

# Governance Document

## Oregon All Counties CCAA Steering Committee

Revised 2023

### Overview

This document describes the operations of the Oregon All Counties CCAA Steering Committee (OACSC) and reflects an agreement among all partners involved. This is an evolution of the Partnership's initial governance principles that were developed in their Strategic Action Plan in October 2015 and this is a living document and is considered for updates as requested by the partners.

### Background

Oregon's sage steppe ecosystem supports a dynamic composition of plant and animal species but this ecosystem type is degrading at a rate that requires collective action to halt. Sage-grouse is a single species indicator of this decline and has triggered multiple Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing decisions. While not currently ESA-listed, the potential for this indicator species to be petitioned for ESA protection serves as a call to action for sagebrush ecosystem conservation. The possibility of a 2015 listing decision brought a crisis-level response that resulted in several enduring programs that now serve as the guideposts for conservation in the sage steppe ecosystem of Oregon. The Oregon Sage-Grouse Programmatic Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) are one example. The agreements were developed by local ranchers, with a passion for and dependence on rural economies, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Together, these entities, in collaboration with scientists, biologists, and other stakeholders rose to the challenge of building a complex program with a federal nexus that provides legitimacy and oversight while being managed by local conservation organizations. The program addresses the threats that are detailed in the Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan, which supplies a framework for agencies, organizations, and private landowners to work together to address the loss of sage-grouse and their range of habitats. The Action Plan calls for conservation to be implemented with a variety of tools based on ownership. On private lands, programmatic CCAAs are utilized as the preferred tool to create site-specific plans that prioritize the implementation of conservation measures.

Oregon's five private land CCAAs are administered by the Oregon All Counties Steering Committee through programmatic agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While each CCAA operates on an individual permit the administration of the programs is a unified effort. The agreements provide assurances to private landowners that if they follow their conservation plans, they will not be subject to

additional conservation requirements if sage-grouse are listed under the ESA. These programmatic agreements represent a unique conservation tool that is based on incentivizing the landowners who commit to the 30-year agreements.

The partnership was catalyzed in 2014 because of the precipitous decline of sage-grouse in Oregon but it endures because of a shared vision and deep dedication to the landscape that supports an array of wildlife species and plant communities that are the foundation for small rural communities with natural resource and agriculturally based economies. Through the CCAA planning process, CCAA permit holders are able to facilitate the delivery of multiple conservation programs and associated funding to the benefit of privately owned rangelands. This allows conservation to be placed on the ground in a way that serves landscape-scale conservation objectives in harmony with local ways of life. The Partnership monitors all restoration actions to track cumulative progress and ensure the practices are being adaptively managed to provide the most conservation benefit.

## Purpose

The purpose of the private lands programmatic CCAAs is to develop conservation plans, implement conservation actions, and monitor restoration effectiveness as called for in the Oregon Sage-grouse Action Plan. OACSC's unifying purpose is to function as a cohesive network of implementors that extends beyond their local jurisdictions in order to address rangeland conservation in a landscape context and apply the program with continuity across eastern Oregon.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The sage steppe ecosystem is large and incredibly complex with a long history of management and ownership changes that all have a bearing on the ecological state of the land. In order to make meaningful progress toward achieving our desired ecological outcomes it is essential that we work with all of the stakeholders who have a hand in shaping these lands. The private lands CCAA program is available to all private rangelands with sage-grouse habitat in Oregon and therefore we work closely with the multitude of managers, organizations, and agencies who work on these lands in order to coordinate funding and project implementation. Additionally, we need to coordinate with other land managers who are working in this ecosystem to coordinate cross-boundary treatments and grazing systems to fully address threats at the landscape scale. Finally, we are working in a changing environment and the science and technology to address the threats to the landscape are evolving quickly. Therefore we must also rely on technical partners to advise on our methods and drive effectiveness. This array of partners is split into three groups according to their level of involvement in the CCAA program.

Roles and responsibilities of CCAA Landowners and Supporting Partners were formally vetted through USFWS environmental and solicitor review as well as solicitor review of all relevant agencies are documented in the five programmatic agreement's Enhancement of Survival Permits (Crook/Deschutes: TE356631B-0; Harney: TE35421B-0; Malheur: TE56830B-0; Lake TE56818B-0; Baker: TE-56630B-0).

