways to combine funds to create a more complete or effective project. Project costs must be consistent with the approved project and incurred during the performance period as specified in the grant agreement. Below illustrates examples of eligible costs:

Budget Item	Eligible Cost	Required Documentation
Salaries, wages, and benefits	Salaries and wages of employees employed by the Grantee who is directly engaged in the execution of the grant project. Benefits include employer contribution of fringe benefits.	Timesheets or similar documentation detailing days and hours worked on the project.
Consultants and contractors	Direct consultant and contractual services necessary to achieve the objectives of the grant.	Invoices from consultant/contractor identifying expenditure, services performed and period of services.
Travel	Travel costs associated with travel to and from project sites, meetings, etc. directly related to the grant project. Costs must be considered reasonable and necessary for the completion of the project.	Receipts identifying travel costs (i.e. lodging, rental cars). Mileage must be documented by either employee travel claims or vehicle mileage logs for vehicles owned by the Grantee.
Equipment and supplies	Supplies required for project or program execution.	Receipts identifying item purchased, cost, and date of

		purchase. Use of Grantee equipment must be substantiated with an equipment usage log that identifies the equipment used, rate, and total rental cost.
Indirect and other	Indirect Costs are costs associated with doing business that are of a general nature and are incurred to benefit two or more functions within the Grantee organization. See indirect cost policy below.	Applied on a percentage basis of direct costs.

Ineligible costs: The following activities and costs will not be covered by this funding:
- Conducting lobbying, carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation or political decision making;
- Influencing the outcome of any specific election through any means;
- Purposes other than those that are charitable, scientific, or educational;
- Fundraising purposes;
- Budget shortfalls or endowment funds;
- Scholarships, fellowships, or grants to individuals;
- Land acquisition or real estate purchases;
- Costs incurred before or after the project performance period; or
- Late fees, penalties, and bank fees.

Indirect cost policy: A maximum of 15% of each grant may be allocated toward indirect costs. Direct costs include all of the expenses that are required for project execution and can be directly linked to the project. This includes, but is not limited to personnel, consultants, equipment, and capital expenditures. Indirect costs are those expenses that cannot be linked directly to the project. Indirect costs can be a separate line item in the budget but the 15% allocation must exclude the following direct costs: consultants, contractors, and sub-grants; equipment and capital expenditures; fee-for-service charges; and fiscal sponsor fees.

Application Process and Submittal
All application submittals will take place through the AmpliFund online platform at:

   https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/opportunities/midpeninsula-regional-open-space-district

Applicants will be directed to create a username and password and upload the required information online. When beginning an application users will be directed to select from either the Sprouts or Roots Programs and then select the applicable funding priority. See Appendix A for application requirements.

Midpen is not soliciting, does not wish to receive, and will not treat any information received as part of a grant application as proprietary or confidential information.

If you need help with the online portal contact Melanie Askay at maskay@openspace.org.

Timeline

Timeline is approximate and is estimated as follows:

Activity	Date
Application period opens	Feb. 11, 2019
Applications due	March 25, 2019
Board of Directors Review	June 26, 2019
Award notification	June 27, 2019
Approximate earliest date project can begin	Sept. 1 2019
Deadline for executed grant agreement	December 2019
Project end date	September 2022, or three years following agreement execution

Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by Midpen staff according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined below. Grant awards may be less than the full amount requested in the proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

Sprouts Program (up to $25,000)

Criteria	Points
Fit with program priorities and overall project impact	30
Project readiness – is the project timeline feasible and is it likely to be completed within the grant performance period?	20
Organizational capacity – does the applicant have demonstrated capacity to take on this type of project and does the organization have a track record for success?	15
Leadership and innovation – is the organization taking the lead in establishing a new methodology, program, or management technique?	5
Additional project characteristics (e.g., multi-benefits)	5
New Midpen Grantee	5
Maximum points	**80**

Criteria	Points
Fit with program priorities and overall project impact	20
Project readiness – is the project timeline feasible and is it likely to be completed within the grant performance period?	15
Project sustainability after funds are expended - is this project likely to continue after the funding is complete? Has future funding been identified	10
Organizational capacity – does the applicant have demonstrated capacity to take on this type of project and does the organization have a track record for success?	10
Collaboration and partnership - will this project establish new external relationships or deepen existing relationships?	10
Leadership and innovation – is the organization taking the lead in establishing a new methodology, program, or management technique?	5
Additional project characteristics (e.g., multi-benefit project)	5
New Midpen Grantee	5
Total	**80**

Grant Agreement and Reporting

Invoicing and reimbursement: Funds can be disbursed after a fully executed grant agreement is in place. Midpen will issue payments on a reimbursement basis, barring exceptions for projects with demonstrable need (see below). Reimbursement requests can be submitted as frequently as quarterly but at least annually if reimbursable expenses are accrued.

Advance payments may be considered at the Midpen's discretion and with demonstrable need. No advance payment shall exceed 25% of the total grant award. Advances must be fully utilized within a six-month period unless additional time is approved by Midpen.

Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by documentation that details the work performed over the reporting period, a budget report that demonstrates which funds are being requested for reimbursement against the fund balance, and appropriate receipts or other necessary documentation.

