



COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM PROCEDURES

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Introduction

The Competitive Grant Program Procedures provide guidance on GOCO's grantmaking processes and board-established policies outlined in Section 3 of Great Outdoors Colorado's Policies and Procedures. This document summarizes key procedures and policies that appear across application materials, program webpages, and board materials.

Grantmaking Process

The following section outlines the process for our base programs managed internally by GOCO staff and partner programs managed externally by partner organizations.

Base Programs Process

Start with a Concept

Rather than submitting full applications upfront, partners submit concept papers using a short narrative format to present project information clearly and concisely. GOCO's concept proposal forms ask only for the details we need to make informed decisions, decreasing the time and resources our partners need to put forth a proposal so that they may direct resources to optimally benefit their projects.

GOCO offers technical assistance through regional program officers. Partners engage early and often to receive feedback, refine their concepts, and strengthen their proposals. The officers provide guidance and encourage communities to leverage local assets that can contribute to improved outcomes. This guidance is shaped by collaborative, intensive internal meetings in which program staff share project ideas and best practices, compare projects from different regions, and discuss project nuances.

The program team accepts draft concept proposals at any time in advance of our two grant cycles each year for GOCO's base programs. The review process for concept papers is time-sensitive. As a result, concept paper review is performed by staff and does not involve outside reviewers. Staff provides the GOCO board with a list of submitted concept papers, access to submitted materials, and a list of the subset of concepts recommended to submit full applications.

On to Full Application

The most competitive concepts are invited to advance. At the application stage, partners can elaborate on their project proposal, respond to feedback received during concept review, and provide additional attachments and indications of support. Applications undergo a peer review process. GOCO selects peer reviewers for their knowledge, skills, and expertise related to our mission and program outcomes. We strive to develop groups of reviewers who have experience

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to provide subject matter input. Peer reviewers guide GOCO's award recommendations and ensure a fair and balanced process. While GOCO staff may have greater familiarity with our mission, vision, and program values, peer reviewers may expose latent biases that could emerge from a completely internal process.

Reviewers consider the following factors when evaluating proposals. Considerations are not ranked, scored, or weighted; instead, they provide a framework for evaluation and discussion. Reviewers initially score and rank proposals to provide a starting point for discussion during a review meeting, but there is no final score or rank. All concept papers and application applicants receive thoughtful feedback from the evaluators, with ideas and recommendations for strengthening proposals in the future.

Review Considerations

1. Contribution toward one or more of GOCO's program values and degree of contribution
2. Compelling urgency to complete project
3. Impact upon community and/or visitors; scale of impact relative to cost
4. Ability to drive local, regional, or statewide plans and goals
5. Advancement of community-directed outcomes or community-centered process
6. Addressing equity and disproportionately impacted communities
7. Leveraging of partnerships or other resources based on availability
8. Fit with grant program vs. other grant resources available beyond GOCO
9. Climate-resilient and environmentally conscious approaches
10. Extraneous factors e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, etc.
11. Geographic spread of GOCO investments in projects
12. Previous similar investments and known potential opportunities
13. Ability of and confidence in the applicant and partners

Committee and Board Approval

The GOCO board's programs committee reviews the slate of recommended projects, and the full GOCO board approves awards, typically via a consent agenda.

Site Visits

GOCO staff may request a project site visit, and regional officers strive to visit project locations to better understand the context of the proposal and community.

Land Acquisition - Out of Cycle Application Process

GOCO considers out of cycle land acquisition requests due to the opportunistic and often urgent nature of projects. To the greatest extent possible, staff will accept, review, and make a recommendation as part of regularly scheduled committee and board meetings.

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Out-of-cycle applications undergo the same process as scheduled base program cycles, beginning with a concept paper, advancing competitive proposals to application and peer review. The review process abides by the same set of considerations listed previously, with additional emphasis on the urgency of the request. Staff and peer reviewers use previous investments as comparables to determine if the submission would fare competitively in a regular grant cycle. To the extent practicable, peer reviews will include those involved with the previous grant cycle to help bolster the comparative evaluation against previous proposals.

Partner Programs Processes

GOCO offers several partner programs that leverage resources and collaboratively support statewide priorities. These programs follow processes managed by our partners with input and oversight by GOCO. GOCO staff participate in the grant review process for each partner program and bring forward project recommendations to the GOCO board for approval. The GOCO board's programs committee reviews the slate of recommended projects, and the full GOCO board approves awards, typically via a consent agenda.