The OACSC Partnership benefits from the intersection of three categories of partners who are committed to the shared vision:

*Our vision is to increase landscape and community resilience by fully implementing the Sage-Grouse CCAA program on private lands across Oregon's sagebrush ecosystem. Through the CCAA program, we will improve sage-grouse habitats and increase populations using methods that benefit working lands, wildlife populations, intact plant communities, and restoration economies so that they are viable long into the future.*

All three partnership categories agree to use best practices to enhance sage-grouse habitat because the sagebrush steppe is a brittle ecosystem that becomes more challenging and expensive to restore as resilience declines. Due to the need to balance agricultural production, real estate value, big game habitat, and sage-grouse habitat, restoration goals can add complexity to conservation decision-making. All partners seek to achieve this balance in project design and implementation and to use the best available science to guide conservation efforts. The OACSC expects that while over time individual representatives may pursue other career opportunities, each participating organization will continue to engage in the partnership and other highly qualified individuals will successfully assume the responsibilities necessary for the continued success of the OACSC.

The Partnership utilizes a Coordinator to facilitate and convene the group's quarterly meetings, maintain the CCAA database structure, provide training opportunities, and assist in funding and communication strategies. The role of CCAA Coordinator is hired by the Core Partners on a biennial basis.

## Core Partners

### Local Core Partners

- Lakeview SWCD
- Harney SWCD
- Malheur County SWCD
- Crook County SWCD
- Powder Basin Watershed Council

### Federal Core Partner

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The Core Partners are the agents responsible for administering the Oregon private lands programmatic CCAAs. The Local Core Partners develop, implement, and monitor the Site-Specific Plans (SSPs) and the Federal Core Partner provides an objective review of the plans and annual reports in order to maintain the Enhancement of Survival Permits pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act. The success of the OACSC depends on the ability of the Core Partners to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to accomplish common sage-grouse habitat conservation and enhancement goals

as outlined in the strategic action plan. The Core Partners are the only voting members of the partnership. Each entity may have multiple staff members but only has 1 vote in official OACSC decisions.

**Principles for partnership engagement by Core Partners:**

- Encourage respectful and candid conversation
- Seek meeting times that allow all partners to participate
- Leverage the partnership's large geography to engage with technical experts from across the extent of the sagebrush ecosystem
- Offer assistance to partners, particularly when organizations undergo staff transitions, funding needs, or changed circumstances
- Participate fully to ensure an equitable division of labor
- Work with state and federal managers to adapt conservation priorities in response to evolving management plans
- Recognize that the success of our partnership relies on the commitment by each Core partner

***Expectations of Core Partners:***

**Act as Voting Members of the Partnership**

- As voting members, Core Partners are expected to solicit feedback from CCAA Landowners and supporting partners and consider their input.

**Act as Primary Project Proponents**

- Core Partners are the primary project proponents who design and implement projects. Proponents work with landowners and supporting partners to develop project proposals on that align with the OACSC's Strategic Action Plan to improve sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health.

**Support the Lead Partner (see below) in implementing actions in the Work Plan**

- Core Partners assist the Lead Partner in the timely completion of tasks and the relatively equitable division of work. Core Partners will actively participate in all quarterly business meetings and provide requested information on a timely basis.

**Collect and Maintain Project Implementation and Monitoring Data in the Program Databases**

- Documentation in the database is essential to:
  - Record conservation actions;
  - Record monitoring data;
  - Maintain quality control on data collection across programs;
  - Maintain program integrity with staff turnover;
  - Inform the adaptive management;
  - Demonstrate responsible stewardship of funds;

- Represent project implementation spatially; and
- Communicate progress toward goals

All partners are expected to make CCAA data available to the CCAA Coordinator to assess progress toward the goals and objectives of the OACSC.

