



**COVID-19 Nonprofit Resilience and Sustainability Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions
November 18, 2022**

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Thank you for submitting your questions via email. Questions have been consolidated, with responses covering all questions asked. Please refer to www.vmcfoundation.org/cvgrants for the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and Request for Proposals, a link to the application portal, a recording of the webinar held on November 9, 2022, and a copy of the slides from the webinar.

The next round of written questions will be due by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, with responses posted by 12:00 pm on Friday, December 2, 2022. Our contact email address is cv19rsgrant@hhs.sccgov.org

Important Dates & Timelines

When is the deadline for proposals?

Application submissions will close on Monday, December 19, 2022 at 4:00pm PST.

What are the timeframes for Resilience and Sustainability?

Resilience - All awarded funds must be expended between March 1, 2023, and February 28, 2024 (12 months). Any unused funds at the deadline must be returned to the VMC Foundation.

Sustainability - All awarded funds must be expended between March 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024 (18 months). Any unused funds at the deadline must be returned to the VMC Foundation.

What is the timing of the FAQ and Responses?

Questions Due Wednesday by 5 PM	FAQ Responses Posted Friday by 12 Noon
November 16	November 18
November 30	December 2
December 7	December 9

Will we receive responses by email or do we need to wait for the FAQ Response posting?

We will be responding to questions submitted via email in the FAQ Response postings, according to the above schedule.

Eligibility

Do organizations need to demonstrate a decrease in revenue or overall budget during the pandemic?

Organizations must demonstrate a negative economic impact. Please refer to the NOFA, Section 3, Page 7, Eligibility Requirements.

Does the non-profit organization need to be located within Santa Clara County to qualify? Or can we qualify if we serve residents of Santa Clara County?

Organizations must have a facility in Santa Clara County, primarily operate in Santa Clara County, or serve populations located in Santa Clara County.

If the non-profit has a multi-county footprint, can we still apply? If so, can the money be applied to the whole agency rather than a Santa Clara County-specific service line only?

The organization can apply as long as there is a facility located in, or you serve populations located in Santa Clara County. The grant would be for Santa Clara County specific services only.

Is there a standard definition of negatively impacted? or is this a subjective evaluation from the grants review committee.

Please refer to the NOFA, Section 3, page 7, Eligibility Requirements.

Is experience with SAM.gov funding a prerequisite to receiving this grant?

SAM.gov is not a funding source. SAM.gov issues the Systems for Awards Management Unique Entity ID.

Our 501 c was birthed during COVID _ our IRS Determination Letter and 501 c status became effective 08/2021, do we qualify to apply for either category?

Your organization will need to demonstrate that you had a negative economic impact due to Covid-19.

Do organizations need to be in a particular service sector? For example, do you have to be in health services? Are small arts groups eligible?

An organization does not need to be providing services in a particular sector in order to be eligible, but must be a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19).

I am curious to know what the requirements are of the non-profit. Would a 501(c)(6) qualify, such as a business association in an underserved business corridor?

Under SLFRF, the U.S. Treasury eligible nonprofit organizations are those with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) designations.

Can faith-based organizations partake in this?

Yes, if they are a 501(c)(3) public benefit organization and if they do not proselytize (ie, insist that people must adhere or convert to a particular faith).

Are nonprofit, private schools eligible for consideration as the document discusses maintaining vital public service?

As detailed in the Notice of Funding Availability, this program is intended to assist local nonprofits in recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to build a more sustainable responsive organization that provides greater impact to the community they serve. To clarify, this funding is not for the provision of services. Instead it is for the strengthening of the organization to continue to provide these much needed services. Applicants must have a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) public benefit designation.

Charter schools are usually non-profits, can they apply for this funding?

Yes, as long as they have a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) public benefit designation.

What is 2 CFR 200.214 Suspension and Debarment?

An organization cannot have been suspended or debarred or otherwise excluded from participating in federal assistance programs. Please refer to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for further details.

Our organization is located in East Palo Alto. We serve families from Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Would we be eligible to apply for the COVID-19 Nonprofit resiliency grant?

The funds are not available to pay for services. However if you lost revenue due to closure, you may be eligible. You would need to show the average % of Santa Clara County clients assisted.

Most of our students live in either San Mateo or Alameda Counties; however, we have approximately 20 students who are Santa Clara County residents. We would like to use our Sustainability grant to plan for program expansion into Santa Clara County to serve more Santa Clara County residents, the vast majority of whom would be students of color. Would our program, currently serving 20 Santa Clara County residents and intending to use our Sustainability grant to fund expansion planning, be viable under this funding? Or are you looking to fund programs that currently serve a greater number of county residents?

This funding is not for service provision. If the intent is to open or expand a facility in Santa Clara County, funding for purposes of such expansion planning would fall under Resilience. The funding request would need to be proportionate to the use by residents of Santa Clara County.

As a result of the pandemic, nonprofit organizations such as private, independent day schools have increased services while generating and receiving significantly less revenue. Nonprofit schools are building alternative revenue streams to become more sustainable. Would the COVID Nonprofit Resilience and Sustainability Grant support

private schools to create alternative revenue sources to offer programs and workshops to train teachers in low income schools that fall under the Santa Clara County QCT?

The nonprofit school must be for public benefit. Grant funds can be used to strengthen the nonprofit organization's infrastructure, including adapting to a fee for service structure or developing expertise in digital campaigning. Grant funds can also support training for staff that will assist the public benefit nonprofit to become more accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive and/or to provide more accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive services.

If we are receiving a different (direct service) ARPA grant concurrently, are we still eligible for these grants?

Yes. These funds are to support organizational infrastructure and/or to implement organizational change to strengthen racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in organizational operations and service provision.

What if there is not a negative impact to the non-profit but to the clients that you are working with? Are we eligible?

No. Please refer to the NOFA, Section 3, Page 7, Eligibility Requirements.

Can we demonstrate an increased need to qualify? We weren't negatively impacted by the pandemic directly, but our wait-list for services has tripled.

You would need to come up with a project that can strengthen the organization and allow it to more efficiently serve your clients. The funds are not for services, they are to be used for strengthening your infrastructure. Please refer to the NOFA, Section 3, Page 7, Eligibility Requirements.

Funding Categories

How is Resilience defined?

Please refer to the NOFA, Section 2, Page 5, Resilience.

How is Sustainability defined?

Please refer to the NOFA, Section 2, Page 6, Sustainability.

Can Resilience and/or Sustainability funds be used for services?

No. For both categories, the funds are to support the organization. Funding is not for the provision of services. As detailed in the Notice of Funding Availability, this program is to assist

local nonprofits in recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to build a more sustainable, responsive organization that provides greater impact to the community served.

If we have two needs within a category, can we request funds for both purposes? Or must we choose one?

You can request funds for two different needs within a category. For example, if you want to implement a strategic planning process and you also want to work on board governance, you would need to put those together and show the two different projects.

What determines organizational need regarding the Resilience funding area?

Organizational need can be in many forms. The purpose is to assist the eligible nonprofits with recovery and building back stronger. Nonprofits faced significant challenges because of the pandemic, including increased demand for services and changing operational needs. Many diverted cash-on-hand earmarked for other operational/infrastructure needs. If your organization experienced negative economic impacts as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, that could have resulted in financial hardships and may require assistance to gain financial stability. As services open to more in-person activities, the need could be to modify office/service space to mitigate COVID-19.

Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs)

How do we determine if we qualify as a Qualified Census Tract or serve those within a QCT?

Find out if you are located in or serve QCTs:

[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html?locate=\\$fips\\$](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html?locate=$fips$)

Enter the address and click **Go**

Then under **Map Options** please select:

Color QCT Qualified Tracts

Show Tracts Outline

Do we need to register to be a QCT or is it automatic if our population qualifies?

No, you do not need to register to be a QCT. QCTs are areas designated by HUD.

Is there a preference for organizations operating in QCTs?