Eligible Entities

The Colorado Constitutional amendment identifies eligible entities for GOCO funds.

- Colorado cities, towns, and counties
- Title 32 special districts eligible to receive Conservation Trust Fund distributions
- Land conservation organizations that support open space and natural area acquisitions
- Political subdivisions of the State of Colorado whose missions are to identify, manage, or acquire open space and natural areas
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Further, GOCO's policies outline acceptable uses of grant funds and investments, as well as the entities eligible to receive funds to achieve those outcomes. Note that an entity may be eligible for certain outcomes of a project but not eligible for other outcomes. For example, local governments such as towns, cities, and counties are the entities eligible to receive local government funds to develop parks and environmental education facilities. Land conservation organizations and Colorado Parks and Wildlife are not entities eligible to receive local government funds to develop parks and environmental education facilities. GOCO staff can provide additional guidance regarding the acceptable use of grant funds and the entities eligible to receive funds for specific purposes.

Grant Programs & Project Scope

Each program offers a guidance document that provides additional context regarding funding opportunities and types of projects considered. Additionally, the GOCO website offers examples

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of previously funded projects as a way to highlight the accomplishments of partners on the ground and illustrate a variety of competitive projects.

GOCO policies identify the following areas where the scope of a project has limitations or requires further consideration:

Indoor Facilities: GOCO-funded projects must be located outdoors, with the exception of environmental and outdoor education facilities and restrooms.

Active Recreational Use in Open Space or Natural Areas Acquisitions: Generally, active recreation on properties acquired with open space funds is not allowed. Projects for a land acquisition with intended active recreation must utilize local government funds. A grantee may request an exception to the prohibition of active recreation by submitting a written request to staff for an exception. Staff may approve the request and provide written notice to the grantee of its decision or, at the grantee's request, bring the request to the board for consideration.

Environmental Clearances: Project review includes assessing environmental impacts and any necessary permitting, exemptions, easements, etc., to determine readiness and feasibility.

Land Acquisitions

A comprehensive overview of GOCO's land acquisition procedures, appraisal guidelines, and conservation easements can be found on the website under the Manage Your Grant section. GOCO may limit investment in a land acquisition based on the structure of an acquisition, especially when a conservation easement is contemplated. While GOCO expects government agencies to adhere to these procedures, special accommodations to address specific needs and circumstances may be considered.

Conservation Easements

When investing in a conservation easement through the land acquisition program, GOCO's contribution is limited to 50% of the value of the conservation easement. The Conservation Easement Tax Credit may be reflected as an eligible project match on land acquisition proposals.

The easement holder shall monitor the easement property at least annually and must keep written and photographic records of all monitoring visits. GOCO may request reports if a violation or suspected violation is discovered or to verify monitoring practices.

When contributing to the purchase price of a conservation easement, GOCO reserves the right to request documentation to understand the financial health of the organization stewarding the easement. Note that any GOCO funds awarded for stewardship cannot be used for legal

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defense. Any proposed conservation easement amendment or assignment must adhere to GOCO's Guidelines.

Land Acquisition Loans

Applicants may apply for a loan through GOCO's land acquisition program and choose to request a loan to secure a real property acquisition. Loan terms are decided on a case-by-case basis and applicants are limited to a single, active loan at any given time. The loan must be backed by a financial guarantee and the borrower must identify a reliable source of repayment funding. Applying for or receiving a loan does not disqualify a grantee from seeking grant support through any active program. The loan policy outlines additional terms and considerations.

Generation Wild

Generation Wild grants support community-led coalitions working to increase youth and family participation in outdoor experiences through programs, partnerships, and community engagement. Implementation grants typically operate on five-year terms to support sustained community impact and coalition development, with awards typically between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000. Due to the programmatic and partnership-based nature of this work, GOCO may advance up to 100% of annual grant funds to support coalition coordination, partner programming, and community engagement activities. Generation Wild funds generally may not be used for capital construction, land acquisition, youth sports programs, or vehicle purchases, unless otherwise approved.

Property Ownership & Maintenance

Ownership and Control

When submitting a concept paper or application, an applicant certifies that it owns, leases, or otherwise has control over the property on which the project will be completed. GOCO staff may require an applicant to submit supporting documentation such as a deed, intergovernmental agreement, or long-term lease to prove ownership or control of the project site.