***Requirements of Local Core Partners:***

- Conduct public outreach and education to encourage enrollment of landowners in the Programmatic CCAA through Site Specific Plans (SSPs)/Certificates of Inclusion (CIs)
- Enroll landowners according to the steps outlined in Section 3 (of the Programmatic CCAA): Application & Enrollment Process
- Use the mutually agreed upon tracking system to protect landowner privacy
- Prepare and review SSPs/CIs for accuracy and cosign the SSP/CI document upon receiving a Letter of Concurrence from FWS
- Assist in the implementation of conservation measures, monitoring, or other measures if agreed upon during the development of the SSP by the landowner, local partners, and FWS
- Ensure terms and conditions included in the SSPs are implemented as agreed upon
- Collect and evaluate monitoring data to determine if CMs are providing the desired habitat benefit and provide a report of monitoring results to the landowner and copies of summary reports to FWS
- Provide technical assistance to aid enrolled landowners in implementing the CMs
- Work with enrolled landowners and other agencies (e.g., OSU Extension, NRCS) to facilitate appropriate rangeland monitoring and/or training
- Provide support and assist in obtaining funding from other sources for the implementation of CMs
- Monitor and report projects (e.g. implementation of CMs) in order to determine the success and adaptations needed
- Immediately report to FWS and ODFW any observed or reported mortalities of sage-grouse
- Meet annually with FWS to present annual and trend-monitoring information
- Protect, to the maximum extent available under federal, state, and local laws, against the release or disclosure of all confidential personal and/or commercial information provided by enrolled landowners and collected, gathered, prepared, organized, summarized, stored, and distributed for the purposes of developing and implementing this Programmatic CCAA
- Provide notice to enrolled landowners when a request for public records concerning this Programmatic CCAA is made, and allow the enrolled landowner to prepare a notification requesting that any confidential personal and/or commercial information be withheld

***Requirements of Federal Core Partners:***

- Provide assistance in coordinating the development and implementation of this Programmatic CCAA
- Review SSPs and provide Letters of Concurrence within 60 days if all issuance criteria are met for all SSPs completed under the EOS permit
- Provide technical assistance to aid the landowners in implementing the CMs
- Review monitoring data for consistency with Programmatic CCAA objectives to determine if conservation measures are providing the desired benefit to sage-grouse

- Serve as an advisor, providing expertise on the conservation of sage-grouse
- Assist in the implementation of conservation measures, monitoring, or other measures if agreed upon during the development of the SSP by the landowner, the local Core Partner and FWS
- Provide FWS funding, to the extent funding is available, consistent with Section 23 of the Programmatic CCAA, to support the implementation of this Programmatic CCAA and associated SSPs/CIs
- Provide support and assist in obtaining funding from other sources for the implementation of CMs
- Conduct outreach and public education efforts to promote the conservation of sage-grouse
- Immediately report to ODFW any observed or reported mortalities of sage-grouse
- Protect, to the maximum extent available under federal laws, against the disclosure of all confidential personal and/or commercial information provided by enrolled landowners and collected, gathered, prepared, organized, summarized, stored, and distributed for the purposes of developing and implementing this Programmatic CCAA
- Provide notice to the local partner when a FOIA request for records concerning this Programmatic CCAA is made, and allow the SWCD/WC to prepare a notification requesting that any confidential personal and/or commercial information be withheld

***Lead Partner: Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District (subject to change)***

All Core Partners elect a member organization to serve as the Lead Partner, in consideration of the member's organizational capacity to serve this role. Once elected, the Lead Partner is expected to fulfill that role for a minimum of 2 years, with the provision that Lead Partner duties will rotate among member organizations to distribute administrative responsibilities equitably. The Lead Partner role is evaluated biennially at OCASC business meetings to ensure the stability and capacity of the partnership.

**Lead Partner, Crook County SWCD, will:**

- Ensure that the role of CCAA Coordinator is filled and supervise that position to ensure coordination duties are fulfilled
- Adaptively manage the OACSC's SAP and track project components to ensure timely implementation
- Coordinate Core partners to achieve conservation outcomes identified in the SAP
- Provide administration and accounting for funding that has been applied for and received by the partnership
- Compile written technical feedback including ranking decisions and funding recommendations consistent with the OACSC joint funding decision-making framework outlined below
- Work with the CCAA Coordinator to ensure that program data are being managed responsibly with appropriate QA/QC in order to report progress towards achieving the conservation outcomes identified in the OACSC's SAP
- Summarize the above information in a prepared report and work with partners to update work plans on an annual basis
- Provide all reporting to funders and/or stakeholders
- Reach out to Core Partners for input and assistance with the above duties as needed

## CCAA Landowners

CCAA Landowners are defined as all private landowners with a Letter of Intent to enroll in the CCAA Program or who are enrolled in the CCAA program. The CCAA landowners engage with the Local Core Partners through the development of their site-specific plan. Along with the Core Partners, enrolled landowners are responsible for the administration, development, implementation, monitoring, and reporting on Site Specific Plans and CCAAs. Although enrolled landowners provide critical feedback regarding the implementation of the CCAA program, they are not voting members of the OACSC.

The CCAA Landowners are heavily involved in the development of their site specific plan because it dictates conservation scenarios that influence their grazing, farming and infrastructure developments. Plans must be developed in a way that is compatible with landowner management objectives and constraints in order to be adopted and implemented as intended for the 30-year life of the program. They are encouraged to identify their management objectives at this longer term time scale in order to identify causes of their limitations rather than symptoms. This facilitates more creative thinking and the incorporation of the ecological systems that support a healthy ranching operation.