Yes, during evaluation of the application, preference points will be awarded to organizations within a QCT and/or serving the communities within a QCT. Please refer to the NOFA, Section 1, Page 3, Equity Considerations.

Please note that an organization does not need to be within a QCT and/or providing services in a QCT in or to be eligible for the program.

For QCT preference points, your physical office does not need to be within the QCT, but you must be providing services to communities within a QCT.

Is priority given to organizations in the QCTs most affected by Covid?

Yes, HUD has defined QCTs as communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID.

Eligible Uses

The guidelines indicate that expenses must have been incurred after March 17, 2020 (for Resilience) and March 2021 (for Sustainability). Is it possible to apply for funds for projects that were completed already, for example for equipment purchased or facility reconfigurations early in the pandemic, or do the projects still need to be ongoing?

If not reimbursed by insurance or other funding sources, and the expense incurred was to address Covid, your organization could apply for funding.

Can you get reimbursed for equipment and systems that were purchased during the pandemic?

Yes, if those items were necessary to support a change in operational practices during the pandemic.

Page eight of the NOFA states that funding shall not be used to supplant other committed funding sources. Would it be possible to please define the term “supplant” in the context of this RFP?

To supplant is to replace funds that have already been funded or committed to a project. For example, if you received funding or a bona-fide commitment letter to fund this proposed project, but the other funding source was more flexible, you can not replace the more flexible funds with these funds.

When the pandemic hit, we increased services to distribute to those experiencing food insecurity. Thanks to an outpouring of community support, we were able to scale up and as such actually increased our revenue for the past two years. The organization, however, was disproportionately affected by the pandemic in that we had to hire additional staff and move to a larger facility to accommodate the need - a need that is still profound. We are now looking to boost our fundraising and marketing to keep up with ongoing demand.

Given that we actually increased revenue but need to boost our infrastructure to remain sustainable, do we meet the grant qualifications?

Yes, if your organization can demonstrate that additional staff and expansion of your facility were not reimbursed by other funding sources.

What kind of “proof” would you be looking for to demonstrate that a project would “strengthen our infrastructure” (i.e., are you looking for specific measurable outcomes) and, if so, do those outcomes need to be tied in some way to delivery of services and/or service numbers?

Measurable outcomes should include what you plan to do as well as a description of how it will help your organization. They do not need to be tied to the delivery of services or service numbers, but a side result of this project to strengthen your organization may yield enhanced services and/or increased service numbers. For example, if funds are used to develop expertise in digital fundraising, a byproduct may be increased revenue available for an increase in services.

Do we need to pay directly for any services/materials we apply for funds for? We are looking at replenishing books that went home to kids, or funding anti-racist training for teachers.

Yes, you will need to provide documentation of the expenses incurred. Replenishing high need inventory is eligible, but you will need to document your inventory prior to COVID-19 and current. You can also offer racial equity training to staff and to your stakeholders that will assist you in furthering your mission.

We recently began a theory of change: Can we apply for funds retroactively?

Yes, as long as expenses were incurred after March 3, 2021.

We are trying to understand how to apply for these funds. We are an organization with a board of about 50% BIPOC and 50% White. Our programs contract BIPOC women from the community who have never had the opportunity to hold formal space in decision making for programs, nor have they had the opportunity in the past to formally work. We would like to continue to offer this leadership development program and expand it to include more people from the community. I wonder if we can use the Sustainability funds for this project?

Yes, if this leadership development program expands decision-making within your organization, it could fall under Sustainability.

Also, our organization is in need of establishing systems (administrative, financial, etc) to help us recover from the pandemic as we lack in these areas. I wonder if we can also use funds from the Resiliency section to contract part-time help to help us set up and thrive?

Yes, grant funds may be used for the cost of setting up the systems that will strengthen organizational operations, (e.g., expert consultants) and appropriate staff time to ensure completion of the project. Funds request shall not include staff time post-implementation beyond February 28, 2024.

