

Draft Request for Proposals Content – Resilient Organizations

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Grant Program Overview

The Community Foundation Sonoma County is entering into a new partnership with the County of Sonoma through its Resilient Organizations Program, which was created to strengthen the financial stability and long-term resilience of our local nonprofit sector.

Nonprofits have been on the frontlines of every major challenge our community has faced, from wildfires and floods to the pandemic and ongoing economic pressures. They have often stepped up to meet growing needs while resources shrink.

With the end of Covid-era funding and deep reductions in government support, nonprofits are being asked to do more with less. Local governments are facing similar budget constraints, which underscores the need for strategic collaboration between the public and philanthropic sectors. Through this new grant program, we aim to provide targeted support to organizations that are working tirelessly to sustain essential services for our community.

While these grants cannot replace the scale of lost government funding, they are designed to help nonprofits adapt to current realities, stabilize operations, and maintain the capacity needed to weather future challenges. In acknowledgment that community needs will outweigh the resources available through this grant program, CFSC will share aggregate data on funding reductions reported in nonprofit applications with relevant stakeholders and the broader community to inform additional giving. Our shared goal is to mitigate the impact of funding cuts, safeguard critical community services, and strengthen the resilience of Sonoma County's nonprofit ecosystem.

Grant Program Process & Timeline

The 2025 cycle will follow this timeline:

- Request for Proposals Released – September 10, 2025
- Applications Due – October 10, 2025
- Award Letters and Contracts Sent for Signature – By November 7, 2025
- Awarded Organizations Publicly Announced – By November 26, 2025
- Mid-Term Check-In – March 2026
- Final Check-In – August 2026

Total Available Funding: \$525,000

Grant Size: We anticipate awards in the range of \$25,000 - \$75,000, with a median grant of \$50,000. Approximately 5-10 grants will be awarded.

Grant Period: One-year.

As part of the application, you will be asked to:

- Describe the specific funding reductions your organization is experiencing.
- Explain how your proposed project addresses those challenges.
- Indicate whether you would like to opt-in to share specific information from your application with CFSC's donor-advised fundholders to enhance their understanding of the needs facing your organization.

Program Objectives

This program aims to:

- Increase nonprofit flexibility and resilience in a rapidly changing funding and policy environment.
- Support organizations in addressing immediate challenges caused by reduced funding.
- Support planning for issues that may require coordinated responses, either now or in the future.
- Assist organizations and their networks in restructuring service delivery systems in response to funding cuts and policy changes.
- Ensure strong geographic coverage in each of the County's five supervisorial districts. There will be 1-2 organizations selected from each district. Collaboration with other nonprofits in your region is encouraged.
- A primary funding priority for this cycle is basic human services, but this is not a requirement for proposal submission.
- Grants will not be made to fund typical, ongoing operations unrelated to recent changes.

Eligibility & Evaluation Criteria

To be considered, applicants must:

- **501(c)(3) Status** – Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (or fiscally sponsored by one) with offices and services based in Sonoma County.
- **Grant Objective Alignment** – Clearly demonstrate alignment with program objectives.
- **Designing to the Margins** – Show how the program is designed by and for communities most impacted by funding cuts.
- **Organizational Connection & Capacity** – Detail evidence of current/past impact in sectors with significant funding reductions and the likelihood of sustained commitment in this area.
- **Partnerships** – Engage in strong existing partnerships and detail plans for collaboration with grant program funds.

- **Geographic Focus** – Have strong physical presence in a specified supervisorial district, such as a dedicated building for service provision or consistent services with physically present staff (i.e. a regular mobile unit route or office hours).

Examples of Projects

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Restructuring service delivery to specifically respond to new challenges caused by policy changes or funding reductions for individual organizations or networks.
- Supporting new or improving existing trusted communication and outreach networks.
- Changing program delivery methods, locations, or systems to address community needs.
- Planning, convening, coordination, or collaboration among multiple organizations to bolster or improve services and/or increase community resilience in the face of decreased funding.
- Implementing leadership development for staff and/or board members to address the increasingly complex organizational challenges posed by policy changes or funding cuts.
- Retraining staff and volunteers to address community needs by delivering services in new ways.
- Developing and implementing action plans to diversify and increase an organization's funding streams in response to recent, unprecedented changes in funding.
- Developing and implementing plans that increase an organization's overall resiliency in the face of funding reductions and policy changes.