Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment program FAQs

General Questions:

What is guiding Silicon Valley Community Foundation's new strategic direction?

SVCF’s vision is to build a community where all can lead financially secure, safe and fulfilling lives. Our work is centered on racial justice and focused on communities that often face challenges that are exacerbated by inequities, specifically Black, Indigenous, people of color and undocumented residents. Our impact goals are to:

1. Reduce systemic disparities by raising the standard of measurable change on economic mobility outcomes, specifically in housing, early learning and financial security.
2. Build a strong and engaged community by engaging deeply in community and aligning with and investing in BIPOC individuals, movements and organizations.
3. Develop a culture of effective philanthropy by engaging donors and corporate partners to garner catalytic capital and aligned action.
4. Build a trusted and enduring institution for the community.

What changes can nonprofit partners expect in SVCF’s approach to funding?

Nonprofit partners can expect more core operating support, a more streamlined grantmaking processes and simpler reporting.

What are Silicon Valley Community Foundation's grantmaking strategies?

Within the Community, Action, Policy and Strategy Division at SVCF, funding will be distributed through various channels:

- Through our Strategic Initiatives team, early childhood development, housing and financial stability will be prioritized. Visit this link to see current updates and information related to our strategic initiatives: Introducing SVCF's Early Childhood Development Strategic Initiative | Silicon Valley Community Foundation (siliconvalleycf.org)
- Through our Community Partnerships and Learning team, funding will be provided for special initiatives such as the California Black Freedom Fund (Funders Join Together to Launch
$100 Million California Black Freedom Fund | Silicon Valley Community Foundation (siliconvalleycf.org), the LatinXCEL Fund, and Equity Forward.

- Through our **Community Action** team, nonprofit organizations can apply for funding through the Community Catalyst Fund and/or the Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment Program
  - Community Catalyst Grants support community-building activities and movement-building activities. Support will be provided to organizations led by people of color and allied organizations working in the areas of arts and culture, civic engagement, environment, health, immigration, media and journalism, faith, and neighborhoods.
  - The Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment program will provide general capacity-building and leadership investment support to organizations as well as through other initiatives such as the LatinXCEL Fund (Funders Join Together to Launch $100 Million California Black Freedom Fund | Silicon Valley Community Foundation (siliconvalleycf.org)).

**How did SVCF pick its new strategies?**

In July 2020, SVCF announced its new strategic plan with the objective of building a Silicon Valley where all can live financially secure, safe and fulfilling lives. This followed a year-long strategic planning process supported by The Bridgespan Group, which included extensive conversations with nonprofit and community organizations. SVCF also conducted interviews with issue-area experts and analyzed trends related to our strategic areas of focus. We connected with many of our community partners throughout the process and beyond, carefully considering all insights and feedback provided.

**Who decided on those strategies?**

Our board of directors approved the strategies, which were recommended by SVCF staff and informed by our community.

**What are the geographic restrictions for funding?**

Organizations must serve San Mateo and/or Santa Clara counties. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region may apply but should demonstrate significant service or partner

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with a local organization significant service to these areas or partner with a local organization that does.

**What is BIPOC?**

BIPOC is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous and people of color.

**What is an ‘allied organization’?**

Allied organizations, not BIPOC-led, are those working with BIPOC-led organizations to advance a racial and economic justice agenda.

**Can nonprofit organizations apply for donor advised funding?**

Organizations may not apply directly to receive funding from donor advised funds established by individuals or families. However, our staff will share investment opportunities with our donors. Also, the community foundation manages a number of corporate advised funds, several of which are open to application. Please check our [corporate partners](#) on our website to see if your organization is eligible for one of the corporate funding programs.

**Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment Questions:**

**When may I apply for a grant?**

The Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment Program is open year-round, meaning the application will be open to applicants throughout the year, with no closing date. Applications will be collected and reviewed on a *quarterly basis*. In 2021, funding decisions will be made in August and November.

2021 Timeline:

- Submit an application by July 31 to be reviewed in August. Grantees will be selected and announced by August 31.
- Submit an application by October 31 to be reviewed in November. Grantees will be selected and announced by November 30.

**What is SVCF looking for in the program application?**
Please review suggestions about how to submit a competitive application. Additionally, please listen to the recorded information session. The Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment team is also available for a conversation -- please send an email to grants@siliconvalleycf.org to schedule with our team.

Will SVCF make multi-year capacity and leadership investments?

We anticipate that we will be providing multi-year funding in future years. Currently, funding for the Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment Program will be considered for up to 12 months.

If my organization has already been awarded a grant from SVCF, will I be eligible for program support through the Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment Program?

Yes, you may submit a program application even if you have been awarded a grant through other SVCF priorities or strategies. If you have been awarded a grant from the Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment program, you will be eligible to submit another application after that grant period has expired.

If my organization is a current grantee through another SVCF initiative or priority, will I be given priority?

No, all program applications will be reviewed based on the program criteria. There will be no priority given to current grantees.

If my organization submits an application, is it possible that the organization may be awarded less money than requested?

Yes, it is possible that your organization will be awarded a smaller grant than what was requested depending on the availability of resources. Any change of this nature will be discussed with the organization before approval, to ensure the modification will still need the organization's goals.

Will any general operating support grants be awarded?

Yes, organizations may include general operating support within the program application budget.
Is the organizational budget required to be based on our current fiscal year or a projection of the upcoming year?

Budgets may be based on either. If you anticipate a significant change in your organization's overall budget going forward, please include the projected budget and explain the variance in the budget narrative.

May we submit letters of recommendation?

No, we ask that you do not submit letters of recommendation. We will not evaluate letters of recommendation as part of your application. If we need additional information not included in the proposal submission package, we will contact you.

If my application is not funded, will I receive comments from the reviewers or a debriefing of some other kind from the community foundation?

Yes, we are committed to building relationships with our nonprofit partners and will endeavor to be as responsive to questions from applicants as our staff capacity allows. Please schedule time with the Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment team here.