Project Useful Life & Maintenance

Grantees must maintain funded capital projects for the useful life of each project component or a minimum of 15 years. If the project is awarded, the useful life of the most substantial project

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component is documented in the grant agreement and becomes the length of time the grantee is required to operate and maintain the project.

Reasonable Public Access

Projects that utilize local government funds need to provide reasonable public access. The definition of public access is determined on a case-by-case basis and due to the diversity of projects funded, not all projects are held to the same standard. Staff will work with grantees to establish the most reasonable form of public access for each project.

Property Owned by an Ineligible Entity

GOCO may consider projects seeking to develop or improve an asset on property owned by an ineligible entity, such as a school yard or recreation amenity owned by a non-profit.

- If the property is owned by a private entity (individual, corporate, 501c3) then the partner that is the eligible entity and serving as the applicant should demonstrate that they hold a legal property interest such as an easement or another appropriate right. It is recommended that the parties also execute an agreement outlining public access, general use, and enforcement of the grant agreement.
- If the property is owned by a public entity (school or other governmental entity) then the parties should execute an inter-governmental agreement that outlines public access and enforcement of the grant agreement.
- The eligible entity applying on behalf of the project will be responsible for establishing, renewing, and maintaining the appropriate agreements to ensure that the project remains in public recreational use for its useful life.

Federal Lands Investments

GOCO generally does not fund projects on federal land, with limited exceptions outlined below. A request for funding projects involving federal lands must come from an eligible entity.

Land Acquisitions

GOCO funding may be used to acquire land being divested by a federal agency. While GOCO funds cannot be used for the acquisition of property to be owned and managed by a federal agency, GOCO may offer loans to serve as bridge funding.

Construction, Stewardship, and Restoration

Projects on federal land are supported through many of our partner programs, including RESTORE, Conservation Service Corps, and the Regional Partnership Initiative. While GOCO generally does not fund projects on federal land, on a case-by-case basis a project may be considered if it has statewide impact; if there is direct connectivity to local government parkland such as a multi-jurisdictional trail; or limited opportunities exist to invest in

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recreation on properties owned by local governments in the region. For projects on federal land, the eligible entity must execute the grant agreement and serve as the fiscal agent for the project. The eligible entity applying for funds should demonstrate applicable management agreement(s) between the applicant and the federal agency involved, which will be included as part of the application. The eligible entity applying on behalf of the project will be responsible for establishing, renewing, and maintaining the appropriate agreements to ensure that the project remains in public recreational use for its useful life.

Grant Amounts & Terms

GOCO staff and leadership determine grant amount guidelines for individual programs. Factors in developing these guidelines include strategic plan priorities; statewide needs for effective project implementation; historical award amounts; and grantee feedback. Grant guidance documents outline award ranges to provide partners with general funding expectations, while also allowing for funding flexibility. For partner programs, GOCO staff works with the coordinating organization to determine funding guidelines.

Base Programs	Grant Amount Range
Community Impact	\$100,000 - \$2,000,000 Limited grants up to \$5,000,000 per project are available for high-impact projects
Land Acquisitions	No cap; though awards are generally up to \$3,000,000 Reimbursement and loans considered
Pathways	No cap; though awards are generally between \$100,000 - \$300,000
Generation Wild Implementation	Typically between \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000 based on scope of work
Partner Programs	
RESTORE Colorado	No cap

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Conservation Service Corps	No cap
Transaction Cost Assistance Project	\$75,000
Regional Partnership Initiative	\$50,000 - \$2,500,000 based on scope of work

Match Requirements

GOCO does not have a minimum match requirement. GOCO expects grantees to explore opportunities for strategic project partnerships, resources, and complementary funding sources based upon the project outcomes and physical/geographic location of the project. Competitive proposals typically include additional resources that support project implementation.

Match costs, both cash and in-kind, should be incurred during the term of the grant contract. Expenses incurred prior to or after the duration of the grant term can be reflected as part of resources leveraged on behalf of a project.

In-kind match reflects the value of discounted or donated eligible project components/costs, such as materials, labor, and the use of applicant or partner equipment for projects.

