

**2019 Conservation Excellence Grant Cycle**

March 28, 2019

The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO) is pleased to announce a conservation excellence grant cycle that will award up to $200,000 in 2019.

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAM:** This program seeks to fund projects that address issues and challenges the conservation community is facing, including pilot projects and research that meet GOCO’s mission to protect open space and natural areas of statewide significance in Colorado. GOCO has focused on funding projects that advance land conservation on a regional or statewide scale. This does not mean that local land conservation is not important, but that outcomes of funded projects should benefit and be replicable by or transferable to other organizations. Proposals should fall in one or more of the following four categories:

* Policy
* Standards and Education
* Community Engagement
* Stewardship and Long-term Sustainability

Examples of the kinds of projects this program is designed to fund is listed below. (This is not meant to be a comprehensive list, and your project does not have to fit into one of these topic areas to be considered).

* Stewardship studies and education. Development of processes, recommendations, and guidance to deal with specific and emerging stewardship challenges.
* Community engagement. Engagement that informs a land conservation organization’s work, leading to an increase in the relevance and sustainability of the land conservation entity, while working to identify and address community needs.
* Advancing statewide excellence and standards. Collaboration between conservation organizations including shared services and education, developing tools to enhance organizational efficiencies, and other projects that address challenges facing the greater conservation community.
* Solutions to the future transfer and/or amendment of conservation easements. Projects or programs that help address the challenges in transferring or accepting potential and/or actual orphan easements.
* Education to help meet Colorado standards for conservation excellence, certification, or accreditation. Technical assistance or educational offerings that fill an unmet need.

The kinds of projects that will not fit into this program include:

* Projects focused on advocacy, such as an effort to poll and/or build support for a new or renewed open space tax
* Strategic planning for a land trust or open space program
* Open space planning in limited geographic areas
* General capacity building for a land trust or open space program
* Land acquisitions
* Construction of recreational amenities
* Restoration of land, riparian areas, or infrastructure

**FUNDING:** **Each grant request is limited to up to $100,000.**

**IMPORTANT DATES: Applications are due to GOCO through the GOCO Grantee Portal by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2019.** *You can start your application on the portal any time after March 28, 2019.* GOCO staff are available to review draft applications. Please submit your draft application as a word document to Alex Castino, [acastino@goco.org](mailto:acastino@goco.org) by April 30, 2019. The Programs Committee meeting to discuss staff’s funding recommendations will be held in September and the GOCO Board decision for this cycle is tentatively scheduled for September 26-27, 2019. Please check GOCO’s Board page for any changes to the meeting schedule: <http://www.goco.org/about-us/board>.

**GRANT AGREEMENT:** If you are awarded a grant, we will work with you to develop and sign a grant agreement that requires compliance with GOCO’s [policies](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/GOCO%20Policies%20and%20Procedures%203-15-18.pdf) and [procedures](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/Competitive%20Grant%20Program%20Procedures%200118.pdf).

**TIMELINE:** Successful applicants will have 24 months from the date of the grant award to complete the project.

**MATCH REQUIREMENTS:** GOCO will fund up to 75% of a project’s eligible costs; therefore, a minimum of 25% match from other sources is required, and at least 12.5% must be in cash. The rest of the match may be in-kind donations.

**BUDGET FORM:** The project budget must be submitted in [GOCO’s required format](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/Conservation%20Excellence%20Budget%20Form_0.xls). Please be as accurate and detailed as possible when budgeting project costs. The budget should include each cost that GOCO funds and matching funds will contribute toward. If there are separate segments of your proposal, you should break out the budget into separate segments and list the line items associated with each segment accordingly. Feel free to add rows and/or columns or otherwise manipulate the budget form to fit your particular project while ensuring that your modifications do not erroneously alter any calculated fields.

Eligible costs are costs that are necessary to the project that GOCO can fund or that can be used as match, either as cash or as in-kind donations. All items in the budget must be eligible costs even if only matching funds are applied to them.

Any cost that would be eligible for GOCO funding but that is donated or discounted can count as an in-kind contribution. In-kind contributions are donations of services for which the grantee would have otherwise paid. Examples include donated meeting space for which the grantee would otherwise have to pay; a discounted rate from a consultant (for example, if the consultant typically charges $100 per hour but charges you only $90 per hour, the $10 per-hour difference is an in-kind contribution); and donation of professional services such as map production and printing. Staff time and grantee-provided services and meeting space are not eligible as in-kind match.

