

Coastal Partnership Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Coastal Partnership Initiative (CPI)?

The CPI program is a competitive-based grant program for Florida's 35 coastal counties, and all municipalities within their boundaries, that are required to include a coastal element in their comprehensive plan. Florida's public colleges and universities, regional planning councils, national estuary programs and nonprofit groups also may apply for CPI funds, if an eligible local government agrees to participate as a partner. CPI grants provide support for innovative, local, coastal management projects in four program areas:

- Resilient Communities
- Access to Coastal Resources
- Working Waterfronts
- Coastal Resource Stewardship

These funds are provided by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (RCP) through the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

2. How can we receive notifications for the request for application?

Each year, FCMP publishes a "Notice of Availability of Funds" in the *Florida Administrative Register* to solicit CPI applications from eligible entities. This notice typically is published each August. Additionally, you may also send an email to FCMPMail@FloridaDEP.gov and request to be added to the email list for CPI announcements. The email list may serve as a courtesy notification only and does not replace the official announcement in the *Florida Administrative Register*.

3. Where can I find the most recent CPI application?

The CPI application can be found at FloridaDEP.gov/CPIGrantApplication.

4. Is there a limit on the funds each applicant can request?

Financial awards are a minimum of \$10,000, and awards are limited to no more than \$60,000 for construction projects, habitat restoration, invasive plant removal or land acquisition; and \$10,000 to no more than \$30,000 for planning, design and coordination activities.

5. What are the match limitations?

Grant recipients are required to provide 100% (1:1) matching funds, which may be cash or in-kind. Match may include the salaries of employees, the value of work time of volunteers, the cost of construction materials or other supplies and/or services that directly benefit the funded grant project. No more than 50% of match may be provided by a third party. Federal funds from any source may not be used as match for any financial assistance from the Coastal Partnership Initiative.

6. Can matching funds be spent in the past or do they need to be spent once the grant is awarded?

No, match funds must be spent during the project period of the CPI project.

7. Can multiple counties apply in one application?

No. While partnership is strongly encouraged, one of the eligible counties will need to be the lead applicant/recipient and have the fiscal and programmatic responsibilities.

8. Can applicants submit more than one application?

The intent of the rule is that any entity within the eligible local government is part of that local government, and therefore, only allowed to submit one application per funding cycle. However, an eligible partner organization, college/university, etc., can also apply with an eligible local government participating as a partner. The rule specifically states that eligible applicants may submit only one application, and it also defines eligible applicants as:

(2) "Applicant" means local governments of the 35 coastal counties, and all municipalities within their boundaries, that are required to include a coastal element in the local comprehensive plan. The term also means Florida colleges, community colleges and state universities (as listed in chapter 1000.21, F.S.), regional planning councils, national estuary programs and nonprofit groups, as long as an eligible local government agrees to participate as a partner.

9. Who is considered the eligible signatory for the application?

The eligible signatory is the person who has the legal authority to enter into any form of contractual agreement with Florida.

10. Who should be listed as the official contact on the application?

Preferably, the project manager or grant manager. The contact should have detailed knowledge of the proposed project. If you need to change/update the official contract at any time, please notify us at FCMPMail@FloridaDEP.gov.

11. Is there a page limit for the total application?

The CPI application has a 10-page limit, not including the map, title page or signature page. Pages in excess of the 10-page limit will not be reviewed.

12. Where can I find the scoring criteria for CPI applications?

The scoring criteria can be found within rule 62s-4 F.A.C. or at FloridaDEP.gov/CPIGrantRule.

13. Can national nonprofits apply?

Yes, but they must partner with an eligible local government. There is a section in the application for the local government to sign as a partner.

14. If a local government signs as a "partner" with a nonprofit or university, what does that mean for the local government?

As the partner, you essentially state you have worked with this organization and support the work they are doing. You agree the project they are proposing meets the local government's needs. It is up to you how involved you need to be in the project. If the project proposed is a construction project, habitat restoration, exotic plant removal or land-acquisition type project, the local government must be the lead applicant/recipient, which means you must be fiscally and programmatically responsible. If the project is not one of those, then you are serving as a reference and support. However, if the partner organization is unable to complete the project for any reason, and DEP does not receive timely notification, this may impact future CPI funding to your local government.

15. Are there project location eligibility requirements?

Yes, projects must occur on publicly owned land, or land held by the applicant in a conservation easement (in perpetuity). Federally owned lands are not eligible. Privately owned lands/structures are not eligible.

16. Are projects not directly located on the coast eligible? Are they ranked lower (given that applicant has a coastal element in their comprehensive plan)?

Yes, projects that are not directly located on the coast are eligible if they are within the [35 coastal counties](#) and the local government is required to have a coastal element in their comprehensive plan. The ranking is not affected by geographic location as long as the application demonstrates the benefits to coastal management.

17. Would a climate action plan and similar projects be considered for CPI?

Yes, these are eligible projects. However, we also recommend that you consider funding opportunities offered through the [Resilient Florida Program](#).