Modification to Proposed Grant Match

Staff may approve up to a 10% reduction in grantee match based on total project cost with any additional changes referred to the GOCO board for approval. For example, a project has a total cost of \$500,000 and includes a \$400,000 GOCO grant and a grantee match of \$100,000 (equal to 20% match). Staff may approve a 10% change based on the total project cost with a minimum partner match of \$50,000 (11% match, which is a 9% reduction). A request to modify the match to \$40,000 (9% match, which would be an 11% reduction) would require board approval.

Grant Term

GOCO offers flexibility in determining the grant term and works with grantees to identify the appropriate grant term outlined in the grant agreement. While grant terms may extend to five years based on project deliverables, competitive projects generally reflect a 1–3-year timeline for completion. The grant term starts at the date of award. Partner programs with discrete grant terms follow:

Partner Program	Grant Term
Transaction Costs Assistance Program	1 year

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Conservation Service Corps	1 year
RESTORE Colorado	Up to 4 years
Regional Partnership Initiative	Up to 3 years

Eligible Costs

Each grant program has established costs that are eligible and ineligible to be included in a GOCO-funded project. Eligible costs are those costs that may be included in a project budget to be funded by GOCO or used as match; ineligible costs may not be included in the project budget to be funded by GOCO but generally may be used as match. Each grant program lists eligible and ineligible costs in its respective grant application materials.

Overhead: GOCO allows for overhead as an eligible expense, including general office and administrative overhead, travel, insurance, and equipment use. Overhead should reflect the reasonable costs associated with project implementation as opposed to a set percentage of the grant award. As part of reimbursement and closeout, the grantee will need to provide documentation of the costs. For cases where an indirect rate is applied as a percentage of costs, the grantee should provide a list of expense categories and dollar amounts, a total expenses dollar amount, and the indirect percentage and total indirect dollar amount. Alternative documentation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Technology Purchases: Technology purchases e.g., computers, software, hardware, etc. may be included as an eligible expense on a limited basis as needed to implement deliverables or support needed capacity.

Vehicle and Equipment Purchases: Vehicles and/or equipment needed to perform services may be considered an eligible expense for stewardship impact activities through base program awards. The grantee must demonstrate that the purchase is cost-effective as compared with rentals and that the vehicles or equipment's sole or primary use is for the services considered in the project. GOCO may prorate its contribution to vehicle or equipment purchases based upon the intended use, length of use during the grant term, etc. The grantee must own the vehicle or equipment for a minimum of five years and will reimburse GOCO if operations end earlier. GOCO will not purchase vehicle(s) for governmental entities.

The following table reflects illustrative examples and is not comprehensive of eligible and ineligible expenses.

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Grant Program	Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
Community Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and other project implementation costs • Land acquisitions for parks or recreation access • Master plans, regional recreation plans, and site plans • Staff, capacity, volunteer training or positions, consultants, or other professional services • Transportation expenses for mileage, fuel, rental, etc. • Equipment rental (discuss equipment purchase eligibility with GOCO) • Community engagement, planning, and design processes • Project communications and celebrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosed structures, environmental education facilities and restrooms excepted • Amphitheatres, entertainment stages, or similar • Costs associated with public art installations • Programs associated with projects • Project contingency
Land Acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition costs/donations at fair market value • Transaction and due diligence costs, including staff time and capacity needed to complete the acquisition • Stewardship endowments - capped at 75% of the endowment cost or \$20,000, whichever is less. If there are multiple properties in the project, GOCO will pay up to \$20,000 for a stewardship endowment for each property. • Site specific master and management plans, including community planning and engagement • Immediate habitat restoration opportunities that protect or enhance ecological function on the acquired property, or immediate recreation asset development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition costs associated with existing buildings and other structures • Project contingency
Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning, research, coordination, implementation, communications, and/or celebration • Staff and capacity • Technology and other one-time non-fixed assets • Expenses incurred during the grant period by the applicant and any contracted service providers for services directly related to project outcomes and administration • Strategic planning, consulting services, and other community engagement costs • Staff, board, and other relevant personnel professional development, skill training, workshops, and conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and policy • Programmatic support for outdoor experiences or environmental education • Local government master and site-specific plans for parks, recreation, trails, and open space • Project contingency
Transaction Cost Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transaction and due diligence costs including appraisal, baseline documentation, environmental assessment, title work, mineral assessment, closing costs • Applicant's attorney's fees • Mapping/survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition costs • Landowner's attorney's fees

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rights due diligence • Stewardship endowment • Tax credit application fee • Grantee staff time or overhead 	
Generation Wild Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with project planning, coordination, implementation, communications, celebration of youth & family programming related to environmental education and outdoor recreation. • Staff expenses, contracted service providers, professional services directly related to project outcomes and administration. • Community engagement, resident and youth leadership engagement expenses, professional development. • Costs associated with volunteer engagement and retention, e.g., prizes, awards, food, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital improvements • Land acquisition • Youth Sports programs • Vehicles (see vehicle purchase provision above)
Generation Wild Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement, resident and youth leadership engagement expenses • Operations expenses incurred by program providers and any contracted service providers for professional services directly related to project outcomes and administration • Strategic planning and consulting services • Capacity and costs associated with project planning, coordination, implementation, communications, celebration • Pilot/demonstration programs or projects • Staff and board development, training, and workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future costs for project implementation • Capital improvements • Gear purchases
Conservation Service Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing/restoring open space, wildlife habitat, or other ecosystems (e.g., noxious weed removal, forest health, fire recovery, flood recovery, riparian restoration) • Constructing/enhancing/restoring trails or other passive recreational infrastructure including signs, fences, tent pads, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials and equipment • Staff time • Other costs outside of conservation service corps labor
RESTORE Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration and enhancement of natural resources. • Capacity for project development and delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Limited equipment • Legal compliance
Regional Partnerships Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity and plan development • Data collection, mapping and research • Community engagement • Pilot and demonstration projects • Construction and project implementation costs • Land acquisition, restoration, and stewardship activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity expenses greater than \$150k/year

Disbursement of Funds

Community Impact, Planning, and Pathway Projects

GOCO offers the following payment options and typically reimburses costs upon project completion.

1. Final reimbursement: One final payment of the entire remaining grant amount for actual expenditures made as reflected in the Final Report form submitted by the grantee. The Final Report should be submitted once the scope is complete as outlined in the grant application or in an approved modification form, and project deliverables are ready for their intended use. A grantee is required to supply documentation of actual expenditures prior to receiving payment from GOCO.
2. Progress Payment: One progress payment annually once work has started on a project. Grantees may request up to 75% of the grant amount. The balance of the grant amount is payable upon GOCO's approval of a final report submitted by the grantee.
3. Advance Payment: GOCO may approve one advance payment per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) to support project implementation prior to beginning work. Advance payments are an exception to GOCO's standard reimbursement model and are approved on a case-by-case basis. Advance payments are intended to address demonstrated financial need or timing constraints and are not guaranteed. Using the Advance Payment Request Form, grantees may request up to 75% of the total grant amount subject to the following conditions:
 - Advance request funds must be committed via executed contracts, quotes, purchase orders, or other documentation, except for funds intended to support capacity.
 - Advance payment requests are subject to additional reporting requirements for GOCO's annual audit.
 - The remaining balance of the grant award is only payable upon GOCO's approval of the grantee's Final Report.

While GOCO prefers to issue one progress or advance payment annually, GOCO staff may consider providing additional grant payments if extenuating circumstances exist, as discussed with the grantee and documented in writing.

Land Acquisitions

GOCO prefers to disburse funds as a single payment at closing for land acquisition and transaction costs. For other costs associated with land acquisition proposals, including land-use planning or natural resource stewardship activities, grantees may request advance or progress payments as allowed for Community Impact and Pathways grants. For additional terms related to payments for land acquisition projects, see the Land Acquisition Procedures document on GOCO's website.

Disbursement of Funds to an Ineligible Entity

When the GOCO board exercises discretionary authority in awarding a grant to an ineligible entity staff may determine if funds may be directly disbursed to that entity in lieu of having the eligible entity serve as a pass-through for funding. Staff assesses the previous track record of managing GOCO grants, organizational finances, and the amount of funding awarded. In circumstances where the ineligible entity may receive funds directly, both the eligible entity and ineligible entity will provide a resolution of support from their governing body and execute a grant agreement.

Grant Extensions

GOCO recognizes that unforeseen circumstances may interfere with a grantee's ability to complete a project on time and offers options to extend a grant deadline.

Staff Extensions: If a grantee is seeking the first extension for a project of the original completion date, staff may approve one extension of up to six months from the original project completion date. Staff extensions may extend through the next board approval cycle and, when necessary to accommodate committee and board meeting schedules, may extend through up to two GOCO board meetings to allow a board extension request to proceed through the required programs committee and board review process. A grantee may receive no more than one staff extension per project.

