

GRANT CYCLE GUIDELINES

Guidelines are categorized into REQUIRED, RECOMMENDED, AND SUGGESTED.

REQUIRED

1. The Rancho Santa Fe Women's Fund (RSFWF) will strive to fund organizations which will be positively impacted in some measurable way due to our support. There are many non-profits that need a "hand-up" to further their stability and growth.
2. RSFWF will choose projects that have other additional sources of funding, so we are not the sole donor for a brand-new project or that we are not funding a program in its entirety. This will be coupled with the limitation that a given organization is only eligible to receive a grant every 3 years. This limitation pertains not only to a given project, but also to the organization, itself. Furthermore, when evaluating organizations, the following questions should be addressed:
 - a. Is the organization and the program, itself, sustainable over the course of several years rather than being a flash in the pan with a low probability of continued existence?
 - b. Does the organization/project have other areas of support needed to continue?
 - c. Does the organization have sufficient reserves to cover the project/operating costs if the other areas of support fall through?
3. RSFWF will strive to select groups that show fiscal responsibility and restraint rather than extravagant tendencies. Examples of potential red flags include but are not limited to:
 - a. Overpaid staff people or paying board members or founders for serving (example extends to excessive expense levels or organizations with a track record of high salaries). **Note:** Executive Director (and other senior level) salaries can vary significantly depending on the size of the organization. A metric which could potentially be looked at and evaluated could be the percent of Executive Director salary relative to total expenses. Generally, 4% or less would be considered acceptable.
 - b. Inappropriate or inter-related relationships with organizations (renting from or loaning to related parties, etc.)
 - c. The organization is putting more money toward overhead expenses than towards program expenses.

Note: Any questions regarding any of the above can be deferred to the RSFWF Finance Chair.
4. RSFWF will select groups that demonstrate proper and effective governance standards based on the size and age of their organization. In addition, RSFWF would prefer organizations have an independent board of directors, a whistleblower policy, and document retention policies.
5. RSFWF has a definite Advocacy Policy as well as a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy for Work Group members and Advisory Board members. This includes Work Group members and Advisory Board members who are paid staff or board members of said charities. Each Advisory Board member and Grant Committee Work Group member shall be required to sign the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy annually so as to allow the affected parties to list any potential conflicts for the member, their spouse and/or immediate family.

6. Projects that discriminate (i.e. give prejudicial treatment) based on race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, political affiliation or religious belief as well organizations that serve an exclusively sectarian purpose will not be considered for funding.

Sectarian shall be defined as membership of a sect, denomination, or other group; following the doctrines of a sect or other group.

If the organization, itself, is sectarian, the population it serves must be diverse. Further examination and verification of this would be necessary to ensure compliance with RSFWF guidelines.

Note: If the focus area for a given year delineates a gender (Women's Services, Girls in STEM) or if the program being considered happens to serve one gender as the client population is sequestered (i.e. POOCH program in a male prison), RSFWF does not consider this to be discriminatory.

7. In the past, RSFWF has avoided those organizations having programs which could be deemed politically controversial or that endorse programs that appear to support or encourage a specific ideology/belief system. (i.e. abortion).

Going forward, even if the proposed program/project does not support a specific ideology, if the charity in question does support a specific controversial ideology, the organization/project will continue to be ineligible for consideration.

8. The total dollar amount of grant requests versus the total amount RSFWF has to award in any given grant cycle year should be examined prior to the Grants Presentation luncheon (where voting takes place) to ensure that all organizations which are given the opportunity to present at the end of the year are not all automatically fully funded.
9. Additional overviews by a group consisting of the Advisory Chair, the Grants Co-chairs, the Finance chair and the Executive Board (if it or a similar proxy exists), may be scheduled as needed at various points in the process but particularly before site visits are scheduled AND before the charities are selected for the Grant Presentations.

The Grant Committee shall strive to keep a few additional charities as possible addendums to the final list so as to allow the Women's Fund to continue to field a full ballot, should any last-minute issue arise with any of the initial charities.