We would like to know if these funds can be used to provide direct financial support to college students from low-income families? These are students who graduated from high school in Palo Alto whose families qualified for the federal free and reduced lunch programs and were disproportionately impacted by the Covid19 pandemic. Many suffered mental health problems as a consequence of the pandemic and their college campuses shut down.

No. These funds may not be used for scholarships or sponsorships. This program is designed to assist nonprofits address the negative economic impacts to the organization caused by the pandemic or to implement organizational change to strengthen racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within the organizational operations and/or in the provision of services or programming in the community.

If this unmet need is a result of the loss in donations, demonstrated loss of donations may be eligible. Please keep in mind the eligibility requirements that organizations must have a facility in Santa Clara County, primarily operate in Santa Clara County, or serve populations located in Santa Clara County.

During Covid, funds earmarked for developing a practice track for the school's track and field team were diverted to build outdoor classrooms so students could attend school during the 2020-2021 school year. Sports are an important avenue for enrollment and enhanced student health and well-being. Since the funds were re-allocated to create safe space to prevent COVID-19 transmission, can the resiliency grant funds be used to build the track and field project?

Funds can be used to reimburse costs to build the outdoor classrooms, if not reimbursed by insurance or other funding sources.

Can funds be used to obtain starlink (or other satellite based) systems to provide greater internet service for our two rural campuses? This would be used to enhance off campus learning and at home learning in rural areas should covid outbreaks (or future pandemic) return and require quarantining.

Yes, increasing access to technology to impacted communities is eligible. Fortifying your infrastructure falls under Resilience.

In response to covid and social distancing requirements, office space was reconfigured to separate work stations. We had to eliminate a "sick room" where students who had developed symptoms would go to rest until they could be picked up by their parents. Can funds be used for acquiring or building space to replace our sick room.

Yes. Please review the [Capital Expenditures section in the General Provision: Other of the Federal Register](#) that describes eligibility standards for these expenditures. Be reminded that construction projects may trigger Davis-Bacon labor standards or environmental review requirements, if combined with other federal funding sources.

Can grant funds be used to reconfigure school kitchen space to provide greater food service for students (Pre/K to grade 12) and sanitary cleaning.

Yes. Please review the Capital Expenditures section in the General Provision: Other of the Federal Register that describes eligibility standards for these expenditures. Be reminded that construction projects may trigger Davis-Bacon labor standards or environmental review requirements, if combined with other federal funding sources.

Many of us received a PPP grant which will reflect in our ORG Budget and Audits for 2020 and 2021. Therefore can the grant be applied to the actual ongoing revenue shortfall due to Covid - lower fundraising / canceled events and program fees?

Yes.

May 100% if grants be used to purchase medical supplies for the homeless in Santa Clara County?

Yes, replenishing high needs inventory is an eligible use.

Can an ASK be built around reduced fundraising and event revenue during Covid years?

Yes.

Can funds be used for hiring "hard to find" program staff?

With this grant being one-time funding it's important to remember that by using these funds the staff must be hired to work towards completion of your project. Staff members that are not hired for the project, that will need to be paid after the project completion date, are not eligible for funding.

Can we use a grant to help fund hiring an executive director/leadership personnel lost during covid with no funding for replacement for sustainability of the organization?

These funds cannot be used for long term staffing, but they can be used to aid in the search for an executive director/leadership personnel.

If building reserves would actually allow us to increase our organizational capacity to serve (because we need to increase our reserves before we acquire more contracts, or we will no longer have a month and a half of reserves), could we apply for building reserves?

No, replenishing reserves is not an eligible expense. A demonstrated diversion of cash-on-hand to Covid-19 response may be an eligible use. Replacing a capital improvement reserve would not be an eligible use.

I know that building reserves is NOT an eligible expense, but if we are receiving funding to address expenses for fiscal years that have already been closed (meaning that they are defraying costs from previous fiscal years that already have been closed), how do we show that expense in a project budget?

Requested further clarification. Deferred to December 2, 2022 FAQ Responses posting.