To request a staff extension, the grantee must submit a Project Extension Request Form, hosted on goco.org, prior to the original project completion date. Staff will notify the grantee of the decision to approve or deny the staff extension request.

Board Extensions: If the grantee needs additional time to complete the project following a staff extension, the grantee can request a board extension.

The grantee must submit a Project Extension Request form a minimum of 10 weeks prior to the staff-extended project completion date so that the request may be reviewed by the Programs Committee, who will refer the request to the board to consider at its next scheduled meeting. Staff will notify the grantee of the board's decision to grant or deny the request for a board extension.

Note that GOCO staff may elect to bring a project's first extension request straight to the board, dependent on the situation, rather than following the two-step process outlined above. GOCO expects the grantee to request the appropriate amount of time needed to complete the project as part of their grant application. Failure to complete a project by the original due date, or by any extended due dates authorized by staff or the board, may result in the de-authorization of the grant.

Project Modifications

The following sections outline project modifications to the original proposed scope of work. See the section above for information regarding modifications to the proposed match outlined in the original project budget.

Unless otherwise noted, all modification requests are reviewed by GOCO staff on a case-by-case basis. Staff may approve requests within established thresholds or refer them to the board for consideration. If a proposed modification significantly deviates from the original intent of the project, GOCO staff may make a recommendation to approve or deny the request to the appropriate GOCO board committee. The committee may deny the request, approve the request, or make a recommendation to the full board. The grantee will receive written notice of the recommended process and final decision.

These terms apply to GOCO's competitive grant programs managed internally by staff. For partner programs and Generation Wild projects please contact staff directly and refer to individual project grant agreement terms.

Project Modifications for Standard (Non-Land Acquisition) Projects

Modifications to Projects Prior to Completion

A grantee may request a project modification prior to completion. Staff uses its discretion to determine if the proposed modification is appropriate, considering factors including whether the modified project will provide the same benefit and meet the same need as the approved project scope.

Upon submitting close out documents for a project, if the grantee does not request the full award amount, the best practice is for GOCO staff to provide grantee with written notice that deauthorization of the award balance will occur and the amount. GOCO staff will deauthorize funds only after the grantee confirms deauthorization, unless the project's completion date has passed or where applicable grant agreement terms apply.

Modifications to Projects After Completion

Removing or Relocating Local Government-Funded Capital Improvements

A grantee may request to remove some or all project components or relocate its project after completion and prior to the project meeting its useful life by contacting GOCO staff.

When considering removal of some or all project components, staff evaluates the circumstances surrounding the proposed removal, the project's age and condition, whether the

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grantee appropriately maintained the project, and how project removal will impact recreational opportunities for the community.

When considering project relocation, staff evaluates the circumstances surrounding the relocation, how the relocation positively or negatively impacts recreational opportunities for the community, and the ability for components to be moved without substantial damage.

Change of Use

An applicant must submit a request for a change of use to GOCO staff when a project changes from what was originally proposed in the application. GOCO staff will conduct an initial review and may deny the request or, if appropriate, invite the grantee to submit a formal proposal in writing, which may include additional information requested by staff.

In evaluating a proposed change of use, staff will assess any facilities, amenities, or other appurtenances lost as a result of the change of use, whether they existed at the time of grant application or were funded by GOCO post-award; and that the applicant's governing board adopts a resolution endorsing the proposed change of use.

GOCO may require financial compensation or other consideration commensurate with the impact of an approved change of use.

Project Modifications for Land Acquisition Projects

GOCO recognizes that circumstances may change during the implementation of land acquisitions projects. This section outlines the types of project modifications that may be requested, the applicable review process, and the level of approval required. All modification requests must be submitted prior to closing, unless otherwise noted.

Land acquisition project modifications generally fall into the following categories:

- General project modifications
- Property substitutions for multi-property acquisition projects
- Modifications to approved acreage and/or budgets
- Changes of use after closing

General Project Modifications Prior to Closing

A grantee may request a modification to an approved land acquisition project prior to closing. GOCO staff reviews requests to determine whether the proposed change remains consistent with the original project intent and the board-approved funding decision. In evaluating

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modification requests, staff considers factors including: the conservation or recreation values of the property, the approved project scope, acreage, budget, and GOCO's percentage contribution to the project.

