



Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services & OR3

Measure Q Proposed Grant Program in FY 2025–2026

November 19, 2025



Anticipated Timeline 1

Phase	Milestone	Target Date	Purpose / Deliverable
Program Finalization	Board Update	December 2025/ January 2026	Present draft guidelines
Launch Prep	Finalize guidelines, application forms & OpenGov setup	Dec 2025 – Jan 2026	Build OpenGov forms (Mini + Impact); post website FAQ.
	Public Outreach & Webinar	Mid-Jan 2026	Announce program; bilingual info session.
Application Window	Application period open (6 weeks)	Jan 15 – Feb 28, 2026	Accept Tier 1 & Tier 2 proposals.
Review & Evaluation	Eligibility screening + independent scoring	Mar – Apr 2026	Staff + evaluator review; ensure \$600 k PV / \$600 k SVR compliance.
Recommendation & Approval	COAB Review of Recommended Awards, Board of Supervisors Accepts Recommendations	May 2026	Oversight & Vision Plan alignment check.
Implementation	Execute Grant Agreements	June 2026	
Reporting	Mid-Year Reports & COAB Annual Update	Feb 2027 & August 2027	Feed into Measure Q Annual Report



Proposed Structure

Proposed Funding Breakdown Option

Program	Grant Type	Suggested Range	Approx # of Awards	Annual Allocation	Description & Purpose
Tier 1 Mini-Grants	Small innovative, capacity-building projects	\$20 – 50 K	4-10	\$200,000	Pilot Programs, volunteer projects, or feasibility studies that build local capacity for future work
Tier 2 Community Impact Grants	Mid-size community/ infrastructure projects	\$51 K +	4-20	\$1,000,000	For permit-based projects, multi-benefit implementation projects
Pajaro Valley Set-Aside	Large Scale Implementation	\$200-600 k	1-3	\$600,000	Major, multi-year projects
San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside		\$200-600 K	1-4	\$600,000	
Total			10-37	\$2.5 M	

Proposed Scoring Rubric for Mini-Grants



Category	Points	Evaluation Focus
1. Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan Priorities	40 pts	How well the project advances Measure Q Vision Plan thematic goals — clean water, wildfire risk reduction, or recreation access.
2. Community Benefit	30 pts	Demonstrates clear, visible values for the community, whether through improved safety, healthier ecosystems, or better recreation.
3. Feasibility	20 pts	Realistic scope, budget, and timeline; applicant or fiscal sponsor can deliver within 12 months.
4. Innovation & Capacity	10 pts	Encourages new ideas, pilot approaches, or builds capacity for future Measure Q participation.
Total	100 pts (+5 bonus)	Bonus points for: Multi-benefit, matching funds, county-wide benefit

Proposed Scoring Rubric for Tier 2 Grants



Category	Points	Evaluation Focus
1. Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan Priorities	25 pts	Advances water quality, wildfire resilience, or parks access goals; consistent with Measure Q Vision Plan priorities
2. Community Benefit	20 pts	Demonstrates clear, visible values for the community, whether through improved safety, healthier ecosystems, or better recreation.
3. Wildlife & Environmental Benefit	15 pts	Improves water, habitat, or climate resilience.
4. Project Readiness & Feasibility	15 pts	Site control, permits, realistic timeline & budget, capable team.
5. Partnerships & Collaboration	10 pts	Strength of partnerships, leveraging, volunteer engagement, multi-agency scope.
6. Budget & Leveraging of Resources	10 pts	Budget clarity, cost-effectiveness, match/in-kind, indirect $\leq 20\%$.
7. Long-Term Maintenance & Monitoring	5 pts	Plan for sustained benefits or data monitoring post-grant.
Bonus (+5 pts)	—	Visibility, Innovation & Scalability, Link to Regional Plans
Total	100 pts (+ bonus)	

Measure Q Grant Program Discussion Items



- **Indirect Costs**
 - Based on annual size of budget, should we allow for indirect overhead cost for nonprofits covered up to 5% or \$10,000 whichever is less
- **Consecutive Funding Limitations**
 - Explicit limit of 2 or 3 grant cycles?
 - Required gap year or limit on the threshold of staff dependency
- **Reimbursement vs. Advance**
 - Advance of up to 50% for smaller grants, up to 15% for larger grants
 - For larger grants, advance only available upon request.



Proposed Measure Q Grant Agreement Terms



1. Allowable costs and indirect overhead

1.1. Allowable Direct Costs. Grant funds may be used only for direct project expenses that are reasonable, necessary, and clearly documented in the approved budget that are aligned with Measure Q.

1.2 Indirect/Administrative Costs. Indirect costs are allowable only to the extent expressly authorized in the approved project budget and on a case-by-case basis.

2. Consecutive Funding Limitations

2.1. To promote equitable distribution of Measure Q resources and build capacity among new partners, no organization may receive grant awards from the same grant funding source for more than three consecutive funding cycles.

2.2. Following three consecutive award cycles, the organization must wait one full cycle before reapplying for funding for the same grant funding source.

2.3. Exceptions may be considered only when the project demonstrates countywide significance, critical infrastructure needs, or unique technical expertise unavailable elsewhere.

3. Matching and Leveraging

3.1. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate cash or in-kind match and may receive higher scoring for so (volunteer time, donated materials, partner services).

3.2. In-kind staff time or donated material contributions must be verifiable and documented at fair market value.

Proposed Measure Q Grant Agreement Terms



4. Term & Reporting

4.1. Standard grant term: 12 months, may be extended up to 24 months from full execution date, upon approval of scope, budget and schedule. For larger projects, grant term may be extended beyond 24 months on a case-by-case basis.

4.2. Grantees must submit progress reports with each reimbursement request and no less frequently than semi-annual and a final report within 60 days of project completion.

4.3. Ten percent (10 %) of the total award shall be retained until satisfactory submission of the final report and all deliverables

5. Audit & Records

5.1. Grantee shall retain all project and financial records for three years following final payment.

5.2. The County, COAB, or authorized auditors may review, audit, and reproduce all records related to the grant at any reasonable time

6. Compliance & Termination

6.1. Grantee must comply with all applicable local, State, and Federal laws, including prevailing wage where required.

6.2. The County may withhold or recover funds for non-performance, misuse of funds, or breach of agreement.

Proposed Measure Q Grant Agreement Terms



7. Recognition & Public Reporting

7.1. All outreach, signage, and publications related to the project must acknowledge Measure Q funding as:

"Funded by the County of Santa Cruz Measure Q – Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Wildlife Protection Act."

7.2. All grant recipients will be required to provide an impact report in addition to all financial reporting requirements. The impact report will include (but is not limited to): geography served, how many residents, communities, populations (wildlife) benefited, area treated/improved, upstream or downstream benefits, multi-benefit outcomes, equity considerations and how project was communicated/amplified. For grants that span multiple years, annual report with aforementioned content will be required.

Questions?

Thank You

