FAAST: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated March 19, 2014

TARGET AUDIENCE: APPLICANTS

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is FAAST?

FAAST stands for Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool. It is a web-based system developed by the State Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance to accept and store applications electronically.

FAAST is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with one exception: the first weekend of every month (starting at 6:00AM on Saturday through 8:00AM on Monday), FAAST is unavailable due to System Maintenance.

What are the computer system requirements necessary to use FAAST?

FAAST does not have computer system requirements, but it does have usage recommendations:
- Use of a PC and Internet Explorer (6.0 or higher);
- Disable pop-up blocking software while using FAAST; and
- Save work often – System will time out after 90 minutes of inactivity.

GETTING STARTED

How do I know what funding programs are currently accepting applications in FAAST?

There are three (3) ways to know what funding programs are currently accepting applications:
- Please visit the **Funding Program Resources** page to find the link to the specific funding program;
- Log onto FAAST, from applicant main menu, select the **Funding Program Resources** link to the specific funding program; or
- Subscribe to the email alerts from FAAST.

What is a PIN?

A PIN is a proposal identification number automatically assigned when an application is started.

NOTE: *When you are requesting help from the FAAST Administrative Team, please include your PIN in your request.*

USER ACCOUNTS

Can I sign up for a user account even though I am not ready to submit an application?

Yes. Having a user account will put you on the list to receive automatic emails for notification of funding programs using FAAST.

I'm a consultant, should I create a separate user account for each client?

If you are a consultant, please create a single FAAST account that associates you with your consulting firm. The system will enable you to submit applications on behalf of multiple clients using a single username/password. At the time of starting a new application, you (as a consultant) will have the option of submitting an application on behalf of the consulting firm or on behalf of another organization (your client's organization).

Can I submit multiple applications/surveys using the same FAAST user account?

Yes. With one username and password, you can submit multiple applications/surveys for the same funding source or different applications/survey for different funding sources. For example, if the State Water Board has two RFPs soliciting applications at the same time, RFP A and RFP B, you can submit more than one application to either or both RFPs.

NOTE: *If you are a consultant, please create a single FAAST account associated with your consulting firm. This will enable you to submit applications/survey on behalf of multiple clients using a single username/password.*

Is the password case-sensitive?

Yes. The password and username are both case-sensitive.

I forgot my username and/or password. What should I do?

If you forgot your username or password please either:
- Use the "Retrieve Password" feature on the FAAST main page; or
- Contact the FAAST Help Desk by email at **FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov** or by telephone (toll-free) at **1-866-434-1083** Monday through Friday from 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

I don't want to receive any more FAAST email announcements. How can I unsubscribe from the FAAST email alerts?

To unsubscribe from the FAAST email alerts, please do the following:
- Log onto FAAST;
- Click on Update User Profile option on Main Menu;
- Select NO from the Subscribe to Email Alerts drop-down menu;
- Click the SAVE CHANGES button; and
- Click the LOGOUT link on upper right hand corner.

BACKGROUND INFOMRATION	GETTING STARTED	USER ACCOUNTS	COMPLETING AN APPLICATION	APPLICATION SUBMITTAL	TROUBLE SHOOTING	RESOURCES

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

When is a Proposal Identification Number (PIN) assigned?

A PIN number is automatically assigned when an application is started. The PIN will appear on the screen in red text just above the application tabs. When you are requesting help from the FAAST Administrative Team, please include your PIN in your request.

My project spans across multiple Counties. What should I enter for County?

When your project spans across several counties, you should select "Multiple Counties" from the "County" drop down list. If your project is a statewide project, you should select "Statewide" from the "County" drop down list.

My project spans across several Regional Water Quality Control Board boundaries. What should I enter for "Responsible Regional Water Board?"

When your project spans across multiple Regional Water Quality Control Board boundaries, you should select "Statewide" from the "Responsible Regional Water Board" drop down list. Please refer to the solicitation notice or guidelines for the funding program you are applying to for direction on how to fill out the "Responsible Regional Water Board". You can check the **Funding Program** Resources page to find the program guidelines or solicitation notice.

What should I enter in the Latitude and Longitude fields?

For the latitude and longitude coordinates, select a single point for your project. This information will be used for GIS maps to show general distribution of funding throughout the state.

NOTE: *If your project is a multi-regional project, we understand that one point may not be the best representation of your project. More details on how to enter the latitude and longitude may be described in the solicitation notice for the RFP or funding program you are applying for. Please visit the Funding Program Resources page to find the link to the specific funding program.*

Does the Latitude and Longitude need to be entered in degrees?