Staff determines if the proposed modification falls within established staff approval thresholds when approving or denying the request. If a proposed modification significantly deviates from the original project intent, exceeds staff approval thresholds, or otherwise warrants board consideration, staff may bring the request to the appropriate GOCO board committee with a recommendation. The committee may approve the request, deny the request, or recommend the request to the full GOCO board for consideration.

Property Substitution for Land Acquisitions Prior to Closing

For approved multi-property land acquisition projects, a grantee may request substitution of one or more properties when all of the following conditions are met:

- Acquisition or conservation of one or more originally approved properties is no longer feasible;
- The proposed substitute property lies within the originally defined project area; and
- GOCO staff recommends the substitution for committee consideration.

In evaluating a proposed substitution, the committee considers whether the substitute property achieves the same or similar objectives as the originally approved project. Factors considered may include: conservation values; property acreage; interest to be acquired; purchase price; appraised value; intended use; location; GOCO's percentage contribution; applicant's and landowners' percentage contribution; the reason the original project could not be completed; and whether a site visit is warranted.

The committee may approve or deny the substitution request and will inform the full GOCO board of any approved substitutions.

Modifications to Acreage and/or Budget Prior to Closing

This subsection applies only to requests to modify approved project acreage and/or budget for land acquisition projects prior to closing. All other project modifications are governed by the general procedures described above.

GOCO staff may approve the following acreage and budget modifications without committee or board authorization.

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Acreage Changes:

- Any decrease in project acreage documented through survey, assessor's data, or other due diligence sources, provided the documentation substantially aligns with maps submitted in the application; or
- Any decrease in total project acreage of up to 10% from the board-approved acreage.

Budget Changes:

- A proportionate reduction of GOCO's grant such that GOCO's percentage of Project Cost remains consistent with the approved budget;
- An increase of up to 10% to the GOCO percentage of Project Cost from the approved budget.

If a proposed acreage or budget modification request exceeds the thresholds listed above, staff will notify the grantee and, at the grantee's request, bring the modification request to the appropriate committee. The committee may approve or deny the request or refer it to the full GOCO board for final decision.

Change of Use for Land Acquisition Projects After Closing

GOCO-funded land acquisition projects are intended to provide long-term public benefit and are generally expected to remain in their approved use in perpetuity. Requests to change the use of GOCO-funded land after closing are rare and considered only in exceptional circumstances. No change of use will terminate a conservation easement or other use restriction that applies to the property. Grantees considering a potential change of use are strongly encouraged to contact GOCO staff as early as possible.

Transaction Cost Assistance Program Modifications

In the event a project approved by the board cannot proceed as anticipated, staff may reallocate the associated funds to a subsequent TCAP cycle to ensure the dollars continue to advance the program's intended conservation outcomes.

GOCO Competitive Grant Program Procedures
May 2026

TERMS

Applicant: The entity or entities that own(s) the property interest.

Deauthorization: when funds are revoked and no longer available to the grantee.

Donated Property Value: The amount of property value for which a seller is not compensated as part of a land or conservation easement acquisition.

Property: The property interest originally acquired in whole or in part through GOCO funding for which a change of use is contemplated.

Open Space: Land of regional or statewide significance permanently protected and maintained to preserve its value as (1) buffer/inholding, (2) natural area and nongame wildlife habitat, (3) agricultural land, (4) greenway and stream corridor, (5) community separator, or (6) locally significant urban open land. Generally, allowed uses include only passive recreation and accessory structures such as parking and restroom facilities.

Open Space/Conservation Values: The values the property provides as stated in the grant application, grant agreement, board funding decision, and use restriction (such as a conservation easement). For example, these may include the community separator value of a property, habitat protection for certain species, or wetlands protection.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Values: The values that the property provides such as: playgrounds, picnic facilities, and sports fields; local parks; environmental education facilities; and hard surface trails.

Project Cost: The sum of eligible cash expenses and in-kind expenses (includes any donated value for land acquisitions).

Public Use: A use that directly benefits the public and that is typical of a function or facility generally provided by state or local government but that falls outside of GOCO's mission. For example, Public Use includes affordable housing developments, public not-for-profit hospitals, indoor recreation facilities, and community meeting facilities. Public Uses do not include, for example, private residential or commercial developments, private golf courses or bowling alleys.