For content-related questions specific to our 2020 Equity Grants Open Cycle strategies, please see our Guidelines.

Eligibility

**Are 501(c)(4) organizations eligible to apply?**
In general, the San Francisco Foundation realizes that lobbying as engaged in by 501(c)(4) organizations provides a valuable tool to change the political landscape in the Bay Area and advances racial and economic equity. However, given the strategies of the 2020 Equity Grants Open Cycle, 501(c)(4)s will not be eligible for funding this year.

**Are organizations with current or active grants with the San Francisco Foundation eligible to apply?**
Yes. Current grantees can apply for a concurrent grant in the 2020 Equity Grants Open Cycle.

**Would advocacy, nonpartisan voter engagement, and other forms of organizing in opposition to or in support of state and/or national policies be eligible for funding under the 2020 Equity Grants Open Cycle?**
Organizations that serve a significant number of Bay Area residents can apply for support for local, regional, state or national policy campaigns as long as they are directly engaging Bay Area residents in one of the five counties the San Francisco Foundation serves (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo) in these organizing, voter engagement, and/or advocacy efforts.

**Can organizations based outside of the Bay Area apply if they’re engaged in a project in a Bay Area county?**
Yes, as long as you are working in one of the five counties the San Francisco Foundation serves (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo).

**If an organization doesn’t have a previous funding relationship with the foundation, will their application be considered only after all current and past grantees are considered?**
No, priority will not be given to current or past grantees. Organizations new to the foundation are highly encouraged to submit an application.

**Are public and government agencies eligible to apply to the Equity Grants Open Cycle?**
Yes, public and government agencies are eligible to apply.
Can collaboratives/coalitions of organizations apply together?
Yes, collaboratives are encouraged to apply. We are asking that one organization take the lead on behalf of the collaborative. This organization must have independent 501(c)(3) status (cannot be fiscally sponsored). When entering the application information, the collaborative should be listed as the grantee, and the lead organization should be listed in the field for “fiscal sponsor.” In the short purpose, reference that the application is for support of a collaborative.

Note: As you have entered an organization as a fiscal sponsor, the foundation requires confirmation from the fiscal sponsor that they currently fulfill that role for the applicant organization. This can come in the form of an email or letter.

For collaboratives, the foundation requires a letter from the Chief Executive or Executive Director of the lead organization confirming that their organization is able and willing to receive grant funds on behalf of the collaborative.

Can organizations applying on behalf of collaboratives submit a second application for their individual organization?
Yes, second applications are accepted from organizations that also submit an application as the lead of a collaborative. Therefore, please follow the above instructions when submitting on behalf of a collaborative, so that your individual application is accepted, too.

Can separate operating departments of a county agency submit multiple applications?
Government agencies can submit multiple applications on behalf of separate departments and/or government agencies, but not multiple applications from the same departments/agency, e.g: a public health department and child services department from the same county agency may each submit an application, but the public health department may not submit more than one application.

Can multiple groups with the same fiscal sponsor apply multiple times?
Yes, multiple projects under the same fiscal sponsor can apply.

Can organizations with budgets under $1 million apply for Equity Grants Open Cycle funding, or should these organizations apply to another separate pot of funding?
Yes, there are no budget thresholds for applications to the Equity Grants Open Cycle.

The Application Process

If an organization has different projects, can the organization submit an application requesting funding for each project?
No, organizations are allowed to submit only one application per organization (with the exception being organizations that apply on behalf of a collaborative—see information above). The application can span different projects. Organizations should also note that an application can include multiple locations rolling up to similar outcomes.

Would the foundation consider multi-year funding?
The foundation will consider multi-year funding of up to 2 years.
If an organization applies for a multi-year grant, is it possible that you might only fund the project for just one year?

Yes, we anticipate requests for multi-year funding, and we want to be intentional in terms of supporting multi-year projects, as well as meeting some immediate and shorter term goals for the current year.

