

Grant FAQ Fact Sheet

1. How can my organization receive a grant from the Community Foundation?

Our competitive grants are open to incorporated, charitable 501(c)(3) organizations serving Sonoma County (applicants for grants from the Healdsburg Area Fund and the Sonoma Valley Fund (??) do not need to be incorporated). Each grantmaking program has its own specific evaluation criteria.

You may apply for a grant if your organization has an existing service or program (or plan to start a new one) that fits one of our program areas. All proposals are judged using our [grant review criteria](#) and compared with other applications. The best proposals are then selected for funding.

2. Are there things that you do not fund?

We generally do not fund competitive grant applications for:

- Annual fund campaigns, fundraising events or debt retirement
- Capital campaigns
- Conferences or one-time events
- Grants (or loans) to individuals, except academic scholarships
- Grants to primary and secondary schools or to their academic foundations, except through Healdsburg Area Fund and the Sonoma Valley Fund grants
- Political or religious purposes (or programs requiring religious participation)
- Projects submitted by departments of local government or that fall within the domain of municipal government responsibility
- Projects that primarily serve residents outside of Sonoma County
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other characteristic protected by law.

3. Where do I start? Whom should I contact?

We welcome and strongly encourage contact by organizations serving Sonoma County. Please contact our Vice President for Programs at 707.579.4073 x15 to discuss your proposal and how it fits the grant cycle criteria. Call well in advance of our grant deadlines for prompt assistance.

We are happy to answer any questions you have concerning polices, guidelines or application procedures. However, we do not offer advice on how to write your application, assist with developing proposals or help you select a project to submit. Before you call, please review our grant program descriptions.

- Can you find a grantmaking program that seems like a good match for you?
- Does the timing of the grant program fit with your funding needs?
- Do your project expenditures include items which we do not fund?
- Are you confident that you know how to submit an application?

After reviewing these guidelines and our criteria, make a list of any questions you have and contact our Vice President for Programs at 707.579.4073 x15.

4. Are there specific forms I need and where do I get them?

You must use our grant application materials available at www.sonomacf.org/receive.

5. Is there a limit to the number of grants I can apply for in any given year?

You may apply to each grant program, as long as you meet our grant criteria. Generally, you may submit only one application per grant program per year. However, multi-service organizations (those that have distinct program departments serving different fields) may submit multiple applications if approved by our Vice President for Programs. Contact our Vice President for Programs at 707.579.4073 x15.

6. If my organization receives a grant this year, may we apply for additional funding next year?

Yes. While we are not yet able to give multi-year grants, it is fine to reapply for additional years of support.

7. I am considering starting a new nonprofit. Do you provide support for startup costs?

Our mailing list of nonprofits has over 500 organizations. Chances are very good that an existing organization already addresses the area you want to serve and could be a capable partner to accomplish your objectives. Starting a new nonprofit is neither quick nor easy and the competition for local funds is challenging. We encourage you to work with existing nonprofits and are happy to advise you on potential partners.

8. How do you determine which proposals to fund and who decides?

A number of grant review criteria are weighed in determining whether the proposal demonstrates:

- a good match with the grant program guidelines
- your organization's capacity to deliver its proposed outcomes
- clearly-defined outcomes
- the relevance of the issue/population/need addressed

Applications are first reviewed by our Vice President for Programs to ensure that they are complete and submitted by eligible organizations. Letters of intent are reviewed by our staff, with input from the Grants Distribution Committee which is composed of community volunteers and members of our Board of Directors. The committee evaluates all applications for Ending Family Homelessness Grants and grants in the Arts, Education, Environment and Health/Human Services.

It then makes recommendations to the Community Foundation's full board, which finalizes all competitive funding decisions. In order to make the review process for smaller grants more

responsive, our board has delegated decision-making responsibility for Basic Human Needs Grants to a small staff/board group.

9. How and when will I know whether our proposal has been funded?

All Letters of Intent and applications are acknowledged by a letter stating when the proposal will be reviewed and when you can expect to hear a decision. Once decisions are made, letters of award or regret are sent immediately.

10. What is the Community Foundation and from where does its grant money come?

A brief description of [community foundations](#) can be found in our [About Us](#) section.

Community Foundation Sonoma County was founded in 1983 by a group of leading citizens who created endowment funds as a permanent source of funds for supporting local nonprofit organizations. Competitive grants comprise about 8 percent of our total grantmaking with funds generated by designated payouts from [endowment funds](#). Grants that honor a donor's charitable intent comprise 92 percent of our grants and are recommended by individuals, groups, businesses and nonprofit organizations with established funds at the Community Foundation. These go to support specific causes and organizations.

Please contact our Vice President for Programs at 707.579.4073 x15.