No. The latitude and the longitude should be entered in decimals. The latitude for California has a range of 32.0000 to 42.0000. The longitude for California has a range of -125.0000 to -114.0000.

Where can I find the latitude and longitude for a project location?

On the General Information tab in the application, there is a link to **Terraserver** , an online resource that helps you locate the latitude and longitude for a specific location.

Can my application be saved before submittal, and completed at a later date?

Yes. You may start an application, save your work as "in progress" and return to FAAST at a later time to work on your application as many times as you need. The application is considered in-progress until it has been submitted or the application deadline has passed.

NOTE: *Applicants are encouraged to initiate their applications early so they know what information is needed to complete the application.*

Is it possible to copy and paste text into the FAAST application?

Yes. You may copy text contained in word processing documents, spreadsheets or emails and past directly into the FAAST application.

NOTE: *Formatted text copied and pasted into FAAST may include hidden formatting code (characters) which count towards the maximum allowed characters in a text field. To ensure you have utilized the maximum allowed characters in a text field, please first copy the text into Notepad or clear the formatting before pasting into FAAST. The character count in word processing programs, such as MS Word, do not include the hidden formatting code as part of the word (character) counts. The character count includes alphanumeric, spaces, punctuation, and hidden formatting code.*

Will information I submit online be secure?

Yes. All data transmitted through the application process is secure by using SSL encryption. This means that information traveling from your computer to the State Water Boards' servers cannot be read if intercepted by a third party.

Is my organization eligible to apply for loans and grants available through FAAST?

Each funding program has specific eligibility requirements. Please visit the **Funding Program Resources** page to find the link to the specific funding program.

Where can I find more information about a specific Request for Proposal, Solicitation, or Survey found in FAAST?

Please visit the **Funding Program Resources** page to find the link to the specific funding program.

NOTE: *At this time, NOT all State Water Board loan and grant programs currently use FAAST for application submittal. Please refer to the specific loan and grant program to verify whether or not FAAST is being used.*

How do I know which supporting documents (i.e., project narrative, budget, project map) to submit with my application?

Consult the solicitation notice or guidelines for the funding program you are applying for. Please visit the **Funding Program Resources** page to find the link to the specific funding program and it's solicitation notice or guidelines. It will have details on what comprises a completed application. These supporting documents will be submitted as electronic attachments.

How do I upload more than one file for a specific attachment category

Select the appropriate attachment category, which then populates the Suggested Attachment Title field. If you have more than one of a particular type of attachment, i.e. you have two project maps, you can add some text to the end of the Suggested Attachment Title such as "1 of 2" or "2 of 2". Then, proceed as before and browse your computer system to select the actual file to be attached.

Is there a preferred file format for attachments?

It is recommended that attachments be converted to .pdf. This file format is easy to open. However, please refer to the solicitation notice or guidelines for the funding program you are applying to for specific information on attachments. You can check the **Funding Program** Resources page to find the program guidelines or solicitation notice.

I have a file to attach which is larger than 10 megabytes. How do I submit the attachment?

When a single file is larger than 10 megabytes, it cannot be submitted through the FAAST system as is. The document will need to be split into several smaller size files and upload via FAAST.

Who should be entered on my application on the Contacts tab?

Please refer to the solicitation notice or guidelines for information on who should be entered on the Contracts tab. You can check the **Funding Program** Resources page to find the program guidelines or solicitation notice.

When is my application due?

The application deadline is set by each funding program. Please refer to the solicitation notice for the specific funding program to determine the due date. You can check the **Funding Program** Resources page to find the program guidelines or solicitation notice.

__NOTE__: A reminder email is sent to applicants 1 day before the application deadline.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

What is the Application Completion Check?

The Application Completion Check is a behind-the-scenes validation of the application to check for required fields and attachments. The validation results are displayed: Return to the application to enter the missing required information or upload the missing required attachments. If the validation results show that the application is complete, please read the certification statement and enter your initials and then click the SUBMIT button.

When is my application considered submitted?

Your application is considered submitted when you type in your initials and click the "Submit Application Now" button. A confirmation screen will appear verifying you submitted and you will receive a conformation email stating that FAAST has received your application.

What happens to my application after I submit it?