CCAA Landowners are an essential element of plan implementation and work through the year on maintaining treatments. During the annual monitoring landowner and Local Core Partners work through the details of the plan and determine progress and limitations for plan implementation. This is an opportunity to discuss the relevant ecology of their property and solidify their understanding of the interactions between management and ecological outcomes. The landowners enroll the portions of their property that are designated sage-grouse habitat as well as adjacent areas with the potential to transition to habitat. While CCAA plans are limited to these acres the management ethic extends beyond the planning area to grazing allotments on state and federal lands, other leased pastures on private land and non sage-grouse habitats.

### **Expectations:**

- Assist in the development of mutually agreeable SSPs in cooperation with the CCAA permit holder, FWS, and cosign the SSP/CI document upon receiving a Letter of Concurrence from FWS
- Implement all agreed-upon conservation measures in their SSP
- Continue current management practices that conserve sage-grouse and its habitats as identified in the enrollment process
- Avoid impacts to populations and individual sage-grouse present on their enrolled lands consistent with their SSP
- Record dates, locations, and numbers of sage-grouse observed on their enrolled lands to be included in their annual report
- Record new observations of noxious weeds that they incidentally find
- Report observed mortalities of sage-grouse to the CCAA permit holder within 48 hours
- Cooperate and assist with annual and long-term monitoring activities and other reporting requirements identified in the SSP

- The property owner agrees to allow the SWCD/WC and FWS employees or its agents, with reasonable prior notice (at least 48 hours) to enter the enrolled properties to complete agreed-upon activities necessary to implement the SSP

### ***Supporting Partners***

The following Supporting Partners are entities that manage adjacent land, provide technical assistance, and administer conservation programs that OACSC interfaces with. These partners are:

- SageCon Partnership
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
- County Governments
- Local Implementation Teams (LITs)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture- Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS)
- Oregon State University (OSU) Extension
- Harney County Steering Committee
- Powder Basin Watershed Council CCAA Advisory Board

### **Expectations:**

- Provide technical and scientific guidance to ensure the development, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of conservation measures utilizes best available science and practices
- Collaborate to the extent possible to apply conservation measures in a cohesive manner across land ownership boundaries to achieve landscape scale conservation
- Assist with CCAA outreach efforts
- As applicable, provide or facilitate funding for conservation measures on enrolled properties
- Participate in meetings and support the Core Partners in applying best practices, training, advice, and spatial prioritization of proposed projects

### **Communication Strategy and Guidelines**

The strength of the programmatic CCAAs hinges on close communication and a highly coordinated execution of the program across the private lands of eastern Oregon. The long-term agreements require partners to remain committed to attendance and active participation in order to develop and hone funding strategies, data management practices, restoration techniques, and monitoring methods.

Regular communication occurs through email and phone calls. The OACSC has formed norms around responsiveness to regular communication and partners are expected to respond to partners within 3 business days, though in practice this duration is typically shorter. We maintain a shared webpage and a document library with references to planning documents and partnership documents, available through the SageCon Partnership website (<https://sageconpartnership.com/ccaa>).



**Quarterly business meetings:** The Core Partners will meet 3-4 times per year in a rotating location to discuss program management, staff needs, funding strategies, data management, and other emerging issues. Meetings will be held on a date when a representative from all Core Partners is available to participate. Core Partners will be asked for agenda items in advance of the meetings and then asked to review a draft agenda to ensure it meets their needs. Meeting notes will be taken and distributed within three weeks of the meeting and stored by the SageCon Partnership on their shared Google Drive.

**Partner meetings:** Typically held in conjunction with quarterly business meetings the Core Partners engage Supporting Partners to provide an update on the program and request input on policies and programs that affect the implementation of the CCAAs. This engagement occurs 3-4 times per year. Supporting Partners will be notified at least one month in advance of the meetings and given an option to participate remotely. If the lead partner from an entity is not able to participate they will assist in providing a substitute.

**Technical training:** In order to execute planning, implementation, and monitoring in accordance with the best available science the partnership regularly engages technical experts from around the state to facilitate technology transfer. The eastern Oregon scale of the OACSC partnership provides a vast network for information exchange and improved program delivery. Close relationships with the Technical Partners provide a wide variety of expertise. Each quarterly business meeting is a forum for requesting and receiving training; training opportunities are typically scheduled to coincide with quarterly business meetings. Continuous engagement among Core Partners and with Supporting Partners helps to identify opportunities to improve our efficiency and effectiveness, and request training and continuing education services needed to deliver a state-of-the-art program. All Core Partners attend the annual SageCon Summit to learn how to apply new technologies, strategies, and geospatial tools/resources to enhance our work.