Will the grants primarily be to support general operations or to support specific projects?

Across all requests for either general operating or project support, we are looking for outcomes tied to our 2020 strategies to advance racial and economic equity in the Bay Area.

If an organization runs programs in different counties, should it submit a different application for each county?

No, please submit one application on behalf of your organization from the county in which it is headquartered. Organizations should also take note that an application can include multiple locations rolling up to similar outcomes.

What is the grant period?

The grant period will start on June 1, 2020. The end date will depend on the recommended duration.

Is the limit for the “ask” linked to the organization’s income or solely based on the cost of the project?

The requested amount should match the need, versus the organization’s budget.

Would you fund an organization that is seeking to expand its services?

Yes, however, the foundation does not fund capital campaigns in the Equity Grants Open Cycle. Capacity building grants are rare, but acceptable if the work aligns with the goals of the program and pathway.

Our work falls under multiple SFF strategies. How do we choose a category for our application?

Please review our 2020 guidelines and apply under the most aligned strategy/ies. On the application, you will have the opportunity to choose additional supplemental strategies.

Does the Equity Grants Open Cycle fund direct services?

A proposal for direct services will be considered for funding if the services include, or are tied to, an innovation aimed at bringing about the possibility of policy change or larger changes in the system.

Given that 501(c)(4)s are not eligible for funding in the Equity Grants Open Cycle, but the some of the strategies include advancing local, regional and state policies, how should applying applicant organizations interested in policy change navigate this?

Via the Equity Grants Open Cycle, the foundation can make general support grants to support all of an organization’s work, including the advocacy work of the 501(c)(3).

Types of Support

How does the San Francisco Foundation define the types of support it offers?

• General or Operating Support funds day-to-day operating costs or the general purpose or work of an organization, rather than a specific purpose or project. This is also referred to as an unrestricted grant.

• Project or Program Support funds specific purposes or projects, rather than day-to-day operating costs or the general purpose or work of an organization.
Should Fiscally-Sponsored organizations set up a Board of Directors?

It is recommended that fiscally-sponsored organizations build an advisory board or some sort of leadership council. Having this structure is good practice, builds in some accountability, and is especially helpful if organizations are thinking about transitioning to independent nonprofit status.

What does the San Francisco Foundation consider as an allowable indirect percentage of grant funding?

The San Francisco Foundation is aware that all organizations have costs that they need to pay in order to keep their organizations running. We encourage grantee organizations to consider these indirect costs and use a reasonable portion of grant funding to cover them. We do not normally expect organizations to spend more than 15% of grant funding on indirect costs. However, if your organization has indirect costs in excess of 15%, please include these in your project budget and our staff will contact you to get a better understanding of the rationale for your indirect costs.

My organization is a multi-issue organizing organization. How do we apply within the Equity Grants Open Cycle strategies?

Organizations organizing on multiple issues should apply under the issue area that most aligns with their work: Housing, Positive School Climate, or Community Wealth (see guidelines). Please note that you can select more than one strategy. If the work of the organization as a whole does not fit strongly with any of these issues, please consider applying for a project grant that supports a part of your work that is focused on any of the strategies covered in the guidelines.

Specific to the Strategy “Changing the Housing Narrative Through Arts and Culture”

Is the foundation open to funding work in this area beyond storytelling? Are you interested in culture shift, particularly around anti-Blackness and xenophobia?

We recognize that anti-Blackness and xenophobia reinforce systems and structures that aggravate housing disparities for people of color. Organizations are encouraged to apply under this strategy if their narrative/culture shift work has a focus on anti-Blackness and xenophobia as it relates to housing and displacement.

Would you consider funding media projects related to this strategy?

Yes, we will consider media projects as part of this strategy. However, the 2020 Equity Grants Open Cycle will solely focus on work related to protecting residents from displacement, preserving affordable housing, and policies that produce more affordable housing and tenant ownership (see our guidelines for details).