Loss of funding: The following are examples of actions that may result in loss of funding:

- Grantee fails to obtain a grant agreement;
- Grantee fails to complete the funded project (conform substantially to the agreement);
- Grantee fails to submit all documentation within the time periods specified in the grant agreement;
- Grantee fails to secure CEQA or other necessary project permits;
- Grantee changes the project scope without the concurrence of Midpen; or
- Grantee terminates the project by written notice 30 days in advance.

Reporting: The Grantee is required to keep Midpen appraised of the project's progress throughout the project performance period. Roots Grantees must submit annual reports detailing project progress along with a financial report to describe how the funds were spent based on the budget submitted. Sprouts Grantees will not be required to submit annual narrative reports but will be asked for periodic updates.

Roots Program Grantees should submit an annual narrative report (5 pages or fewer) that includes answers to the following questions:

- List your SMART objectives and progress made against each of the objectives;
- List any other highlights from this period that are important to share (e.g., new opportunities discovered, partnerships developed/deepened);
- Were any anticipated activities or milestone delayed? If so, describe the reason for the delay and how this might impact the project's goals, budget, or timeline;
- Explain any proposed changes to the approach, project, timeline, or budget for the upcoming year; and
- Project budget against total expenditures.

Changes or amendments: Grantees seeking changes to the scope or budget (greater than 10% from a budget category) must obtain Midpen's approval. Changes in project scope must continue to meet the need cited in the original application. Grantee will jeopardize funding should changes be made without prior notice to and approval by Midpen.

Audit and Accountability: Projects are subject to audit annually and for three years following the final payment of grant funds. If the project is selected for audit, Grantee will be contacted in advance. The audit shall include all books, papers, accounts, documents, or other records of Grantee, as they relate to the project. All project expenditure documentation should be available for an audit, whether paid with grant funds or other funds. Grantee must maintain an accounting system that accurately reflects fiscal transactions, with the necessary controls and safeguards to provide an adequate audit trail.

Project Recognition: Grantees will be required to identify the funding source during public announcements relating to the project. Printed or web-based public materials relating to the project should acknowledge Midpen as a funding source. In addition, if the Grantee uses social media, the Grantee should acknowledge the project and Midpen funding at major milestones,

as well as other sources of public outreach, such as newsletters or blog posts whenever possible.

In addition, the Grants Program will prepare an annual report to the Board of Directors on the Grantmaking Program that details the proposals received as well as those selected for funding, and the results of research received. Grantees must be available to present to the Board annually, if requested.

Public announcements relating to the project should be listed in the Grantees annual grant reports to Midpen (Roots Grantees), or in disbursement requests (Sprouts Grantees).

Restrictions: Eligible projects must not result in permanent damage and/or impairment to habitats or natural resources on Midpen lands and will be in compliance with Midpen's Permit to Enter procedures (required for each research project).

Questions and Contact

Research projects are required to consult with Midpen staff prior to application submittal to determine whether faculty sponsorship is required. Other applicants are also encouraged to consult with Midpen staff prior to application submittal.

For questions, please contact Melanie Askay, Grants Specialist, at maskay@openspace.org, or 650-691-6507.

Appendix A – Grant Application

Applicants will select the appropriate funding program (Sprouts Program for proposals requesting $25,000 or less and Roots Program for proposals requesting between $25,001 to $50,000).

Basic Information
- Organization name, address, and tax status
- Contact information
- Applicable funding priority
- Executive summary
- Required documents
    - Project budget that includes other sources of funding, along with a short narrative describing how the funds will be spent.
    - Project workplan that includes a timeline
    - Bios of key members of project team
    - Map of project location (if applicable)
    - Two years of audited financial documents or documented relationship with fiscal sponsor. If audited documents are not available then non-audited financial documents will be accepted.
    - Documentation of relationship with faculty sponsor (if applicable)

Sprouts Program
The proposal narrative should be no more than three pages, with bulleted answers acceptable, and answer the following questions:

- Describe the project, including the purpose, goals, and how it fits into Midpen's mission and priorities.
- Describe your organization, including the mission and vision. Describe the organization's capacity to achieve these goals.
- If applicable, list all other organizations that will be involved in the project, including Midpen.
- Describe the expected results and how they will advance the goals set forth by the applicable funding priority.

Roots Program
The proposal narrative should be no more than six pages and include answers to the following questions:

- Describe the project, including the purpose, goals, and how it fits into Midpen's mission and priorities. Include answers to the following questions:

- How does the program/project fit into the long-term goals of your organization?
- What makes the program/project well positioned to succeed? What results are you currently achieving in this area?
- Explain how you will implement the program/project, including key steps/stages, activities, and milestones, the timeline for implementation, and how it will be staffed.
- If applicable, what partnerships do you have or will you develop to support your effort?

- Describe your organization, including the mission and vision. Describe the organization's capacity to achieve these goals.
- If applicable, list all other organizations that will be involved in the project, including Midpen.
- Provide a short, bulleted list of target results for this grant. These should be structured as SMART objectives (specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, and time-specific). *Note: SMART objectives will form the basis of grant expectations and will be included in the grant agreement and reporting requirements.*
- What challenges do you expect to encounter, and how will you address them?
- How will you measure the success of your effort? What indicators will you track, what methods will you use, and how will you use/share what you learn?