**Data management:** Data from each program is private and solely the property of each Local Core Partner. In order to communicate the outcomes of this work it is important to store and track data in a shared database that allows our accomplishments to be rapidly summarized and reported to meet a variety of data requests. It is essential that all Core Partners use the data management systems to store and protect their work. The CCAA coordinator provides updates and training manuals to the Core Partners in order to ensure that new staff are trained on the methods and to keep current staff up to date on best practices. Technology changes rapidly and therefore the data management software will need to remain current in order to manage the data and ensure that the program is being implemented consistently and completely across eastern Oregon.

**Outreach and public relations:** There is a need to communicate our work to the public at-large, funders and concerned stakeholders, as well as CCAA Landowners or may be interested in enrolling. This means communicating local efforts as well as the OACSC's cumulative efforts to

demonstrate the scope and scale of our work. OACSC utilizes several communication outlets such as the SageCon Partnership and USFWS websites (<https://sageconpartnership.com/ccaa> and <https://www.fws.gov/project/voluntary-sage-grouse-conservation-oregon-ccaas>, respectively) and a recently (2022) produced informational video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C4jqK7EeX4>). The OACSC seeks opportunities to present on the CCAA program at local events; and regional (The Wildlife Society) and national conferences (WAFWA Sage-grouse Summit). Local partners promote their programs via their individual agency websites, newsletters, local media, and outreach events. Promotional materials produced by any member of the CCAA program about the program are reviewed by the Core Partners and are made available for adaptation and use by all Core Partners.

## **Decision Making Process**

**Administrative Decision Making:** Before a decision is taken to a vote the group will work to move the group toward consensus through constructive conversation. If a decision is needed and there is no consensus the decision will be made based on the “consensus of the majority”. The designated representative of each Core Partner is the voting member of the committee. Each SWCD, PBWC and USFWS receives one vote. When one or more voting member is not represented at a meeting, and a vote is called for, no decision will be made until the absent representatives have had an opportunity to vote on the issue. All other participants in the Partnership (e.g., technical partners and landowners) are non-voting, advisory members.

## **Project Evaluation, Scoring and Ranking**

The process for distributing jointly raised funds must be technically sound, transparent, and consistent to maintain the group's faith in the shared value of the Partnership. The Partnership will use the following process to receive, score, and prioritize. An evaluation team with one member from each Core Partner will review restoration and technical assistance projects for funding and will review and rank the projects.

### **A. Restoration projects**

Restoration projects will involve the design and installation of conservation practices on the ground. The following screening, review, and ranking processes will be utilized for restoration projects:

1. Application: The lead partner will lead the development of an application to distribute funding raised by OACSC. The application for restoration projects will request information that includes the project name, partners, specific problem and associated restoration goals/objectives, restoration actions and design to be used, proposed outcomes and metrics, monitoring approach, landowner involvement, schedule, budget and match, a map and photos. The applicant will submit the application to the CCAA Coordinator by the due date.

2. Initial Project Screening: The CCAA Coordinator will forward the proposals to the Evaluation Committee who will review the proposals and confirm that the project answers yes to both initial screening requirements below.

- a. Is the project consistent with a goal, objective, or action that is identified in the current OACSC work plan, and
- b. Has the owner and/or manager of the land where the project will take place provided appropriate written documentation that they support the project?

Projects that do not meet initial screening will not be further considered.

3. Initial Review. Projects that meet the initial screening criteria will be reviewed for responsiveness to the application and technical soundness. Written feedback will be developed by the Evaluation Committee for each proposal. Project applicants may not participate in the evaluation of their own project.

4. Applicant Response to Evaluation and Re-Submittal: If an initial proposal is inadequate the applicant may respond to feedback from the Evaluation Committee and submit a revised proposal. A site visit or discussion with the Evaluation Committee can be requested by the applicant at this time. Note that a project must pass the initial screening and be deemed complete and technically sound before it will be scored. The premise is to ensure project intent, landowner involvement, and technical merits are sound before subjecting a project to scoring.