18. Under which of the four priority areas does land acquisition fall?

It depends on the purpose and reason for acquiring the land. If the land is being purchased to provide public access, it would fall under the program area of Access to Coastal Resources. If the land is being purchased for a living shoreline project, then it would fall under either Resilient Communities or Coastal Resource Stewardship.

19. Where can we find information on the types of projects that have been previously funded?

For detailed information on previously funded projects, visit [FloridaDEP.gov/CPI](#). There are links to [Grant Abstracts](#) and [Interactive Story Map](#), which provide information about project descriptions and locations, respectively.

20. Are state universities allowed to apply as the lead, or are they required to apply under the local government participating as a partner?

Yes, an eligible state college/university/community college (those listed in [Chapter 1000.21, F.S.](#)) can apply as the lead recipient with an eligible local government partner. Either entity can be the lead applicant. There is a section in the application for the local government to sign as a partner.

21. Can work begin upon notification of an award from DEP?

No. Work on the awarded project may begin only when both parties have a fully executed agreement. The DEP grant manager will notify recipients when agreements are fully executed, and that work may begin. Any work performed outside of the project period will not be eligible for reimbursement.

22. How would I complete the budget if the total project amount is \$250,000 and CPI only allows up to \$60,000 maximum?

You would list the \$60,000 as CPI funds requested, and the remainder can be considered as match. However, we do not recommend including amounts over 100% (in this case, over \$60,000) as match. There are no extra points awarded for additional match, and you will be required to expand and account for all listed match.

23. How do I prepare a budget estimate for a project that will not start for a year or more?

Estimate based on today's costs and take inflation into consideration when developing your budget and budget narrative. Also consider potential cost impacts of BABA requirements. See also FAQ #33.

24. What information should be included in the budget narrative?

Provide as many details as possible for each budget category. For example, instead of including only the estimated total cost of supplies, list expected types and cost per type. For travel, list anticipated trips with number of trips and travelers. Must follow state travel rules. For equipment (defined as any single item over \$5,000), include a brief justification for need. For contractual services, if vendor information is known, please provide those details. Contractual services should be procured using your local government/organization procurement policies.

25. Can CPI funds be awarded in conjunction with other grants?

This depends on the timing and project. However, no other federal funds can be used as match for CPI funds, and funds awarded through CPI cannot be used as match for other federal grants. See also FAQ #26.

26. Can CPI funds be used for an ongoing larger project?

Yes, CPI funds can be used to *enhance* a larger-scale project, but the CPI funds and match must be used during the CPI project period. However, CPI funds cannot be used to supplement or replace funding for an existing project. A small-scale project is characterized by factors such as a short project duration, a small team, low staffing hours, and a smaller budget. See also FAQ #25.

27. Can planning funds be used to secure property appraisals?

Yes, but if the applicant intends to apply for CPI funds in a subsequent year to purchase the property, NOAA requires that the appraisal must be no more than one year old. Applicants should keep this timeline in mind for project planning.

28. Is there a recommended time frame for permitting?

While every project is different, applicants are required to have a pre-consultation with the permitting agency/agencies prior to application, which should provide an estimated timeline. For construction projects, it is recommended that you submit the permit application/permit(s) with the application and the 306A questionnaire.

29. If we would like to propose a construction project, habitat restoration, invasive plant removal or land acquisition project, are there any additional forms needed?

Yes, applicants must complete the 306A questionnaire and provide backup documentation along with their application. View the questionnaire from [DEP](#) or [NOAA](#). There is also [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) guidance](#).

30. Can we have a CPI project with planning and construction in one?

We highly recommend splitting these due to the environmental compliance process that could hold up the project. The planning would have to be completed prior to environmental review, which will prolong your start of the construction phase.

31. Would sea level rise (SLR) assessment of lift stations for sewer be appropriate as long as it impacts coastal areas?

Yes, sea level rise assessment of lift stations for sewer is appropriate if the lift station is on publicly owned land and located within one of the 35 coastal counties that are eligible.

32. Are construction projects subject to federal Davis-Bacon/certified payroll conditions?

No, the federal Davis-Bacon payroll conditions only apply to prime contracts.

33. Will grant recipients need to comply with the federal Build America Buy America (BABA) Act?

Yes, if the grant is funded with federal infrastructure funds, all recipients will be required to comply with the federal BABA Act. This will be included in your Special Terms and Conditions in the grant agreement. The domestic content procurement preference requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in covered infrastructure projects are produced in the United States. Waivers may exist for some items. More information can be found on the federal Made in America office website, <https://www.madeinamerica.gov/>.

34. Where can I find more information about CPI?

You can find more information about the CPI program at FloridaDEP.gov/CPI. You may also contact Tiffany Herrin at 850-245-2953 or via email at Tiffany.Herrin@FloridaDEP.gov. General questions about the FCMP program can be sent to FCMPMail@FloridaDEP.gov.