

# Community Action Grant Applicant FAQ

## **What are Silicon Valley Community Foundation's new strategic direction and impact goals?**

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](#)?**

Current SVCF strategies include:

### Community Catalyst Grants:

SVCF invests in BIPOC-led and allied organizations working in arts/culture, civic engagement, environment, immigration, media/journalism, faith & neighborhoods – seeding a movement building ecosystem and serving as cornerstones to building a stronger and more engaged community. These flexible grants are for core operating support or programmatic efforts.

### Movement Building Grants:

SVCF invests in BIPOC leaders and BIPOC-led organizations as cornerstones to building power and advancing racial justice.

### Partnership and Learning Grants:

SVCF invests in collaborative initiatives that fund data and analysis efforts of our communities'



most pressing challenges. These grants are by invitation only and occur on a rolling basis throughout the year.

### **How did SVCF pick the 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 to these areas or partner with a local organization that does.

### **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.

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

SVCF uses a Request for Proposals (RFP) format. The RFPs are publicized on our [website](#), social media and other marketing channels as well as in our network of intermediary organizations supporting nonprofit partners in the region. RFPs are released on specific dates and each has a specific application window and deadline for submission. Some strategies will be provided year-round.

### **How do I obtain an RFP?**

The RFPs and applications will be announced and advertised on our [website](#), social media and other marketing channels as well as in our network of intermediary organizations supporting nonprofit partners in the region.

### **Where can I get more information about applying for a grant?**

Following RFP announcements, you will find detailed information about each opportunity on our [website](#).  
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website. This may include key dates for RFP information sessions and due dates. Please note that the information sessions are specific to the particular focus of each RFP (for example, the [Community Catalyst Fund - Promoting Civic Participation](#) information session would be different than the Community Catalyst Fund - Journalism). You can also reach out to our staff at [grants@siliconvalleycf.org](mailto:grants@siliconvalleycf.org) with specific questions.

**Are there any organizational eligibility requirements that would prevent an organization from being considered for a grant (e.g., organizations that have been incorporated for less than a year, have a small budget or staff complement, etc.)?**

Different grantmaking strategies may have different eligibility requirements. The process is competitive; an organization's capacity and relevant experience, as well as its ability to provide specific, measurable, achievable outcomes for the grant, are examined closely during the review process. Please refer to the Eligibility Criteria section of the RFP guidelines for the complete list of requirements.

**May an organization submit a proposal for a multiple-year grant?**

We anticipate that we will be providing multi-year funding in some subsequent grant rounds.

**May we submit multiple proposals under the RFP process? No.**

**My organization intends to respond to an RFP under one of SVCF's strategies. If we are awarded a grant under that strategy, will we be eligible to respond to other RFPs?**

Yes, you may submit a proposal for another RFP even if you have been awarded a grant under a separate strategy.

**If my organization submits a grant proposal, 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.

**Will any general operating support grants be awarded?**

Yes, organizations can request grants for general operating support.

**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.



**When will we be notified if we have received a grant?**

RFPs have different award dates. Please refer to the key dates on our website and individual RFPs for the specific dates when announcements will be made.

**May we submit letters of recommendation?**

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

**If our proposal does not get funding, will we 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.

**Can 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.