

Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated December 16, 2011

FAAST SYSTEM BASICS

1) 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 application and survey submittals electronically. FAAST is available via the internet using Internet Explorer (version 6.0 or higher).

2) Is there a User Manual for FAAST?

Yes, the FAAST User manual is available online. To view the FAAST User Manual, go to <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/> and click on the "User Manual" link located on the left hand side of the page within the gray colored column. The user manual contains detailed information on how to create a user account, login to the system, navigate through FAAST and submit your application/survey. When you select a topic in the table of contents, it will jump to the corresponding section of the user manual.

3) What are the computer system requirements necessary to use FAAST?

- FAAST is best viewed on Internet Explorer Version 6.0 or above
- Computer screens should have a resolution of at least 1024 x 760.
- If you have pop-up blocking software installed, disable it while you are using FAAST.
- Attaching electronic files to your application can be done with a dial-up connection, but may be very slow. You can email your attachments to FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov and FAAST staff will upload them to your application for you.

USER ACCOUNTS

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

Yes. Having a user account will put you on the list to receive automatic emails for notification of upcoming funding programs that plan to use FAAST as their method of application/survey submittal.

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

If you are a consultant, please create a single FFAST 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/survey, you (as a consultant) will have the option of submitting an application/survey on behalf of the consulting firm or on behalf of another organization (your client's organization). Select the option to submit an application/survey on behalf of another organization (your client's organization).

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

If you forgot your username or password please either:

- Contact the FFAST 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, or
- Use the "Retrieve Password" feature on the FFAST main page.

7) Can I submit multiple applications/surveys using the same FFAST 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 FFAST account associated with your consulting firm. This will enable you to submit applications/survey on behalf of multiple clients using a single username/password.

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION/SURVEY

8) I am not ready to fill out the entire application/survey in detail yet. How do I print out a blank copy of the entire application/survey?

Initiate a new application/survey and fill out the following three required fields on the General Information tab: "Project Title," "Project Description," and the "Responsible Regional Board." Click on the "Save as Work in Progress" button to save information entered. You can come back to edit the fields at a later time. Then click on the "Next" button to proceed to the rest of the FFAST application/survey.

If working on an application, please enter a \$ amount in the funds requested field on the Project Budget tab (the \$ amount must be within the minimum/maximum range for the funding program selected in the Funding Program tab). If working on a survey, please check a box in the Funding Program. The final step is clicking the "Preview/Submit" button and select the "Print" Option from your browser's "File" menu.

9) Can my application/survey be saved before submittal, and completed at a later date?

Yes. You may start an application/survey, save your work as “in progress” and return to the system to work on your application/survey as many times as you need. Please remember that you may have completed filling out all the information on your application/survey, but you have not completed the process until you submit your application/survey.

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

10) Is it possible to copy and paste text from other Windows applications into the FAAST application/survey?

Yes. You may copy text from Windows applications such as word processing documents, spreadsheets or emails directly into the FAAST application. To do this, open the application/survey containing the text you wish to copy and then open the FAAST browser window. While both windows are open on your computer, copy and paste the text from the application/survey into FAAST.

NOTE: Formatted text copied from other applications/surveys into FAAST may include hidden characters which count towards the total number of characters in a text field.

11) I am working with one or more individuals in preparing the application/survey online. Is it possible for multiple users to have access to modify one application/survey in the FAAST system?

Yes. You may share your username and password with other individuals who are helping you complete the application/survey. The FAAST database will allow multiple users to be logged onto the same application/survey at the same time. Please use discretion when sharing your password with other individuals and remember to keep in contact with all parties involved so there are no miscommunications about what is modified or submitted online.

12) Will information I submit online be secure?

Yes. Since you are providing sensitive personal and financial information, we have ensured that all data transmitted through the application/survey process is secure by using SSL encryption. This means that information traveling from your computer to SWRCB servers cannot be read if intercepted by a third party.

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

Each funding program has specific eligibility requirements. Please visit the Program’s website for more information.

Information on the available State Water Board's funding programs and their eligibility requirements can be found on the Division of Financial Assistance website, which is at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/funding/index.html>.

Non-State Water Board funding programs are using FFAST to administer their funding program solicitations. If you are attempting to apply for a non-State Water Board funding program, please refer to that funding program's website for specific information regarding the solicitation.

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

14) When is a Proposal Identification Number (PIN) assigned?

