



Frequently Asked Questions

Grantmaking Program 2025 Grant Opportunity

Updated September 25, 2025

On September 9, 2025, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) announced \$300,000 in funding will be available through the 2025 Grantmaking Program grant round. Organizations are invited to submit pre-proposals for projects that further scientific understanding of our natural world, build capacity in the conservation field, or support nature-focused access, interpretation, and/or education for the public.

The following information is provided in addition to the request for proposals which can be accessed at openspace.org/grants. This FAQ sheet will be updated regularly. Updates will be shared as necessary via email to contacts subscribed to our [Grantmaking Program interest list](#)

A webinar with an overview of the funding opportunity and application forms will be held October 9, 2025, at 12:00 pm on Microsoft Teams. The webinar recording will be available on openspace.org/grants.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

How many awards are expected? Midpen's Grantmaking Program has a total of \$300,000 in funding available for the 2025 grant opportunity. Approximately six to ten proposals may be selected for awards.

What is the maximum size grant possible? Tier 1 grants are up to \$30,000. Tier 2 grants are up to \$60,000. Partial awards may be offered.

Is there a grant match requirement? Matching or in-kind funds are not required.

What is your indirect cost policy? A maximum of 10% of each grant may be allocated toward indirect costs. Indirect costs can be a separate line item in the project budget, but the 10% allocation must exclude the following direct costs (expenses required for project execution that can be directly linked to the project): personnel, consultants, contractors, and sub-grants; equipment and capital expenditures; fee-for service charges; and fiscal sponsor fees.

Are applicants able to submit more than one pre-proposal? Yes, multiple pre-proposals for separate projects may be submitted to either funding tier.

Is it possible to receive more than one grant award if more than one project proposal is submitted? Yes, however the Grantmaking Review Committee will be considering the technical review scores based on the evaluation criteria listed in the RFP as well as the balance and distribution of funds by geographic area, project type, type of organization, and availability of funds.

Can projects support more than one funding priority? Yes, if appropriate, reference how the project meets more than one funding priority. Midpen seeks to support projects that fall into one of three funding priorities:

- *Applied Science* - Advancing scientific understanding of natural processes and promoting environmental stewardship.
- *Network and Partnership Support* - Cultivating, sustaining and growing conservation networks.
- *Access, Interpretation, and Education* - Educating and promoting open space protection.

GRANT PERIOD

When can funding begin to be used? The earliest grant funding agreements are anticipated to be executed (signed by all parties) is July 2026, depending on length of time to finalize individual grant agreements with awardees. Expenses incurred prior to the date the agreement is executed will not be eligible for reimbursement.

How long will the funding period be? Up to two years from the date the agreement is executed, following board approval of awards.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

How are community needs considered for this grant opportunity? Midpen welcomes proposals that serve all communities and encourages proposals that serve under-resourced communities and/or communities that have been under-represented in access to open space.

Do either the project/program or participants need to be within Midpen's jurisdiction? While applicant organizations do not need to be within [Midpen's jurisdiction](#), beneficiaries and/or participants of funded programs or projects must be within Midpen's jurisdiction.

PROPOSALS

Why are pre-proposals an initial step? The pre-proposal is intended to reduce the burden on applicants while still providing sufficient information to evaluate proposal alignment with funding priorities.

Will letters of support be accepted at the pre-proposal or full proposal stage? No, letters of support are not required.

When will invitations be provided for full proposals? Applicants will be notified on December 12, 2025 about their proposals. Tier 1 applicants will be notified of advancement to final round and Tier 2 applicants will be notified of advancement to full proposal.

How will proposals be evaluated? Please refer to the evaluation criteria listed in the RFP. **Update 9/25/2025:** Please note the page limits stated in the pre-proposal and full proposal. It is important to adhere to these guidelines.

Can applicants request a consultation? Grants program staff are available for individual consultation. Applicants are encouraged to schedule consultations *prior* to submission of their pre-proposal. Contact grants@openspace.org. Webinar October 9, 2025 at 12:00 pm. Sign up [here](#).

Applied Science applicants: Before submitting a pre-proposal a consultation with the Grants Program staff is required to discuss the proposed project and determine whether faculty sponsorship is needed.

How will feedback be made available? Feedback on the pre-proposals and full proposals not selected will be provided upon request following Midpen board approval of final awards.

UPDATE 10/20/25 We are having trouble with the PDF of the Proposal Form. Can we use a Word version? Yes, you may use a Word version of the form. You can either convert it or reach out to grants@openspace.org. It is also okay if the formatting is off.

ELIGIBILITY

What does it mean to be *grassroots* or *early-stage*? Grassroots refers to an organization with net assets minus the value of land, building and equipment totaling \$1.2 million or less. This information is found on the organization's 990 form. If Form 990-EZ is used, the organization is considered grassroots. If the applicant is a fiscally-sponsored initiative, it is considered grassroots. Early stage refers to the maturation of the proposed project or program.

Update to *grassroots* definition: Grassroots refers to an organization with liquid assets totaling \$1.2 million or less. Liquid assets are those readily available for use, such as unrestricted cash, savings, temporary investments, and accounts receivable. A nonliquid asset is a property or item that cannot be quickly converted into cash without substantial effort, time, or loss in value (such as land, building and equipment). For the purposes of this RFP, an endowment is also considered a nonliquid asset.

Eligible Project Summary:

	Early-Stage Project	Existing/Ongoing Project
Grassroots Organization	Eligible	Eligible
Large Organization	Eligible	Not Eligible

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

Are student researchers able to apply? A student researcher can apply under the sponsorship of a faculty member at an accredited academic institution.

Are applicants from prior Grantmaking grant rounds eligible to apply? Yes.

AWARDS

When will awards be announced? Midpen's board of directors are anticipated to approve awards in May 2026. Once the board meeting date is set, openspace.org/grants will be updated and the Grantmaking Program interest list notified. Please sign up for the [Grantmaking Program interest list](#) to receive a public meeting notice in advance of the meetings.

How will the award selections be made? Midpen's Grantmaking Program Review Committee will develop grant award recommendations to present to Midpen's executive team and general manager. The general manager will consider the comments and recommendations from the entire review process and will determine the final grant award recommendations to be presented to the Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee for consideration prior to presenting the recommendations to the full

board of directors for funding approval. The board has sole and absolute discretion to approve or reject funding for a project. Upon approval, the Grants Program team will work with selected applicants to develop grant funding agreements.