



## GRANT GUIDELINES Opportunity Grants

### ABOUT

Opportunity grants are part of the Community Foundation Monterey County (CFMC)'s competitive grants program, which allows nonprofits serving Monterey County to receive assistance when an urgent, unexpected situation arises or when a small grant is needed to test an innovative idea or capture a promising opportunity. These grants can be an entry point for emerging organizations and new ventures that have not received CFMC funding in the past.

Prospective grant applicants are **highly** encouraged to call and speak with a staff person regarding questions and/or proposal ideas. Please contact Esther Figueroa, [estherf@cfmco.org](mailto:estherf@cfmco.org), 831.375.9712 or 754.5880 x107.

### OPPORTUNITY GRANT GUIDELINES

Opportunity grants are considered for the following types of activities:

#### **Emerging Organizations or Ventures**

Funds may be provided to develop a new, innovative idea or endeavor that would not occur without CFMC's support. Priority is given to emerging organizations or ventures that have strong potential to serve an important community need. Start-ups will occasionally be considered if they are able to demonstrate the ability to sustain the effort. These grants can cover the work of individual organizations or collaboratives as they address a new community issue or a continuing issue in an innovative way. Some possible activities might include:

- Recently incorporated nonprofit organizations that have been successful as unincorporated organizations
- [Neighborhood Grant](#) projects with several years' experience that have demonstrated increasing strength and effectiveness and
- Pilot projects that provide an innovative approach to existing issues.

#### **Urgent and Time-Sensitive Needs**

Opportunity Grants for urgent and time-sensitive projects are designed to respond to rapidly changing circumstances in the community. Successful applications will clearly illustrate the changes or needs that have occurred since the organization's last budget was passed and the urgency that requires a response before the fiscal year-end. The application should explain why the situation could not be planned for. Funding may cover both program and operational expenses. A loss in revenue or budget shortfall is not an eligible time-sensitive need. Examples might include

- Efforts to address an unforeseen emergency
- An emergent issue that has evolved in a new way over a short period of time (less than a few months) and
- Other unexpected needs that could not have been planned and budgeted for.

### Selecting Grants

The CFMC receives far more grant requests than is possible to fund. Opportunity grants are meant to allow CFMC to be responsive to community needs, with the understanding that Opportunity grants address needs in a specific scenario. The CFMC encourages proposals that:

- Describe the community need, with data if available, that substantiates the request.
- Include a brief description of the circumstances that now allow for the proposed project (why it could not have been planned for or which partners/situations have come together that now make it possible).
- Demonstrate community support, e.g., volunteers and financial donations.
- Are well-thought out and have the necessary financial and human resources for implementation and ongoing success. Grant request fits well with the organization's mission and long-term plans for effectiveness.
- Are supported by leadership that is receptive and welcoming to learning and improvement; clients' feedback is sought and program/volunteer assessment is a regular practice.
- Seek to increase racial/financial equity.

## Grant Awards:

Opportunity grants typically range between \$1,000 and \$5,000. Larger grants (up to \$10,000) may be considered but are the exception. Approximately \$50,000 total is available per year. Organizations may apply for more than one grant during the calendar year, as long as each request is for a different type of support (i.e.: Organizational Development, Opportunity, Community Impact, etc.). Priority will be determined based on potential impact on the organization, community need and fit with our funding interests. Efforts in which a CFMC grant would leverage other resources are encouraged.

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Opportunity grants are open to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and (occasionally) other public agencies serving Monterey County residents.
- All organizations applying for a grant should be current on reporting obligations for past Community Foundation grants of any type.
- Individual organizations within a collaborative applying for a grant may also apply for their own Opportunity grant, as long as it is not for the same project as that of the collaborative.
- Businesses and individuals are not eligible, with the exception of social enterprises associated with a local nonprofit.

\*Fiscal Sponsorships: Efforts or collaborative projects that are not legally incorporated may partner with a tax-exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which will serve as the fiscal sponsor for the proposed grant. The fiscal sponsor must agree to be accountable to the CFMC for the programmatic and financial outcomes of the grant and have a signed agreement with the sponsored group verifying the terms of the arrangement. **Please contact us if your organization does not have its nonprofit status and plans to apply in conjunction with a fiscal sponsor.**

## Exclusions:

- Activities that are non-secular or promote a religious doctrine
- Academic or medical research
- Funding to schools and public agencies that would supplant tax-supported, mandated services
- Annual fundraising campaigns or events
- Creation of, or addition to, endowment funds
- Payment of debt or legal settlements
- Political or partisan purposes
- Expenses incurred prior to the grant award date

While schools, faith-based organizations and public agencies are eligible to apply for a grant from the Community Foundation, due to our limited funds, grants are infrequently awarded to such organizations. It is highly recommended that you speak with your program officer before submitting a grant application to discuss your proposal idea and fit with our guidelines and interests.

*CFMC does not support organizations that discriminate in their employment practices, volunteer opportunities, or delivery of programs and services on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.*

## Submitting a Grant Proposal:

Opportunity grant proposals are accepted throughout the year, until all funding has been awarded. Decisions on grants will typically be made within two to three months of receipt of the proposal. While there is no application deadline for Opportunity grants, proposals should be submitted at least three months before the start of activities to be covered. Organizations must be current on past grant reporting requirements. This includes final reports for Opportunity, Organizational Development and Community Impact grants, etc.

For questions regarding Opportunity grants, contact Esther Figueroa, Scholarship and Community Impact Officer, [estherf@cfmco.org](mailto:estherf@cfmco.org) or 831.375.9712 or 754.5880 x107.