



DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL

GRANTS COMMITTEE

grants@deserttortoise.org

www.deserttortoise.org

Grant Request Policy

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Authority and Responsibilities: The Desert Tortoise Council (Council) encourages activities and research that benefit desert tortoises and/or their habitats, provide information or service to the public, or address other appropriate conservation issues in manners consistent with the goals and objectives of the Council as provided in the bylaws, including:

Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, c. To support, and be an advocate of, such measures as will contribute to ensuring the continued survival of desert tortoises and the maintenance of their habitats in a natural condition;

Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, d. To stimulate and encourage studies on the ecology, biology, management, and protection of desert tortoises;

Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, e. To gather and disseminate information on the desert tortoise and its habitat, and to be an advocate of science-based management;

Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, f. To maintain active public information and conservation education programs; and

Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, g. To support conservation actions for the protection of other tortoises, turtles, and ecosystems, as appropriate.

Consistent with the Council's interest in conservation activities and research, the Council, through its Board of Directors (Board), will consider Grant Requests from qualified individuals or organizations for research or other activities on topics related to the biology, conservation, or management of desert tortoises; the development and dissemination of educational material about desert tortoises; or in support of other imperiled tortoises, turtles, and ecosystems. All Grant Requests are evaluated and awarded as funds are available, at the sole discretion of a majority vote of the Board. Guidelines for submitting a Grant Request for funding by the Council follow.

Instructions for Submitting Grant Requests

Submissions: All Grant Requests must be submitted electronically in portable document format (.PDF) to: grants@deserttortoise.org. Each Grant Request must be accompanied by the Grant Request Cover Form.

Timing of Submissions: Grant Requests may be submitted at any time; however, because the Board of Directors requires at least 30 days to review requests prior to voting, and because voting only may be accomplished at Board meetings (held three times per year), response times may vary. The Grants Committee Chairperson will notify the applicant of anticipated response time at the time of submission.

Grant Request Format: The format for Grant Requests is flexible to allow for a variety of project types and circumstances. In addition to the Grant Request Cover Form, the following information is required:

1. A detailed description of the proposed research or activity. The description must include the following information:
 - Goals and objectives.
 - Geographic location.
 - The specific design of the study or action, including a detailed list of tasks to be performed, the sequence of tasks to be completed, personnel required for each task, methods of analysis, and overall timeframe for conducting the work, completing the project, and reporting of results.
 - If the Grant Request is for a research project, the hypotheses to be tested should be included in the introductory description along with the project objectives. A thorough literature review is to be included and anticipated results identified. Study methods (e.g., study area; data collection techniques; data analysis and statistical testing) are to be clearly presented. The project schedule should present a timeline for field studies, preparation of draft reports/manuscripts, peer review, and final product completion.
 - Specific criteria for measuring the progress and success of the project.
 - A schedule for publishing the results of the research and/or reporting the results to the Board and Council. Awardees may be expected to provide the results of the project or action in report(s) to the Board and presentation(s) at the Annual Symposium.
 - Any permits or governmental or non-governmental authorizations required for the project, and the current status of obtaining those permits and/or authorizations. Final approval of a Grant Request is contingent on all required permits being issued.
 - A description of how the project or action will benefit desert tortoises, their habitats, or other specific conservation objectives.
2. A detailed budget that itemizes funds to be used for labor and non-labor expenses must be included. Nonlabor materials or items are to be identified by unit cost (e.g., per diem, mileage, supplies, and travel). Labor costs should be identified by individual, their hourly rates, and the number of hours proposed for each individual by task. Any sub-consultant or sub-contractor costs must be identified consistent with the requirements of labor as noted above. The budget should also include:
 - The total amount of funding requested, and a description of other funding needs and/or funding sources that may be required for successful completion of the project.
 - A specific timeline for submitting requests for payment or disbursement of awarded funds.
3. Names and contact information for three professional references.
4. Résumés of all key participants, highlighting current and past relevant experience. Submission of a Grant Request implies that all key participants have reviewed and approved the request and will be working on the project.