The following chart provides some examples of eligible and ineligible costs, but it is not comprehensive. Please discuss any potential project costs with GOCO to determine their eligibility prior to applying.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Eligible Costs** | **Ineligible Costs** |
| Consultant costs | Fundraising costs |
| Professional services, such as legal, facilitation, professional planning, etc. | Volunteer or board member time |
| Staff time\* of grantee and partners on this project when it can be shown that staff time is the most effective and strategic way of completing this project and that the regular duties of that staff person are being completed in a different way | Staff time on existing projects and regular duties |
| Specific trainings that are germane to the issue/topic being addressed through the project | Unrelated conference costs, recurring staff training, tuition for degree programs |
| Direct costs of the project, such as inventories, design, GIS/mapping, printing, etc. | Organization website design |
| Public input meeting costs, such as meeting rooms, mailings, travel\*\*, etc. | Any meeting costs not associated with the project |
|  | Financial audits |
|  | Administrative and overhead costs; costs of existing operations or equipment |
|  | Certification and accreditation fees |
|  | Costs incurred for the project prior to the date of the grant award unless otherwise approved by GOCO |

**\*** Staff expenses: If the applicant expects staff time to exceed 50% of the total budget, GOCO’s prior approval is required. All requests to include staff time in the budget must be fully explained, and requests for reimbursement of staff time must be well-documented.

\*\* Travel/meal expenses: Please be specific as to whom these expenses will cover. GOCO does not cover a “per diem” because we can only pay for expenses that are documented by receipts. At the application stage, you can estimate what these costs will be and submit final numbers once the travel is complete.

**PAYMENTS:** The costs of the project will need to be paid by the grantee and will be reimbursed by GOCO only upon documentation of eligible expenditures and satisfaction of reporting requirements. GOCO may pay up to 50% of the grant award upon satisfactory completion of a mid-project [progress report](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/CE%20-%20Progress%20Report%20Form%20-%20April%202018%20update.doc.docx); the balance is payable upon GOCO’s approval of a [final report](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/CE%20-%20Final%20Report%20Form%20-%20April%202018%20update.docx). In cases where the board sets special funding conditions, GOCO may also prescribe an alternate method of payment. As with all grants, payments are subject to sufficient net lottery proceeds being available to GOCO.

**PROJECT CHANGES:** Any changes that arise during the course of the project, or modifications the grantee desires, such as changing the scope of the project, matching resources, total project cost, etc., must be requested in writing and approved in advance by GOCO. The funding award may be modified to account for substantive changes to the project between the application and project completion. Grants may be reduced but not increased.

**CONTACT:** Please contact GOCO’s Land Protection Program Officer, Alex Castino at (303) 226-4517 or acastino@goco.org if you have any questions about these requirements or about the application and grant cycle.

Thank you for your interest in GOCO’s conservation excellence grant program.

1. Using the Application Checklist as a guide, you’ll create up to three documents for submission through the portal.
2. To start an application, follow [this link](https://goco.foundationconnect.org/GrantsManager/Pages/GrantApplication.aspx?OrgID=00Do0000000Y65x&CampaignId=7011J0000011pr8&IsDirect=true) and login to or register for the GOCO Grantee Portal. **Please use only this link to start a grant application; other links from previous grant cycles will not work properly and may result in your application not being properly submitted.**
3. When you log in, you will be on the new application page. If instructional text isn’t displaying properly, it will after you enter a Project Title and press Save.
4. Complete the portal application:
   1. Fill in all fields in the “Details” tab. (This is general information like contact information, the project title, amount requested, etc.) All fields are required, except where noted.
   2. Upload the documents in the “Attachments” tab.
      1. Each document must be 25MB or smaller.
      2. To upload, click the “Select” button to locate the document. You will need to then click “Upload” to attach it to the application.
   3. When you are ready to submit your application, go to the “Review & Submit” tab and click the Submit button. (The grant application will include a particular timeframe during which you are able to submit the application. Please make sure you’re within this timeframe.)
5. Once you have submitted your application, you will be able to view it through the portal, but you will not be able to edit it. (If GOCO staff finds something you need to change in the application, they’ll give you instructions on how to do that.)

Other useful information:

* You can register for the portal and start your application at any time during the process, but please keep in mind that there may be a particular timeframe during which you may *submit* your application.
* You can save your application and return to it at any time prior to submission. The only field you need to complete to save your application is the Project Title.
* **To access your application after you’ve started it, login at** [**http://tinyurl.com/GOCOGranteePortal**](http://tinyurl.com/GOCOGranteePortal)**. (You cannot use this link to start a new application; instead use the link in paragraph 2 above.)**
* To edit an in-process application, click the icon in the “Edit” column of the portal dashboard. It looks like this:



* To see a read-only version of your application, click the icon in the “View” column. It looks like this:



* When working on or viewing an application, you can return to the portal dashboard by clicking the “My Submissions” link. (Just be sure to save your application first!)
* If you forget your portal username or password, please don’t create a new portal account. Instead:
  + To recover your username, send an e-mail from the address you used during registration to [portal@goco.org](mailto:portal@goco.org). Include the first name, last name, and organization you used when you registered for the portal.
  + If you forget your password, reset it using the “Can’t access your account?” link on the portal registration page.
* A grant application started on or submitted through the portal is visible only to the individual who created it; no one else at your organization will be able to access it without being granted permission to do so. If someone else needs to be able to access the online application, have that person establish a portal account. Then, you can e-mail [portal@goco.org](mailto:portal@goco.org) and ask that the application be shared with the other person.

