



# request for proposals

Increasing Access  
to Affordable Housing

# Increasing Access to Affordable Housing

## Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) was created to address our community's most challenging problems. Despite the area's great wealth, residents are challenged by so much – lack of affordable housing, financial instability, the precarious safety and insecurity of immigrants and persistent gaps in student achievement. Through its discretionary grantmaking, the community foundation addresses these issues among others, including support for people to engage in civic affairs and the public decisions that impact their lives.

SVCF recognizes that to achieve meaningful impact on these issues, collaboration is critical. By issuing requests for proposals (RFP), we hope to solicit the best ideas from nonprofits, public agencies, research institutions and community organizations serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and to partner together on solutions. The focus of this RFP is on increasing access to affordable housing in our communities. We invite you to apply.

## Grant Application Deadline

**The application process will open on February 24, 2020.**

Grant applications must be submitted through our online application system, **Apply SVCF**, by **11:59 p.m. PST on Friday, March 20, 2020.**

## The Problem

While Silicon Valley's economy is marked by steady job growth, declining unemployment and high median wages compared to the state and nation, housing costs are causing widespread economic hardship among very low, low and middle-income residents. Despite the region's strong economy, incomes, especially among the bottom 20 percent of residents, have not kept pace with housing cost increases. These residents are often forced to choose between living near where they work or other basic necessities, such as food, child care and health care. Many can no longer afford both.

Funding cuts for affordable housing programs at the federal and state levels have made the problem worse. This, combined with local regulations and exclusionary zoning practices, community opposition and high land costs is making it extremely difficult to build more housing. A serious imbalance between the jobs created and the housing available puts even more strain on the limited housing supply. Low-income residents are disproportionately priced out of quality housing and are at greater risk of being evicted. Some resort to living in overcrowded or substandard conditions. Others cope by re-locating to other parts of the Bay Area and beyond.

Segregation and exclusion also continue to further preclude opportunities for low income communities and communities of color.

## Key Dates

**February 24, 2020:**  
Grant application opens

**March 20, 2020, 11:59 p.m.**  
Proposal submission  
deadline

**May 2020:**  
Announcement of grant  
awards

## The Opportunity

Amidst this dismal housing climate, California as a whole and the Silicon Valley region, have made progress toward increasing affordable housing. In recent years, California's achievements, in contrast to developments nationally, are raising hope in the region. A number of housing bills have been signed into law that will protect residents from rent gouging, increase funding and other resources for housing and suspend regulations that could be recognized as obstacles to building affordable housing. At the local level, wins for Measure A and K along with the Regional Partnership for the Bay's Future are generating millions in new funding for affordable housing in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

These successes are a testament to the work of housing advocates and other stakeholders over the last decade. They create an opportunity to bring solutions to scale and ensure that very low, low and middle-income residents can live and work in the region.

## Program Goal

SVCF believes having a place to live is a human right. Our goal is to invest in strategies that will create communities in which everyone has a place to live. SVCF has chosen to focus this grant opportunity on the following:

1. **Protecting people from unjust evictions and displacement** through anti-gouging and just cause policies as well as tenant counseling and legal services. Efforts that make it easier to find affordable housing will also be considered.
2. **Preserving existing affordable housing** through acquisition, rehabilitation and one-for-one replacement projects (any occupied or vacant very low and low-income unit that is demolished or converted to other uses will be replaced with a comparable very low and low-income unit).
3. **Creating new affordable housing** through inclusionary policies and streamlining of local regulations, leveraging new funding, and innovation in production, such as through land trusts, co-ops, shared housing, secondary units and use of technology.

Consideration will also be given to proposed projects that support the engagement of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the strategies described above.

**Note** that SVCF will accept proposals for specific projects or for general operating support. Proposals for general operating grants will also be considered provided the overall organization mission meets goals of the grant strategy. General operating grants are unrestricted funds that enable an organization to carry out its mission. These grants are intended to support an organization's administrative and infrastructure costs, assist with strategic financial and organizational capacity and/or help maintain core programs and essential staff.

## Application Process

- 1) **Review reference materials**, including **SVCF's research brief** on Increasing Access to Affordable Housing and Public Transit Opportunities. Reference materials may be found at: [siliconvalleycf.org/grants](https://siliconvalleycf.org/grants).
- 2) **Participate in an information session**. This is highly encouraged for those responding to this RFP. Because all grant applications are submitted online, this session provides an overview of SVCF's online application system, **Apply SVCF**.

Additionally, the information sessions will provide an opportunity for applicants to review the RFP in greater depth and ask questions. Click [here](#) to register for an information session.

- 3) **Submit grant application**, including required attachments, through our online application system, **Apply SVCF**, **beginning February 24, 2020. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (PST) March 20, 2020**. A guide to the online application system can be found [here](#).

Applicants should include a budget narrative that clearly outlines the necessity of the project's specific line items. More specific questions about project eligibility, proposal process and evaluation can be addressed through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.

## Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- Organizations serving San Mateo and/or Santa Clara counties. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region may apply but should demonstrate significant service to these areas or partner with a local organization that can.
- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation, those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation, public agencies, collaborations of nonprofit and public agencies, or other entities that have a designated charitable purpose.
- Organizations must not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status or any other protected status.
- Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support addresses the needs of the wider community

without regard to religious beliefs.

### **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

SVCF awards grants on a competitive basis. Successful proposals will need to meet the minimum eligibility criteria and provide a clear and compelling narrative about how the proposed project will advance SVCF's program goals. Proposals will also be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity of project description and strategies/activities to be implemented to reach desired outcomes
- Relevant and measurable outcomes and indicators of success
- Strategies that are based on well-tested models and can be scaled or expanded regionally, while maintaining local relevance
- Achievable timeline (12 months) that corresponds to the key activities
- Organizational capacity to implement project, including staffing, leadership, operational and fiscal management
- Established track record of work related to proposed project or likelihood of success with a new project
- Ability to leverage financial, human and technical resources from other partners leading to greater impact
- Ability to contribute successes and lessons learned with the field

### **Awards**

Please note that project proposal narratives may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of transparency and encourage learning among grantees, future applicants and the community at large.

### **Review and Selection Process**

An advisory committee with issue expertise will help staff review all proposals recommended for funding to SVCF's Board of Directors. Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call and/or other type of communication from SVCF staff as part of the review process.

**Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in May 2020.**

### **Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities**

Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF's reporting and evaluation requirements and be willing and available to talk with SVCF staff and donor advisors if requested. Grantees will also be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project successes, challenges and lessons learned to further the overall program goals of this RFP.

Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in joining us to address our region's housing crisis. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.



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[youtube.com/TheSVCF](https://youtube.com/TheSVCF)

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**About Silicon Valley Community Foundation**

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. We engage donors and corporations from Silicon Valley, across the country and around the globe to make our region and world better for all. Our passion for helping people and organizations achieve their philanthropic dreams has created a global philanthropic enterprise committed to the belief that possibilities start here. Learn more at [siliconvalleycf.org](http://siliconvalleycf.org).

**More Information**

If you have questions, please contact us at [grants@siliconvalleycf.org](mailto:grants@siliconvalleycf.org) or call 650.930.9885.

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