Your PIN number is automatically assigned when you start your application/survey. The PIN will appear on the screen in red text just above the application/survey tabs. When you are requesting help from the FFAST Administrative Team, please include your PIN in your request. For instructions for starting an application or survey, please see the FFAST User Manual.

15) 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.

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

When your project spans across multiple Regional Water Quality Control Board boundaries, you should select "Statewide" from the "Responsible RWQCB" drop down list.

17) What should I enter in the Latitude and Longitude fields?

For the latitude and longitude coordinates, select a representative point for your project. This information will be used for GIS maps to show general distribution of funding throughout the state. 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 project location may be described in the solicitation notice for the RFP or funding program you are applying for.

18) How do I know which supporting documents (project narrative, budget, etc) to submit with my application/survey?

Please consult the Solicitation Notice for the funding program you are applying for. It will have details on which supporting documents are needed to complete your application/survey. These supporting documents will be submitted as electronic attachments.

In the Attachment tab, use the Suggested Attachment Title as it appears if you only have one of that type of document. 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.

19) Is there a preferred file format for attachments?

If possible, it is advised that all attachments be converted to .pdf. This file format is easy to open by everyone.

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

When a single file is larger than 10 megabytes, it cannot be submitted through the FAAST system. It may be possible to split the file into several smaller documents and upload those smaller files through FAAST or submit the larger than 10 megabytes attachment(s) on a CD. If you submit attachments by United States Postal Service mail, please include your Proposal Identification Number (PIN) on the CD and make sure that the CD arrives in time to meet the due date of the RFP or funding program.

21) Who should be entered on my application/survey in the Contacts tab?

The Contacts tab in FAAST is where you can list the personnel who have assisted you in completing the application process, such as State Board, Regional Board or staff from other State or Federal Agencies. Refer to the solicitation notice for the RFP or the funding program for which you are applying for more details.

22) What is a Cooperating Entity?

Cooperating Entities are people or organizations that will be helping you carry out the tasks of your proposed project, including non-profit groups, volunteers, private companies, etc. Refer to the solicitation notice for the RFP or the funding program for which you are applying for more details.

23) Which application/survey tabs do I have to complete before submitting my application/survey?

At the time the application/survey is created in FAAST, the tabs which will comprise the application/survey are selected. Only those tabs that are related to the application/survey will appear.

Please refer to the policy, guidelines, solicitation notice, or webpage for the Program for which you are applying to or submitting a survey for more information as to how the application/survey tabs should be completed.

24) When is my application/survey due?

Each funding program has a different application/survey due date. Please refer to the solicitation notice for the specific funding program to determine the due date.

25) When is my application/survey considered submitted?

Your application/survey is considered submitted when you type in your initials and click the “Submit Application/Survey Now” button. A confirmation screen will appear verifying you submitted and you will receive a confirmation email stating that FFAST has received your application/survey.

APPLICATION/SURVEY SUBMITTAL

26) How do I print a copy of my submitted application/survey?

You may print a copy of your submitted application/survey for your records by logging into FFAST and opening the read-only version of your application/survey. Select the FILE/PRINT from your browser window and then select Landscape to print your application/survey. If you want to share an electronic copy of your application/survey with other parties, you can save the application/survey screen as “web page complete” and email it as an attachment.

27) I have submitted my application/survey, but I now notice an error. How do I fix an error on my application/survey?

To correct an error once your application/survey has been submitted, you must contact the FFAST 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. FFAST Admin staff will manually change information (if possible) or change the status of the application/survey from SUBMITTED to IN PROGRESS (which makes the application/survey editable).

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

28) Should I retain copies of all submitted materials?

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

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

The “Application Status” tab on your application will be updated periodically to indicate changes to your application’s status. The distribution of funding is dependent on each funding program. Please refer to the solicitation notice for the Request for Proposal or funding source for more details.

NOTE: Some funding programs notify applicants via email instead of using the “Application Status” tab in FFAST.

30) I submitted my application/survey 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/survey is submitted by logging onto FFAST, selecting your PIN, and going to the “Status” tab of the application/survey to view the date and time stamp on your electronic submittal.

NOTE: If you have not received a confirmation e-mail within 24 hours, please contact the FFAST Administrative Team at FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov or by telephone (toll-free) at 1-866-434-1083 Monday through Friday from 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

OTHER RESOURCES

31) User Manual

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

32) Need further Technical Assistance using FFAST?

If you have looked on the FFAST User Manual and you still have a question, please contact the FFAST Administrative Team:

- Via 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.