

# Habitat Conservation Fund

## Questions and Answers

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1) **Question:** Can multiple applications be submitted? For example, multiple land acquisitions properties.

**Answer:** Yes. Grant applicants may submit multiple applications for multiple land acquisition properties. For each land property acquisition and/or restoration project, a separate HCF grant application must be completed and meet the HCF eligibility requirements as identified in Page 1 of the HCF Application. The grant applicant is encouraged to prioritize their land acquisition properties in order of preference.

- 2) **Question:** How will you compare the priority of restoration vs. acquisition?

**Answer:** A selection criteria has been developed for each grant category, (restoration projects and land acquisitions) to evaluate HCF grant applications. Each HCF grant application will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee and scored in its respective category based on the information provided in the grant application. The HCF strives to prioritize projects that provide the most biological benefit in Orange County. The highest ranked restoration project and/or land acquisition within each category will be offered the HCF grant and the remaining HCF funds will be awarded to subsequent grantee(s) based on scoring rank until the \$8 million HCF is expended

- 3) **Question:** Who can apply for these grants?

**Answer:** The HCF grant is open to all organizations and agencies. All Projects (restoration and land acquisitions) must be partially or entirely within Orange County. General eligibility requirements are provided on Page 1 of the Habitat Conservation Fund Application available at:  
<https://thetollroads.com/media/4szikzce/habitat-conservation-fund-application.pdf>

- 4) **Question:** Are matching funds required? And are matching funds a factor in the application ranking?

**Answer:** Matching funds are not required but are considered as part of the evaluation criteria.

- 5) **Question:** For land acquisitions, is there a certain acreage size that is needed? For example 40+ acres or several hundred acres?

**Answer:** *There are no minimum or maximum acreage size requirements to qualify for HCF. Available funding for HCF in 2025 is \$8 million and the acquisition must be within this budget.*

**6) Question: For restoration projects:**

- **What can funds be used for? (Can they be used for staff time?)**

**Answer:** *HCF may be applied towards staff time related to the proposed restoration activities.*

- **Is there a specific timeline in which projects need to be completed?**

**Answer:** *It is expected that restoration projects or portions of a multi-year restoration project funded by HCF (by December 2025) would be completed within a reasonable time in accordance with the respective permitting agency performance standards for restoration activities and plant establishment. As part of the selection criteria, grant applicants must provide dates for anticipated completion of on-site restoration activities, performance standards and timeline for meeting performance standards.*

- **What would we need to report on?**

**Answer:** *Because each project is expected to have unique performance criteria, the grant applicant is required to develop, for consideration, the monitoring and reporting process to achieve project goals. Please refer to Section III of the Application.*

**7) Question: Will workshop #2 cover the same information as today's workshop?**

**Answer:** *HCF Workshop #2 will cover the same information provided in the PowerPoint presentation. However, different questions may be posed during the second workshop in which staff will provide clarification and answers related to HCF. Please note that the date and time for HCF Workshop #2 has been moved to Tuesday, December 3rd from 3PM to 4PM to allow grant applicants to ask last minute clarification questions and support.*

**8) Question: Can you explain the boundaries of the geographic area where funds can be used?**

**Answer:** *Restoration projects must be located within Orange County. Land Acquisitions can be entirely or partially within Orange County (if acquired to enhance wildlife movement across the landscape).*

- 9) **Question:** Are applicants encouraged to provide letters of support from other stakeholders? If such letters are encouraged and considered as part of the process, we would probably be able to obtain one or more letters, but if not then I will save the effort.

**Answer:** *While letters of support are not required, Applicants are encouraged to provide such letters in support of the need for the project*

**Question:** If a grant is awarded, are any in-kind services eligible for expenditures under the grant? Some grants permit up to 10% for project administration. It would be helpful to know if this is an eligible expense.

**Answer:** *HCF could be applied towards services related to the completion of the work on the Project (land acquisition or restoration) as defined in your completed HCF Application. Administration expenses for the HCF are capped up to 15% of the total HCF award. Grantees awarded HCF are expected to make appropriate decisions for the best use of funds to accomplish Project goals.*

- 10) **Question:** Are habitat restoration projects located within California State Parks eligible for funding (e.g. Crystal Cove State Park)? These are state owned and protected lands intended for conservation and passive recreation.

**Answer:** *The HCF grant is open to all organizations and agencies, including California State Parks. Projects (restoration or land acquisitions) must be partially or entirely within Orange County.*

*General eligibility requirements are provided in Page 1 of the Habitat Conservation Fund Application by following this link:*

<https://thetollroads.com/media/4szikzce/habitat-conservation-fund-application.pdf>

**Question:** Are habitat restoration projects in San Diego County eligible if SSOC is one of the funding partners, it seemed like a possibility.

**Answer:** *Restoration projects must be located within Orange County. Land Acquisitions can be entirely or partially within Orange County (if acquired to enhance wildlife movement across the landscape).*

- 11) **Question:** Is there a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or any additional documentation outlining project requirements (specifically the minimum and maximum request amounts or any expected match requirements).

**Answer:** Additional information about HCF is provided in TCA's Habitat Conservation Fund web page: <https://thetollroads.com/about/about-tca/environmental-commitment/habitat-conservation-fund/>. Available HCF grant award(s) for 2025 is \$8 million. There are no minimum grant requests or match requirements.

General eligibility requirements are provided in Page 1 of the Habitat Conservation Fund Application by following this link: <https://thetollroads.com/media/4szikzce/habitat-conservation-fund-application.pdf>

**12) Question: Is there a recording of the first grant workshop?**

**Answer:** The video and presentation of HCF Workshop #1 is available at: [TheTollRoads.com/HCF](https://TheTollRoads.com/HCF).

**13) Question: Why was the second workshop pushed back almost a full month, creating a tight timeline?**

**Answer:** The date and time for HCF Workshop #2 has been moved to Tuesday, December 3rd from 3PM to 4PM to allow grant applicants to ask last minute clarification questions and support before the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, otherwise this workshop will cover the same material that was covered in Workshop #1.

**14) Question: Is it problematic if a restoration project involves multiple jurisdictions. What documentation would the grantor need?**

**Answer:** The HCF grant is open to all organizations and agencies. To be considered for the HCF grant, please complete the HCF Grant Application and provide the applicable documentation requested in the HCF Grant Application. The HCF Grant Application is provided in the following link:

<https://thetollroads.com/media/4szikzce/habitat-conservation-fund-application.pdf>

If the restoration project is awarded HCF, TCA will notify the grantee of required agreements and other documents necessary to complete and finalize the HCF award.

**15) Question: Are there was any additional information you could provide on funding request amount expectations or match requirements for the Habitat Conservation Fund opportunity.**

**Answer:** Additional information about HCF is provided in TCA's Habitat Conservation Fund web page: <https://thetollroads.com/about/about-tca/environmental-commitment/habitat-conservation-fund/>. Available HCF grant award(s) for 2025 is \$8 million. There are no minimum grant requests or match requirements.