5. Project Scoring and Ranking. Evaluation Committee members will score and rank qualifying project proposals using the Partnership Capital Project Scoring Form provided as Attachment H. Projects will be scored using the criteria and weighting described in Table 5. Applicants cannot score their own projects. The Funding Evaluation Committee will use scores to rank the projects in numerical order from 1 (top choice) to however many projects were evaluated per subbasin and basin wide. Note that some criteria in Table 5 and the attached form may not apply to certain projects. The Partnership may revise the criteria and corresponding form (or develop completely new criteria and forms) as necessary for each funding opportunity (e.g., to align scoring criteria with funding entity review and/or deliverables requirements). Formal partners will approve any revised criteria or forms by a majority vote.

### **Ranking Questions**

1. Is the project implementing practices prescribed in an approved CCAA Site Specific Plan or will benefit an SSP property? (Yes (1), No (0))
2. What is the habitat designation of the majority of the proposed treatment area? (Core (ODFW or SCD) (2), Low Density (ODFW) or Growth Opportunity Area (SCD) (1), Non-Habitat (ODFW) or Other Rangelands (SCD)(0))

3. Will the proposed project improve connectivity to a larger, open sagebrush habitat? (*Only applies to Low-Density/Growth Opportunity Areas and Non-Habitat/Other Rangelands.*) (Yes (1), No (0))
4. Is the proposed project adjacent to other past or ongoing projects by agency partners? (BLM, DSL, CWMA, Watershed Councils, NRCS, USFS, SWCD, etc.) (Yes (1), No (0))
5. Is the proposed treatment area predominantly flat or gently sloping hills (approx. < 15% slope)? (Yes (1), No (0))
6. Is this project taking place in a location that exhibits medium to high resistance and resilience? (e.g. Does the understory vegetation of the proposed treatment area consist primarily of native grasses, forbs, and shrubs?) (Yes (1), No (0))
7. Does the proposed project address the threat in a holistic way such that the threat is eliminated or adequately reduced? (e.g. Is the proposed project area free of old-growth juniper, and pine, and as planned, will no pockets of trees (riparian areas exempt) remain after treatment? (Yes (1), No (0))
8. Is the observed rangeland trend stable or upward or will the proposed project result in a transition to a stable or upward trend? (Yes (1), No (0))
9. Is the proposed project part of a conservation system that addresses the majority of resource concerns within the project area? (Yes (1), No (0))
10. Is the landowner using or willing to change to a grazing system that promotes healthy resilient sagebrush ecosystems?

*All answers to each proposal will be summed to represent the final ranking score.*

6. Final Project Selection. The OACSC members will work down the list until available funding is exhausted. If there is a tie at the end of allocated funding the final decision will be made by a majority vote of the Steering Committee. Note that applicants whose project was not funded will have the option to have their project scored in the next funding opportunity without repeating steps 1-4 (unless the project changes or the funding opportunity requires it).

7. Funds Distribution. Partners whose projects were selected will work directly with the lead partner to establish a formal contract with the Partnership that lays out the terms of funding.

## **B. Technical Assistance Projects**

1. Application: The lead partner will lead the development of an application to distribute technical assistance funding raised by OACSC. The applicant will submit the application to the CCAA Coordinator by the due date.

2. Initial Project Screening: The CCAA Coordinator will forward the proposals to the Evaluation Committee who will review the proposals and confirm that the project answers yes to both initial screening requirements below.

- a. Has the applicant completed the biennial staffing needs assessment?

b. Is technical assistance funding needed to meet the capacity level documented in the staffing needs assessment?

Projects that do not meet initial screening will not be further considered.

3. Initial Review. Projects that meet the initial screening criteria will be reviewed for responsiveness to the application and completion. Written feedback will be developed by the Evaluation Committee for each proposal. Project applicants may not participate in the evaluation of their own project.

### **Fiscal Management Procedures**

Each Core Partner manages the majority of their funds individually and applies for funding specifically to implement projects within their CCAA geography. When the partners seek funding to work in their shared geography any of the Core Partners is eligible to serve as the fiscal manager for that project. Fiscal management for joint funding is managed by the designated partner appointed to the role of fiscal manager. The fiscal manager is voted on and assigned at the time of application for funding and in the case of an OWEB FIP grant the fiscal management corresponds to the lead partner, Crook County SWCD. OACSC's decision-making process will be used to determine the lead partner as described in the Roles and Responsibilities section and the lead partner will also serve as the fiscal manager for projects with shared funding. Fiscal managers will maintain financial records and provide reports on joint funding sources to OACSC at quarterly meetings.

Funding-specific MOUs will be developed between partners where appropriate.