



## County of San Mateo Office of Sustainability: 4Rs Grants Program Q&A

### Terms:

- *Applicant Organization* is the organization that has the authority to enter into an official agreement/contract with the County of San Mateo. For instance, a school district that's applying on behalf of one of its schools, the Regents of University of California applying on behalf of one of its schools/programs, etc.
- *Benefiting Organization* is the entity that will ultimately benefit and will be directly impacted by the grant funding. The Application Organization applies for grant funding on behalf of the Benefiting Organization.

### 1. Q: What is the difference between the Mini Grant and the Mega Grant?

A: The Mini Grant (\$2,000 - \$5,000 in funding) is available to support and fund small discrete projects that are targeted at specific communities in San Mateo County (e.g., a school, a city, a neighborhood, a community garden, etc.). The Mega Grant (up to \$25,000 in funding) has a wider geographical focus and provides funding for larger projects that have an impact throughout San Mateo County (county-wide focus). The Mega Grant projects will also need to be innovative and/or fill a need that is not currently being met within the solid waste sector in San Mateo County.

### 2. Q: Can I apply for project funding that is non-solid waste related, but still falls under the realm of sustainability (e.g., energy, water, transportation, etc.)?

A: No. The overall objective of the 4Rs Grants Program is to provide funding for eligible organizations to design, develop, and/or implement projects and programs that focus specifically on diverting waste from being sent to the landfill. This includes projects that focus on at least one of the "4Rs" of the solid waste sector – reduce, reuse, recycle and rot (composting). While the Office of Sustainability recognizes that other areas of sustainability are equally important (e.g., energy, water, transportation, etc.), the 4Rs Grants Program was designed specifically to only fund solid waste reduction related efforts in San Mateo County.

### 3. Q: Can previously awarded 4Rs grantees (or Applicant Organizations) apply for grant funding year after year for continued funding for the same program/project?

A: Yes, an Applicant Organization, regardless of whether they had been awarded a 4Rs Grant (either the Mega or Mini) in the past or not, can apply for 4Rs Grants Program funding year after year. The Applicant Organization will need to demonstrate in the grant application how the project proposal that is being submitted will build off/improve/augment the past project, if there is a connection to the past project that was funded by the 4Rs Grants Program.

**4. Q: Can an Applicant Organization submit more than one application in each grant category (Mega or Mini)?**

Yes, an Applicant Organization can submit more than one application in each grant category under one condition. The Benefiting Organization that the Applicant Organization is applying on behalf of cannot be the same.

Example:

- Johnson Elementary School District (Applicant Organization) can submit a Mini Grant application for Hugh Elementary School (Benefiting Organization) and a separate Mini Grant application for Theodore Elementary School (Benefiting Organization), schools that are both within the Johnson Elementary School District. However, Johnson Elementary School District cannot submit two different Mini Grant applications for Hugh Elementary School.

A government agency will only be allowed to submit one application in each grant. For example, if City of Appleton is interested in applying, the City can only submit one application for the Mini Grant and/or one application for the Mega Grant.

If the Applicant Organization and the Benefiting Organization are the same entity, then the Applicant Organization can only submit one application for each grant category. For instance, non-profit organization called ABC Environment can only submit one application for the Mini Grant. ABC Environment can also submit one application for the Mega Grant.

**5. Q: Can an Applicant Organization apply to both grant categories (Mega and Mini)?**

A: Yes, an Applicant Organization can submit applications for both grant categories (Mega and Mini), regardless of whether they have the same Benefiting Organization. However, there are restrictions on the number of applications that an Applicant Organization can submit for each grant category, depending on who the Benefiting Organization is. Please refer to Question 4 above for additional information.

**6. Q: Can religious organizations (e.g., church, synagogue, etc.) apply?**

A: Yes, a religious organization can apply if it officially falls under the IRS' definition of a "nonprofit organization" category.

**7. Q: What are the grant use parameters?**

A: Grant funds can be used for the following:

- *Labor cost:* Grant funds can be used for in-house staff labor and/or contracted service labor (includes subcontracting) costs. The hourly rate (\$/hour) and total estimated hours must be included in the budget section of the grant application for all applicable grant project staff, including in-house and contracted service (including subcontracts) staff.
- **Important Note:** The OOS is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout San Mateo County. As such, if requesting grant funding for staff labor, applicable applicants **must** comply with the County’s Living Wage Ordinance (LWO) to promote the creation of a livable wage for associated labor staff costs. The LWO requirement for the upcoming 4Rs Grant Program cycle will be \$18/hour. For additional information on the County’s LWO, including who must comply, please visit:
  - <https://hr.smcgov.org/san-mateo-county%E2%80%99s-living-wage-ordinance-lwo> and
  - [https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/LWO%20FAQ\\_Final\\_03142017.pdf](https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/LWO%20FAQ_Final_03142017.pdf)
- *Equipment, supplies, and materials:* Examples include recycling and composting bins, posters and stickers, composting tools, environmental education curriculum, etc. When possible, equipment purchases for project must remain at the project site.
- *Outreach and educational materials and expenses:* Examples include curriculum development, lesson plan printouts, graphic designer, materials/supplies/props used for instruction, etc.
- *Advertising and marketing:* Examples include printing, ads, and designer fees.
- *Event expenses:* Examples include venue reservation cost, equipment rental (e.g., tables, chairs, A/V equipment), and speaker fees. Grant funds cannot be used for food/beverage.
- *Field trip fees:* Examples include charter bus fees, entrance fees, and guide/educational literature fees.

Grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Overhead costs (e.g., insurance, internet/phone fees, utilities, rent, fiscal sponsorship fees, etc.)
- Food/Beverage (unless they are used directly for educational purposes, for example, as part of instructional material in a food preservation class)
- Expenses for activities incurred before grant agreement execution
- Monetary awards or gift cards
- Donations
- Membership fees
- Legal fees or indemnity obligations
- Repayments of debts
- Loan or bank fees

- Fines or penalties

The grantee must first check with the County to determine the eligibility of the use of grant funds for costs not listed above.

**8. Q: What are some of the changes in the grants guidelines from last year?**

A: Below is a summary of some of the more notable changes in the grants guidelines.

Both Mega and Mini Grants

- If requesting grant funding for staff labor (includes in-house staff labor and/or contracted and subcontracted service labor), applicable applicants must comply with the County's Living Wage Ordinance (LWO) to promote the creation of a livable wage for associated labor staff costs. The LWO requirement for the upcoming 4Rs Grant Program cycle will be \$18/hour. In previous program years, meeting the LWO was highly recommended. For the upcoming program year, meeting the LWO will be a requirement by all grant recipients. For additional information on the County's LWO, including who must comply, please visit:
  - <https://hr.smcgov.org/san-mateo-county%E2%80%99s-living-wage-ordinance-lwo> and
  - [https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/LWO%20FAQ\\_Final\\_03142017.pdf](https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/LWO%20FAQ_Final_03142017.pdf)

Mini Grant Only

- The minimum amount of funding that can be requested has changed from \$1,000 to \$2,000. To apply for the Mini Grant, applicants will need to request funding between \$2,000 - \$5,000.
- Grant amounts will be disbursed in one-lump-sum in the beginning of the grant cycle after all paperwork has been completed versus disturbing the grant amount in two disbursements as done in past program years.
- Mini Grant recipients will not be required to obtain/verify comprehensive liability insurance coverage, professional liability insurance coverage, motor vehicle liability insurance coverage, or workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance.