

2019 Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants Program –FAQ –

GENERAL:

· Can I get help if something in the guidelines is unclear?

Yes – we're here to help you. We are more than happy to explain and clarify eligibility requirements, review criteria, application forms, etc. Please review all application materials before contacting us and do not wait to the last minute. You can reach SWNI's Program Coordinator John Tappero at John@swni.org or at 503-823-4592.

· Can I get the application forms in a different format?

Yes. The application is on our website in both Word

. If you need the application forms in an alternative format, please contact SWNI's Program Coordinator John Tappero at John@swni.org or at 503-823-4592.

· Do I have to use the forms you provide?

No. However if you create your own form, please answer all questions in the order they are listed.

ELIGIBILITY:

· My organization has never received a grant in the past. Should I consider applying?

Yes. The Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants Program is specifically design to help people who have never applied for a grant before to take the next steps. No prior grant experience is required. In fact, many first time grant recipients are funded every year. An important thing to keep in mind though is that the selection committee will want to see that you have the capacity and dedication to make your project work. So make sure you have a clear and practical implementation plan to go with your good idea, and the ability to adjust and persevere when things inevitably don't go exactly as planned.

· How many applications can I submit?

Applicants may submit more than one application for different projects; however, no more than one project per applicant will be funded.

· My organization does not have its own nonprofit status. Can we still apply?

Yes, however you will need to obtain fiscal sponsorship from a non-profit, federal tax exempt organization or government entity. Don't let this deter you from applying.

· What is fiscal sponsorship?

A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, such as Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc (SWNI), which acts as a sponsor for a project organized by a group that does not have its own tax-exempt status. The fiscal sponsor will receive the grant funds on behalf of the group and disburse payments to cover the grant project expenses.

· How do I find a fiscal sponsor?

SWNI can provide fiscal sponsorship for neighborhood small grant projects that fit within our mission, "SWNI empowers citizens action to improve and maintain the livability of SW Portland" SWNI charges an administrative fee for management of all projects that are not projects of one of our member neighborhood associations. Please budget accordingly. Applicants seeking fiscal sponsorship from SWNI must submit a fiscal sponsorship application with their grant application to be considered. More information on fiscal sponsorship and the application form can be found on SWNI's website.

If you are already working closely with a 501(c)(3) organization, you may want to consider asking them to be your organization's fiscal sponsor. For help finding a fiscal sponsor, the Nonprofit Association of Oregon is a great resource. They can be contacted at 503-239-4001 or info@nonprofitoregon.org.

· **We are an organization physically located outside of the coalition area, but our project will take place within the boundaries. Can we still apply?**

Yes, you may apply as long as the project activities will take place in and benefit the residents of the coalition.

· **Does my project have to be original? Does it have to be big?**

No. Projects do not need to be original or big. The key is to have a project that is compelling and inspiring. We encourage you to think of new, creative ways your organizations can meet the goals of the grant program. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and push the boundaries.

GRANT FUNDS:

· **How much should I ask for?**

Grant requests may range from \$200 to \$2,000. You may apply for any amount within this range. However, it is important that the amount you request is consistent with and appropriate for the scope of your project. Provide a clear budget so that the committee can plainly see how funds will be used. Additionally, leveraging volunteer time and donations will increase the competitiveness of your proposal.

· **What can I not receive funds for?**

- Costs that may be incurred in preparing the application
- Direct social services such as food baskets, health clinic services
- Ongoing general organizational support such as rent, utilities
- Direct grants, scholarships or loans for the benefit of specific individuals
- Loans or debt retirement
- Fundraising activities or community events that cost money to attend. Events may have suggested donations
- Emergency funding
- Capital improvements, unless built by volunteers
- Items intended for sale

· **What counts as direct social services?**

Generally, direct social services are not eligible for Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants Program funding because they do not meet the intent of the grant program. "Direct social services" include, but are not limited to: clothing, food, shelter, counseling, utility bill assistance, rent assistance, child care, medical assistance, and other life resources need by individuals. Projects that meet the goals of the grant program and have a social service element may be eligible. Applicants should contact SWNI's Program Coordinator at John@swni.org or at 503-823-4592.

· **What counts as capital improvements?**

Generally, capital improvement projects are not eligible for Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants Program funding because they do not meet the intent of the grant program. Capital improvements are defined as permanent improvements or additions to the project site, building, grounds, etc. Capital projects that meet the goals of the grant program may be eligible. For instance, a community work-party that brings residents together to build a community kiosk could be funded if there is strong hands-on involvement of community members in the actual work and the kiosk helps achieve one or more of the grant goals. Applicants should contact SWNI's Program Coordinator at John@swni.org or at 503-823-4592.

· **Is there a chance that you will only fund part of my proposal?**

Yes. The committee may choose to only partially fund your project if they determine that it would still be possible with reduced funding and/or if they feel that particular budget items could be cut or funded through alternative sources.