Fiscal Agents

What do you need from fiscally sponsored projects as opposed to independent nonprofits?

A registered 501c3 nonprofit can be the fiscal agent for a community based organization that is not a 501c3. The fiscal agent will submit the application on behalf of the community based organization. This relationship should be with organizations that have similar missions. The grant will go to the fiscal agent, therefore a Memorandum of Understanding will be required to outline each organization's responsibilities. Therefore:

For fiscally sponsored projects, do you require the project to obtain a UEI or do we use our fiscal sponsors?

If you are not a registered 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) and you are working with a fiscal agent, the Systems for Awards Management Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is the number assigned to the fiscal agent.

As a fiscally sponsored organization, do we submit our own financials or those of our fiscal sponsor (they have audits and official board approved financials)

Financial statements and Board approved budgets will be from the fiscal agent. However, the Fiscal Agent may require it as part of the submission to address the proposed project budget.

Organizational Budget

Is there a maximum organizational budget size to qualify for this grant?

No, there is not a maximum organizational budget to qualify for this grant. Preference points will be awarded to organizations who had an annual budget under \$2 million during the operational year of 2020.

If the resilience effort is around 2 of our programs that are affecting clients the most and the cost of those programs are under \$2M, can we report the total under \$2M?

The \$2 million threshold applies to the organizational budget. Overall organizational budget is the number we'll be reviewing, not program.

May we submit a budget only for our Santa Clara County regional operations which is under \$2 million, or must the submitted budget be our Board approved budget for our entire organization which covers many counties?

If your local organization is accountable for its own budget, then yes, you may submit the budget for your local operation. If your organization's budget is rolled into the overall organization's budget, then no, you must submit the financials for the entire organization.

If a national non-profit with a budget over \$2 million has a regional branch located in Santa Clara County, whose regional operating budget is under \$2 million, would they still be considered a "small non-profit"?

Yes.

Project Budget

If we are asking for reimbursement of expenses for equipment, can any associated indirect costs be included as part of the budget?

Yes. This would fall under Resilience.

For simplicity, can we just show 10% indirect costs in our project budget (i.e., to avoid needing to develop an indirect cost rate plan), even if our typical indirect cost rate is 15%?

Yes.

What is a 10% de minimis?

2 CFR 200.414(f) states that organizations can charge a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs. Modified total direct costs includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, and services.

Documentation

Do you have to be registered with SAM.gov to apply?

If you do not have a System for Award Management Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, you must provide proof that you have an application pending when you submit your application. There is a link to SAM.gov in the application portal. Your registration must be complete prior to contract finalization as we will be requesting the UEI number at that time if it has not already been provided.

For financial documentation, we are currently in 2022. Is a 990 sufficient for 2021? Which particular financial statements are you looking for in 2021 or 2022?

We need financial statements from the fiscal year 2021-2022. If you do not have financial statements for this year, you can send a 990 and the financial statements from your most recent quarter.

There was mention of a board signature approved document, do you need that notarized?

The document needs to be approved and signed by the appropriate board representative.

Project Evaluation and Scoring

How does the project narrative factor into scoring?

The project narrative sets the stage for the evaluation criteria. It will be referred to throughout the course of the application's review.

We seek clarity on the project impact section. Does the proposed grant need to directly impact the QCT? What are examples of measurable impact on the QCT?

The funds are to assist public benefit nonprofits address the negative economic impacts of pandemic-caused losses or under-investment in organizational infrastructure, and to assist nonprofit organizations with planning or implementation of organizational change to strengthen racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within organizational operations and/or in the provision of services or programming in the community, with the goal of creating benefit in impacted communities.

An example: piloting a promotora model of community engagement can result in increased community members participating in policy discussions.

We seek to expand access to transformative learning programs for students and teachers in the QCT. In the grant application, should we provide examples of the school's measurable impact on low income communities nationally and internationally as well examples of how students have benefited from these programs?

Provide adequate information to support your request.

Ideally, what measurable outcome do you want to see from the grant recipient?

Outcomes may include how organizational stability and the strengthening of racial equity work will impact the community.

What level of need do you seek to address to impact the lives of people in the QCT? For example, the program we will propose in the grant application offers a framework (both

in-person and virtual) to teach students how to become engaged citizens, empower them to create meaningful change in their communities, and develop confidence in their voice as engaged citizens.

The applicant shall demonstrate the level of need to support the request.

Will other applicants scores and proposals be made available to everyone?

No. We will be notifying each organization individually.

Collaboration/Consortium

Could you help define what is a consortium?

A consortium is generally more than one entity working toward the same community impact by applying their specific strengths/expertise to make a whole program. This model requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) authorized by each organization and specifying each agency's participation, responsibilities, outcomes, and budget.

We are considering creating a cohort of organizations who would be eligible on their own but who do not have the capacity to submit this level of grant on their own. The regranting would only be for the specified uses but the burden of reporting and submitting would be on the "parent" organization, i.e. us. le acting as an intermediary for multiple partners. Is this allowed?

It sounds like you may be considering creating a consortium. Please refer to the response above for information about a consortium.

If we essentially act as a pass through organization for a school district, does that make us a consortia requiring an MOU? We raise funds for the district, but then give the money to them and they spend it on what we specify.

A consortium is defined in the previous question. If you are a registered nonprofit, you can apply independently of the school district. Applying for pass-through funds to go directly to the school district for their desired use will not be eligible.

Application

Will a hard copy application be available?

No, a hard copy of the application will not be available. The application must be submitted through Submittable.

Will there be language access resources available for applicants?

Please contact us at cv19rsgrant@hhs.sccgov.org with specific accessibility questions.

On the application are there word or character counts?

Yes, some questions have file upload limits and maximum word counts.

Are there any formatting requirements for the project narrative, such as font, font size, maximum pages, line spacing?

No.

The project narrative section of the application on Submittable allows for 10 attachments. Is there a page limit for the project narrative section and/or each individual attachment?

No. Please note that we do not expect 10 attachments, though in some cases that might be necessary. Please take into account the relevance of any document you attach.

In the online application, there are two sections that note we should upload the Project Budget – 1) Under the project summary; 2) A few items below that, under Additional Documentation, the first item is noted as “Project Budget including completed template and supporting documentation.” Can you clarify in which section we should upload the project budget?

Thank you for catching this. We have removed the item under “Additional Documentation”.

Technical Assistance

If our questions are not answered, can we be guaranteed they will be answered if we submit to the email cv19rsgrant@hhs.sccgov.org?

We will answer overall questions about the program, including funding categories, eligible uses, eligibility requirements, and the application process. We cannot answer specific questions about how a proposed project will be evaluated.

Will you provide technical assistance, provide a list of suggested organizations/consultants agencies and/or helpful tips for those seeking support to race/equity organizational development for organizations awarded with sustainability grants?

We cannot provide technical assistance during the application process.

Other

What is the maximum amount each organization can apply for?

Please refer to the NOFA, Section 2, Page 6, Grant Limits.

Do matching funds help increase the chance of being awarded?

No.

With regard to not lobbying or contacting County officials, their staff, or panelists during the review process, who are “County officials”?

This term includes the Board of Supervisors and any Santa Clara County staff member.

At the end of 2024, what are examples of project results you are looking for to determine these grants were successful and potentially worthy of future funding from Santa Clara County resources.

The applicant shall provide project outcomes/results and the anticipated impact to the community you serve.

Are there two grant programs, one through Valley Medical Center Foundation and one through Santa Clara County?

No, there is just one grant program. Valley Medical Center Foundation is administering this \$10 million Covid-19 Nonprofit Resilience and Stability Grant Program, which is funded by the County of Santa Clara through the Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Is District 3’s URJGENT grant program separate from this program?

Yes, D3’s URJGENT grant program is separate from the COVID-19 Nonprofit Resilience and Stability Grant Program.

Do you know if San Mateo County is offering something similar and what agency is administering it?

We do not know. We suggest contacting your local district office.