

Cultural Activities & EPA Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Funding

Facilitating Environmental Protection Through Culture in Region 9

INTRODUCTION

Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) eligible activities may include culturally relevant environmental education and outreach and certain aspects of natural resource vulnerability assessments, among other potential activities. Some GAP allowable activities simultaneously protect the environment and help preserve culture.

TIPS FOR DRAFTING A GAP ELIGIBLE COMMITMENT

1. Connect the work with an EPA environmental program – air quality, water quality, climate change, etc.
2. Check that the activity is a priority in tribe's most updated Tribal Environmental Plan.
3. Use words in your commitment description that show capacity is being developed and link to the [GAP Guidance](#). Suggested key words or phrases may include *research, plan, aligns with EPA Tribal Environmental Plan (ETEP), supports associated outreach and education, develops program capacity, environmental quality (instead of environmental management)*.
4. Consider making multi-year plans that build on each other. You can use your ETEP as a strategic planning tool.
5. Connect the work with a capacity indicator within the [GAP Guidance](#). If you think there is a need in developing a new capacity indicator, please contact the [EPA Region 9 TIPD Division Director](#) who will work with AIEO on a formal approval.

WORKPLAN COMMITMENT EXAMPLES (AND ASSOCIATED CAPACITY BUILDING INDICATORS)

Below are some example commitments that include cultural activities. A grantee may choose whether to include them or something similar in their workplans. Please see the tips in the section above on how to draft a GAP eligible commitment.

- Tribe will use existing **cultural knowledge stories and history** for the development of **Tribal Beneficial Uses** for water quality. (*D.3.19: Tribe has developed and promulgated tribal water quality standards, including designated uses for tribal waters.*)
- Tribe will gather **cultural knowledge stories from elders** to teach the community about environmental protection. (*B.6.3: Environmental Education/Outreach plans and (or) curricula*)
- Tribe will build capacity of their environmental program through a **multi-year traditional species planning** project. In Year 1, Tribe will research traditional plant species that prevent erosion and flooding, improve water quality, prevent fire and/or assist with soil remediation. In Year 2, Tribe will draft a multi-year plan to plant traditional species. This information will be included as a major part of a climate change mitigation plan. (*C.3.14: Tribe has developed a climate change vulnerability/risk assessment.*)
- Tribe will hold a **cultural burning/prescribed burning workshop** to teach the community about why fire can be beneficial for environmental quality. (*B.6.3: Environmental Education/Outreach plans and (or) curricula*)

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES & EPA INDIAN ENVIRONMENTAL GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDING

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- Tribe will develop capacity in GIS through **mapping** areas that need focused environmental protection, including **culturally sensitive sites**. *(B.7.5: Documentation supporting the tribe's claim of interests to usual and accustomed areas and to cultural resources potentially affected by environmental protection activities.)*
- Tribe will work on a community plan to protect native resources used for cultural purposes from **pesticide exposure**. *(G.3.17: Tribe has established a Pesticides Field Program, including identification of possible pesticide inspection targets and pesticide-specific issues to determine the kind of approach needed to address concerns related to the use and sale of pesticides.)*
- Tribe will attend quarterly **meetings with local government agencies** to discuss projects that will affect both environmental quality and cultural resources. *(B.2.5: Intergovernmental agreements (tribal, federal, state, local) necessary to implement the environmental program.)*

Note that your GAP Project Officer may ask for more details within the commitments to better understand the connection between the cultural work and environmental capacity building (the statutory purpose of GAP).

RESOURCES BEYOND GAP

GAP funds may not be used to fund activities related to cultural resources that are unrelated to environmental protection, such as the repatriation of Native American cultural items. In some cases, it may make sense for a tribe to explore resources besides GAP, including BIA grants, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA – Forest Service (FS), the [Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and Tribal Heritage Grants](#) and the [California Native American Heritage Commission](#).

If you have any specific eligibility questions, please contact your [GAP Region 9 Project Officer](#). Tribes can also contact the [EPA Region 9 RTOC Co-Chair](#) directly with specific questions or concerns.