Applications undergo an eligibility screening by funding program staff. Applications that are deemed eligible by the funding program staff are then assigned for review. Next steps are determined by the funding program - some funding programs have 1-step application/review process, others have a 2-step application/review process. Applicants will be notified of any funding decisions by the funding program.

I have submitted my application. I just noticed an error. How do I fix an error on my application?

To correct an error once your application has been submitted before the deadline, you must contact the FAAST Administrative Team by email at **FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov** or by telephone (toll-free) at **1-866-434-1083** Monday through Friday from 8:00AM - 5:00PM. The application will be returned to the applicant. The application will need to be submitted again after whatever changes/corrections are made.

NOTE: Your application cannot be edited after the application submission due date has passed.

Should I retain copies of all submitted materials?

The FAAST system will maintain an electronic copy of your submitted application. The decision to keep a copy of the submitted materials is up to you.

I submitted my application and I have not yet received a confirmation e-mail. Is there a problem?

You may have to wait up to 4 hours before receiving a confirmation e-mail. Or you can verify that your application is submitted by logging onto FAAST, clicking the "Submitted Applications/Surveys" link and verifying that the PIN appears on the list of submitted applications/surveys.

When will I know if I have been recommended to receive funding?

In most cases, the funding program will contact the applicant organization directly if selected to receive funding. Please check with the funding program for any updates or announcements regarding who has been recommended to receive funding.

TROUBLE SHOOTING

I received an error while using FAAST. What should I do?

If you receive an error, please contact the FAAST Help Desk by calling 1-866-434-1083 or emailing **FAAST_Admin@waterboards.ca.gov**.

The following information is useful in troubleshooting the error you encountered:
- What kind of computer is being used;
- What kind of internet browser is used to access FAAST;
- Which in FAAST did the error occur? If it occurred within the FAAST application, please identify the tab you were on;
- PIN assigned to the application; and
- Screen shot of the error.

Help! I'm using a PC and Internet Explorer. I am unable to:
- **Navigate within FAAST;**
- **Unable to log out of FAAST;**
- **Inability to delete attachments; or**
- **Inability to add or delete organizations on the Cooperating Entity tab.**

Since November 2013, some FAAST users using Internet Explorer (version 9.0 or higher) have reported one of the above issues. After checking the FAAST system, it was determined it is not a FAAST issue, but rather a browser (Internet Explorer) compatibility view setting issue. In order to resolve the browser compatibility issue, please follow the instructions listed below:

- Open the Internet Explorer Browser window;
- Go to the FAAST website at **https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/**;
- Go to TOOLS (on Internet Explorer);
- Click COMPATIBILITY VIEW SETTINGS;
- Add the ca.gov website;
- On the bottom, click Display All Websites in Compatibility View;
- Click Close; and
- Log onto FAAST to verify the issue has been resolved (i.e., try doing what you were unable to do before).

I can't submit my application. Results from the Application Completion Check show that I'm missing required attachments. I have verified that the attachments are uploaded.

Selecting from the attachment category drop-down on the attachment tab is necessary as it is the only way of letting FAAST know that a required attachment has been uploaded. If you did not use the attachment category drop-down on the attachment tab when uploading a required attachment, please go back to the attachment tab to do so.

Every time I try to save on the questionnaire tab, I get an error. Why?

A likely cause is that one or more of the responses in the text fields has exceeded the character count in FAAST. Whenever this occurs, an error message appears. To successfully save the responses in the text fields, please shorten the responses and/or try saving the responses individually by clicking the SAVE AS WORK IN PROGRESS button each time a response is entered. This way you will know when the character count has been exceeded.

NOTE: _The character count in word processing programs such as MS Word, do not include the hidden formatting code as part of the word (character) counts. The character count in FAAST includes alphanumeric, spaces, punctuation, and hidden formatting code._

RESOURCES

User Manual

A step-by-step guide on using FAAST is provided in the form of a User Manual. The User Manual can be found at: **https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov** under FAAST LINKS on the left hand side of the screen.

Help Desk

If you have consulted the FAAST User Manual and you still have a question, please contact the FAAST Administrative Team:

- Email at **FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov**; or
- Telephone (toll-free) at **1-866-434-1083** Monday through Friday from 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

How-To Videos

To view FAAST How-To Videos, please visit the FAAST How-To Videos page located at: **https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/LoginLinks/FAASTVideos.aspx**. As of February 1, 2014, we have added 3 how-to videos:
- How to Create an Account;
- How to Start/Submit a CWSRF Application; and
- How to Upload Post Submission Attachments.