Evaluation of Grant Requests

When a Grant Request is received by the Grants Committee Chairperson, the (s)he will identify and appoint at least two members to the Grants Committee, including at least one current Board member, and may include non-Board members that are members of the Council. The committee may seek additional information from other knowledgeable persons. The Grants Committee will review each Grant Request for completeness prior to the Grants Committee Chairperson forwarding the request for Board consideration.

The Grants Committee will evaluate Grant Requests on the following criteria:

- Would the action or research benefit desert tortoises and/or their habitats?
- Would the action or research benefit important conservation objectives not specific to desert tortoises?
- Would the action provide conservation information to the public?
- Are the proposed study methods, analytical techniques, and reporting appropriate?
- For research projects, are the hypotheses clearly stated and testable? Are study objectives clearly stated? What is the potential for successful project completion and publication of a high-quality report and/or manuscript?
- What is the likelihood of success of the proposed project, based in part on the experience of the lead investigator(s)?
- What is the cost of the project and are funds available to the Board?

The Grants Committee will evaluate each proposal for completeness. For incomplete Grant Requests, the Grants Committee will either reject the proposal or seek additional information from the author(s). For complete Grant Requests, the Grants Committee will provide their recommendation to the Board for consideration for funding. This recommendation would generally fall within the following framework:

- Provide full support for the project as proposed;
- Offer partial funding in support of the project;
- Request additional information and/or provide a set of conditions to be met for funding; or
- Decline funding of the project.

Evaluation of the Grant Request by the Grants Committee and/or Board may result in a request for additional information on project participants, project approach, analytical methods, costs of the project, or other factors related to an assessment of the potential benefits of project implementation.

The Board will consider the recommendation of the Grants Committee as a motion for discussion and vote. A majority vote, by a quorum of the Board participating in the consideration of the Grant Request during a scheduled meeting, will determine if the project will be supported. Under special circumstances, this discussion and vote by the Board may be by email or conference call.

The Grants Committee will provide a formal response to the applicant that conveys the decision of the Board and may include information regarding the Grant Request that influenced the Board's decision.

Additional Information for Grant Requests

Grant Requests will be acted on by the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting that is at least 30 days from the date of the request submittal, unless special circumstances warrant expedited action.

Generally, Grant Requests of \$500 to \$10,000 will be considered as appropriate to the project and the availability of funds. Higher levels of funding may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Council will exercise appropriate efforts to ensure confidentiality of the Grant Request and any proprietary information contained therein, but cannot guarantee such confidentiality.

Should a majority vote of the Board approve a Grant Request, a letter of funding approval from the Grants Committee Chairperson will be provided. This letter may contain stipulations such as, but not limited to, payment and deliverable schedule (e.g., withholding of a certain percentage of the total funding pending delivery of final product), quality standards and criteria, and/or expectations for a presentation of the project's results at the annual symposium. Written acceptance of the Board's offer, including any stipulations, will function as the contract for the proposed project.

By submitting the Grant Request, the applicant submitting the request acknowledges that funding is specifically at the discretion of the Council's Board, and that no guarantee of funding is implied or offered prior to consideration of the Grant Request by the Board.

Priority consideration for funding will be given to:

- 1) Projects that are in response to a specific emergency situation that may result in tortoise mortality and/or loss of habitat.
- 2) Projects that have the potential to address far-reaching issues.
- 3) Projects that address a current management issue that is important for recovery and is not being addressed by public agencies or other entities.
- 4) Projects that can be implemented quickly and provide demonstrable results.
- 5) Projects for which Council funding would leverage other funding sources.

Each year the Board may budget specific funding to be considered for awards under the Grants Policy.

Each year the Board may identify and announce specific types of projects that would receive priority consideration for funding.

Any questions concerning submission of a Grant Request may be directed to the Chairperson of the Grants Committee or the Chairperson of the Board.