

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Access Clean California Solicitation Question and Answer (Q&A) Session

Written Staff Responses

Posted: March 26, 2024

Introduction

On March 21, 2024, California Air Resources (CARB) staff held one Questions and Answer (Q&A) session for the FY 2023-24 Access Clean California Solicitation. The full Solicitation can be found here: [Low Carbon Transportation Investments and AQIP Grant Solicitations | California Air Resources Board](#).

The questions and answers in the document include both questions reviewed via email before the Q&A session and questions and answers asked during the Q&A sessions. To minimize repetition, similar questions have been combined and answered together.

The following written responses serve as an update to and take precedence over verbal responses provided during the Q&A session. This document includes references to the Solicitation and associated appendices. Language in the Solicitation and appendices takes precedence over any additional language provided in this Q&A document, except for clarifications provided in the Solicitation Errors & Clarifications section. Use the following links to reference the relevant Solicitation and appendices:

- [Access Clean California Solicitation](#)
- [Access Clean California Appendix A](#)
- [Access Clean California Appendix A, Budget Template](#)
- [Access Clean California Appendix A, Scope and Timeline Template](#)
- [Access Clean California Appendix B, Sample Grant Agreement](#)

As outlined in the Solicitation, CARB will not answer questions regarding this Solicitation outside of the Q&A sessions.

Solicitation Errors and Clarifications

Access Clean California Solicitation Appendix A, Attachment 4:

- In the Budget Details Tab, the comment box that appears when the user selects cell E12 currently states: "Input all indirect costs here. Indirect costs should account for no more than 1% of the total requested funds." This should read: "Input all indirect costs here. Indirect costs should account for no more than 5% of the total requested funds."

Questions and Written Responses from Q&A Session 1

1. **Question:** Can you please explain the difference between how the Solicitation is defining a Letter of Support and Letter of Commitment?

Answer: A letter of commitment typically comes from an organization with an anticipated role in the Solicitation application – like a subcontractor – whereas a letter of support can come from any organization regardless of their role in the Solicitation application. Please also refer to page A-9 of [Appendix A \(The Application\)](#), which states that subcontractors should submit a letter of commitment.

2. **Question:** Can you please explain the difference between a subcontractor and subrecipient and whether they should provide Letters of Support or Letters of Commitment in Support of our proposal?

Answer: In the context of this question a subcontractor and subrecipient have no substantive distinction. As such, a letter of commitment would be appropriate for either subrecipient or subcontractor, so long as the organization has an anticipated role in the Solicitation application. (see also response to Question 1 above).

3. **Question:** If a team of organizations partners on a bid with a single prime, do the non-prime partners need to go through an open procurement process before finalizing their placement on the team?

Answer: We don't use the term "prime" in the Solicitation, but if we're interpreting the term correctly, non-prime partners are essentially subcontractors to the Grantee. The subcontractors do not go through the Solicitation process. Subcontractors are required to meet the applicable requirements. Page C-40 of [Appendix B \(Sample Grant Agreement\)](#) states the following: "The Grantee is required, where feasible, to employ best contracting and procurement practices that promote open competition for all goods and services. Grantee shall obtain price quotes from an adequate number of sources for all subcontracts."

4. **Question:** The Budget attachment says to use loaded labor rates that include overhead and fringe. Overhead typically includes indirect costs. Are these indirect costs subject to the 5% total CARB funding limit, or because they're "already identified or reimbursed as a direct cost" are they excluded from this limit? Also, should column C of the Budget Details page of [Appendix A, Attachment 4](#), called "Direct Labor Plus Expenses" include fully loaded labor rates (including overhead and fringe benefits) or should overhead and fringe be included in column E, Indirect Costs (non-labor)?

Answer: CARB understands that different organizations may calculate overhead and indirect costs differently and will work with the selected funding recipients to determine the best approach for tracking indirect costs during grant implementation. CARB recommends that each applicant choose whichever column makes most sense to them based on their accounting practices and definitions, and to make note of this in their application.

5. **Question:** On page A-9 of Appendix A, the solicitation application states that all subcontractors should each provide a qualification narrative, resume and letter of commitment as part of the solicitation application. For small community-based organizations, providing these materials can be burdensome and thus raises an equity

issue. Is there any flexibility in terms of what materials community-based organizations are required to submit?

Answer: CARB's solicitation requirements were drafted to be compliant with the laws, consistent with other state funded grant programs and to include a set of minimum requirements applicable to all subcontractors who will receive state funding under the grant. The solicitation terms cannot be altered at this stage. However, we note that the solicitation does not set standards as to how complex or elaborate these materials should be. Therefore, CARB staff will consider accepting a variety of formats and materials so long as they comply with the basic requirements stated in the solicitation.

Note to reader: *After the release of the solicitation, CARB scheduled a second Q&A session. Information on this second Q&A session will be provided through public notice. A document summarizing the questions and answers from the second session will also be posted online.*