##### Please submit the following three documents through GOCO’s online portal by the deadline shown on page 2 to complete your application. Each document must be less than 25MB.

**DOCUMENT 1: APPLICATION**

A single PDF or DOC file of the following information for your project *in the same order as listed below*:

1. Summary Form
2. Workplan/timeline with narrative
3. Color maps (If your project will occur in or affect a certain geographic area, please provide maps designating that area. Also designate any appropriate uses or plans on the map that will aid reviewers in understanding the proposal.)
4. Selection criteria answers (Please include the questions with your answers.)
5. Letter of support from governing board of applicant
6. Other letters of support if applicable
7. Funding commitment letters

**DOCUMENT 2: BUDGET**

A separate Excel file of the [conservation excellence budget form](http://www.goco.org/sites/default/files/Conservation%20Excellence%20Budget%20Form_0.xls).

**DOCUMENT 3: ORGANIZATIONAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

A separate PDF or DOC file containing your Organizational Stewardship Report, unless you have submitted one in the last two years or GOCO agrees to waive this requirement.(Contact GOCO staff for the report form.)

**GOCO staff will conduct an initial review of your application within two weeks and might ask you to revise the application or provide additional supporting documentation.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **APPLICANT** | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Applicant Contact Name: | | | Title: |
| Telephone: | Email: | | Are you the primary contact for this grant:  ☐ YES ☐ NO |
|  | | | |
| **PARTNER (IF APPLICABLE)** | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Partner Contact Name: | | | Title: |
| Telephone: | Email: | | Are you the primary contact for this grant:  ☐ YES ☐ NO |
|  | | | |
| **PROJECT** | | | |
| Project Title\*: | | | |
| Grant Request: $ | | Total Project Cost: $ | |
| **PLEASE BE SURE THE DOLLAR FIGURES ABOVE MATCH YOUR BUDGET.** | | | |
| County or Counties: | | | |
| Brief Project Description (Please describe your project in 250 words or less. This summary should include a brief description of the elements of your project as well as the benefits and need.): | | | |
| Budget Narrative (Please explain each of the items on the budget form, including the tasks contractors will perform. Any staff time in the budget should be explained, including how the numbers were developed, what increase in staff time they represent, and why staff time is necessary to complete the project.): | | | |

*I certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the applicant and that, if awarded a conservation excellence grant for this project, the applicant will comply with GOCO’s requirements for conservation excellence grant administration, including matching and general reporting requirements.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*An authorized person must sign here, such as the applicant’s executive director,*

*county commission chairperson, or city council chairperson.*

\*The project title will be used in all press releases, reports, and other public documents.

Please replace this blank page with your proposed workplan/timeline and a narrative explaining each of the items included. The workplan/timeline should include the individual goals and tasks of the project and their expected completion dates.

Describe your proposal below, answering each of the questions with as much detail as possible. **Please include the questions with your answers.** If a question does not apply to your project, please contact Alex Castino to discuss how to answer it. Do NOT leave any questions blank. If you have information to share that does not fit well into one of the sections, contact Alex to discuss where the information is appropriate.

Projects will be scored on the 100-point system allocated as indicated below and then ranked by total points. Failure to respond to these questions may substantially reduce your score, due to the difficulty of evaluating the project without this information.

1. **SCOPE:** Describe your project. What is the scope? What is the specific challenge or issue you propose to help address? What are the proposed outcomes and deliverables? What does success look like, and how will you measure it? What challenges do you anticipate through this project, and how do you propose to address them? **(15 points)**
2. **URGENCY:** Describe the need and urgency for this project for the conservation community. What would likely be the resulting impact to the community if this issue is not addressed in a timely fashion? **(15 points)**
3. **STAFF/OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE:** Do you propose to complete this project with outside consultants or staff? If staff will be working on the project, does that include staff of project partners? How will existing staff’s regular duties be fulfilled? If the use of an intern/fellow, new staff member, consultant, or other outside assistance including volunteers is requested, why can’t this work be performed with existing staff resources? Who are the partners in the project, and what are their roles? **(15 points)**
4. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Why is your organization and any partners in the best position to undertake this work? Describe the qualifications of key staff and/or consultants that will ensure the success of the project. Are there specific staff training needs for this project? **(15 points)**
5. **APPLICABILITY:** How will the outcome of this project be replicable or usable by other organizations? What specific steps will you include to disseminate and share information broadly with the conservation community and other partners? **(15 points)**
6. **SIMILAR PROJECTS:** Describe any other past or ongoing efforts by your organization or others that are similar or complementary to your proposed project. How will your project build on or enhance those efforts? Are the other organizations that have worked on or are working on the issue aware of your proposal? If not, why not? Explain how your proposal differs and what effort will be made to work cooperatively. **(10 points)**
7. **LEVERAGING OF FUNDS:** Describe the status of confirmed and potential cash and in-kind funding sources, including any applications for funding and the dates those funds are to be awarded. Be sure this information is consistent with your budget form. Leveraging points are awarded based on the applicant’s ability to bring cash and in-kind match to the project. **(15 points)**