



County of San Mateo's Office of Sustainability: 4R's 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 (\$1,000 - \$5,000 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 (formerly known as the 4R's 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 4R's Grants Program is to provide funding for eligible organizations to design, develop, and/or implement projects and programs that focus specifically on at least one of the "4R's" 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 4R's Grants Program was designed specifically to only fund solid waste reduction related efforts in San Mateo County.

3. Q: Can previously awarded 4R's 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 4R's Grant (either the Mega or Mini) in the past or not, can apply for 4R's 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 4R's 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 (Mega or Mini). However, the Benefiting Organization that the Applicant Organization is applying on behalf of cannot be the same.

Examples:

- 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.
- Emerald City (Applicant Organization) can submit a Mega Grant application for its Department of Public Works (Benefiting Organization) and a separate Mega Grant application for its Department of the Environment (Benefiting Organization). However, Emerald City cannot submit two different Mega Grant applications for its Department of Public Works.

If the Applicant Organization and the Benefiting Organization is 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/overlapping 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 staff labor and contract service costs. If requesting funding for staff labor, hourly rate of staff (\$/hour) and total estimated staff hours must be included in the budget section of the application.

The Office of Sustainability is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout San Mateo County. As such, if requesting grant funding for staff labor, we encourage applicants to consider in the proposed budget the County’s Living Wage Ordinance to promote the creation of a livable wage for associated labor staff costs. For additional information on the County’s Living Wage Ordinance, please visit: (1) <https://hr.smcgov.org/san-mateo-county%E2%80%99s-living-wage-ordinance-lwo> and

(2) 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 – This can 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 – This can 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, etc.)
- Food/Beverage (unless they are used directly for educational purposes, for example, as part of materials in a food preservation class)
- Expenses incurred before the start of the grant cycle
- Gift cards
- Donations
- Legal fees or indemnity obligations
- Repayments of debts
- Loan or bank fees

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