10. The geographic region from which RSFWF accepts applications each year will be clearly defined. Preference is to be given to North County projects. Current boundaries for grant recipients are based on where the project operates not the non-profit headquarters. The Eastern boundary shall be west of the 76 freeway, the Northern boundary shall be Camp Pendleton and south, and the Southern boundary shall be Downtown San Diego. North County is defined with the same north and east boundaries but the southern boundary being the Route 52 freeway. See map provided.
11. A member survey shall be done ANNUALLY to determine the TOP TWO vote-getting focus groups. Those shall then be the grant focus areas for the next grant cycle.
12. RSFWF does not provide grants to or fund capital campaigns or endowments.

RECOMMENDED

1. Preferential consideration shall be given to projects that fulfill the eligibility criteria for **ALL** (not just one) of the grant criteria, namely: a) it is bold new venture, b) it addresses an urgent or critical need, c) it offers new approaches to time-worn problems. These were our original guiding principles for grants. In order to be eligible to apply, an organization's project **MUST MEET AT LEAST ONE OF THESE CRITERIA.**
2. An attempt shall be made to have a diversity of charities that provide different functions and serve different types of populations, purposes, or services.
3. In each grant cycle, the amount of available dollars to be granted shall be divided into the two focus groups as evenly as possible. While this amount does not have to be exact, the goal is that it be relatively equal so there is no competition between work groups. Adjustments can be made in the final allocation by a full Grant Committee vote. If the deviation is 5% or greater of the total grant pool, this allocation would require an Advisory Board vote.

SUGGESTED

1. The Grants Committee shall closely analyze any organizations that have multi-million-dollar budgets. Many of these large groups receive government funding, either state or Federal sources, and it is felt that we, as taxpayers, are already funding them. In addition, large organizations can move funds into special projects if that is their priority. Therefore, our donation potentially would not be very impactful. In other words, RSFWF strives to choose organizations/projects where our funding will matter and make a difference.

The exception to this is a novel program serving the local population that would not be part of the larger organization's budget and therefore, would not otherwise be funded. An example of such a project was the funding of the Scripps Encinitas NICU.

2. RSFWF generally does not contribute to capital projects. Grant Funds are usually given for operational needs and special projects only.

Two previous exceptions to this guideline were the funding of the purchase of a van for transportation needs for a program and funds given towards a project for Camp Pendleton mobile homes for veterans.

3. The Grants Committee shall determine, in a given year, if there are other criteria that can be used to reduce the annual number of applications and/or generate interest from diverse charities. Grant Chairs can cull the initial Letter of Interests (LOI) to a manageable level before distribution to the Work Groups.
4. The Grant Committee should consider additional ideas to encourage involvement not only within the membership but also within the community. Also, they should consider suggestions on how to encourage a broader array of charities to apply. Two suggested methods include a general notice to be sent out non-profits of our focus areas for the given grant cycle and asking RSFWF members to provide potential charities which could be notified and/or ultimately added to our database. Other methods can be employed as well at the Grant Chairs discretion.

5. The Rancho Santa Fe Women's Fund was formed to allow for a pooling of funds that could then be dispersed to non-profit organizations that people might not necessarily be aware of AND to fund those organizations which satisfy at least one of the three stated grant criteria. In the past, RSFWF has generally not funded new start-ups due to concerns that they may not survive. Going forward, perhaps we should consider funding some organizations that are relatively new, smaller and/or are innovative thereby allowing RSFWF to make a real difference in their success.

That being said, there is a concern that some new and/or smaller non-profits may have trouble meeting our comprehensive criteria which is currently in place for all grant applications. Other grant awarding agencies have very successfully met this need by breaking grants into Major (>20k) and Minor ($\leq 20k$) categories, with Minor applicants having a FastTrack process and criteria without a site visit requirement. The eligibility/application criterion for this subset could be developed by the Grants Committee, with input from the Finance Chair and Executive Board (if it is in existence or a similar proxy).