

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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# W6f

**DATE:** August 31, 2017

**TO:** Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

**FROM:** John Ainsworth, Executive Director  
Susan Hansch, Chief Deputy Director  
Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager  
Sylvie Lee, Grants Program Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** **Modifications to guidelines for WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> Competitive Grants.** The Executive Director recommends that the Commission approve a modification to the application guidelines for the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> Grants Program.

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## SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the following changes to the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> grant guidelines:

- (1) Criteria for selecting grant recipients will include that the project's educational content and mode of delivery should be culturally relevant to the project's audience.
- (2) Project concept should include culturally competent approaches.
- (3) Project design that reflects research-based best practices will be encouraged.
- (4) Add minor language further clarifying existing criteria.

## I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

### Motion:

*I move that the Commission authorize the modifications to the guidelines for the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> Competitive Grants Program as described in the staff report dated August 31, 2017, Item W6f.*

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the foregoing motion. Passage of this motion will result in authorization of Coastal Commission staff to begin using the modified selection criteria when soliciting proposals in Fall 2017. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

### Resolution:

*The Commission hereby approves the newly modified guidelines for WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> grants as described in the staff report dated August 31, 2017, Item W6f.*

## II. INTRODUCTION

The Commission's WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> grants offered by the Public Education Program support coastal and marine education projects to educate and involve the public in the protection of marine and coastal resources. A large portion of the Public Education Program's annual budget is distributed through local assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies for this purpose. The funding is awarded in two different grantmaking cycles each year through recommendations to Commissioners by the staff: some of these funds are awarded as targeted grants in the late summer or early fall, and the rest of the funds are awarded in the winter through a competitive grants process approved. The Commission approved guidelines for the competitive grants program in 1998 and approved minor modifications in 2009 and 2013.

### **Adding criteria regarding cultural competency**

According to the National Education Association (NEA), cultural competence is a person's awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about differences among people, and the ability to learn and build on the cultural and community norms of others. The NEA considers it to be "a key factor in enabling educators to be effective with students from cultures other than their own." Examples of manifestations of cultural competence could include incorporating participants' own community concerns and interests into lessons, providing role models who look similar to participants, or making people who speak limited English feel welcomed.

In recent months there have been discussions by Commissioners and staff regarding how to support cultural competency in the organizations funded by the CCC to strengthen the effectiveness of their programs. In order to encourage this quality, seek it out and support it, the staff proposes listing it as part of the criteria and scoring rubric in the application guidelines for the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> grants.

### **Encouraging research-based best practices**

There is a large and growing body of research into what works effectively in environmental education. In addition, various efforts have been made to synthesize these studies and hone in on the program design elements that have empirical evidence of helping lead to positive outcomes (e.g. increased knowledge, awareness, and skills; positive attitudes; critical thinking; stewardship intentions and behaviors; enjoyment). Staff proposes including the sentence, "Project design that reflects research-based best practices are encouraged" in the Grant Guidelines, and to provide links to best practices-related research on the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> Grants website.

## III. Staff Recommendations for WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> Grant Guidelines

The staff recommends that the following changes be made to the criteria in the WHALE TAIL<sup>®</sup> grant guidelines so they would read as follows:

### **CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GRANT RECIPIENTS**

**1. Educational Component (25 points):** Projects funded under this program should have a strong, high-quality educational component involving the marine and/or coastal environment.

We encourage experiential, hands-on learning and incorporation of stewardship, where possible. The project's educational content and mode of delivery should be age-appropriate and culturally relevant for the target audience. Projects aiming to improve the quality of beaches or coastal or marine habitats will be considered as well.

**2. Need (15 points):** Projects will be assessed on the degree to which they address an identified need (educational, ecological, social, etc.). Projects that reach audiences who are traditionally underserved in terms of marine education, including ~~those from~~ low-income populations, multicultural communities, and residents of rural and inland areas, are especially encouraged.

**3. Project Concept (30 points):** We seek thoughtfully developed ideas, technically sound concepts, and creative, innovative, culturally competent approaches. Project design that reflects research-based best practices are encouraged. The degree to which a project could potentially be expanded or continued after the grant ends, and/or build organizational ~~or audience~~ capacity, will be considered. The degree of impact relative to cost will also be evaluated. Up to 5 points of extra credit will be awarded if the project will have a ripple effect beyond the project itself, by providing useful tools or knowledge to others in the field, helping to advance the field into new areas, or building fruitful collaborations with other entities.

**4. Proposal Content and Project Implementation (30 points):** The proposal should demonstrate that the concept has been fully thought out and developed into a concrete, feasible project with clearly stated, realistic goals and, measurable objectives; a defined audience; a workable project design; and a clear plan for implementation. A sensible plan for evaluating the project's success should be included, as should detailed and accurate cost information. The likelihood of the project's successful implementation and completion will be considered, including the likelihood that project objectives and goals will be achieved, as well as the strength of the organization's track record, and the qualifications and capabilities of project personnel.