

## 2024 Community Small Grants – 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. Contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org) or call 503-232-0010 x 2.

- **Can I get the application forms in a different format?**

Yes. If you need the application forms in an alternative format, please contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org) or call 503-232-0010 x 2.

- **Do I have to use the forms you provide?**

We prefer that you do. However, if you choose to create your own form, please include all questions and answer them in the order they are listed on the form.

- **What are the goals of the Community Small Grants program?**

Proposed projects must directly involve and engage the community as active participants and achieve one or more of the following goals:

1. Increase the number and diversity of people who are **involved and engaged** in the broader community.
2. Strengthen **community capacity** to create change by building community leadership, identity, skills, relationships, and partnerships.
3. Increase community **impact on public decisions** and community life.
4. Improve the neighborhood livability.

### Eligibility:

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

Yes. The Community Small Grants program is specifically designed 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 only submit one application each grant per cycle. Please *submit separate applications if you are applying to both Community Small Grants and IDEA Communications Grants*.

- **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 SE Uplift, 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. Fiscal sponsorship is a contractual arrangement between a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, such as SE Uplift, and a project without its own tax-exempt status that allows the project to receive grant funding and solicit tax-deductible donations. The organization providing fiscal sponsorship accepts financial donations on behalf of the project and is responsible for providing appropriate financial oversight.

- **How do I find a fiscal sponsor?**

SE Uplift can provide fiscal sponsorship for community & civic engagement small grants projects that fit within our mission, "To collaborate with the SE Portland community to build informed, inclusive, and participatory neighborhoods that support our social and ecological well-being." Applicants seeking fiscal sponsorship from SE Uplift must submit a fiscal sponsorship request form with their grant application to be considered. More information on fiscal sponsorship and the application form can be found on SE Uplift's website at [www.seuplift.org/fiscal-sponsorship/](http://www.seuplift.org/fiscal-sponsorship/).

If you are already working closely with a 501(c)3 organization, we recommend asking them to be your project'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](mailto:info@nonprofitoregon.org).

- **Do neighborhood associations have to include a fiscal sponsorship application with their Community Small Grants application?**

Yes. Neighborhood associations that do not have 501(c)3 status or a current fiscal sponsorship contract with SE Uplift must submit a fiscal sponsorship application form along with their grant application to be considered for funding. The application form can be found on SE Uplift's website [here](#).

In order to qualify as a neighborhood association project, for the purpose of fiscal sponsorship, projects must have their scope, project coordinator, and draft budget formally voted on and approved by the board.\* They must also provide frequent updates to the neighborhood association board, self-recognize as a project of the neighborhood association on all outreach materials, thank all donors on behalf of the neighborhood association, and be listed as a project of the neighborhood association in all applicable neighborhood association communications.

If you are not sure if your NA's Fiscal Sponsorship with SE Uplift is current, please contact [lindsey@seuplift.org](mailto:lindsey@seuplift.org).

- **We have received a Community Small Grants from SE Uplift for our project twice before. Can our project apply again?**

Possibly. If you have received funding from SE Uplift grants two or more times, you cannot reapply for the same project. However, past grant recipients may apply for a distinctly different project or a distinctly different phase of a previously funded project.

- **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 organization 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?**

The average grant award is over \$2,000. Grant requests may range from \$250 to \$5,000. 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 are Micro Grants and how are they different from regular Community Small Grants?**

Limited funds are reserved for Micro Grants. Proposals must advance the goals of the Community Small Grants program and follow the same application guidelines required by Community Small Grants. Proposals that meet these criteria and requesting less than \$800 have a greater chance of being funded.

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

- General Operations expenses
- Costs that may be incurred in preparing the application or evaluating the project
- Direct social services such as food baskets, health clinic services
- Ongoing general organizational support such as rent, utilities, or staff
- Direct grants, scholarships or loans for the benefit of specific individuals
- Fundraising activities or community events that cost money to attend\*
- Capital improvements, unless built by volunteers
- Items intended for sale

\*Events may have a suggested donation.

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

Generally, direct social services are not eligible for Community Small Grants 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 needed by individuals. Projects that meet the goals of the grant program and have a social service element may be eligible. Applicants should contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org) or call 503-232-0010 x 2 if they have questions.

- **What counts as capital improvements?**

Generally, capital improvement projects are not eligible for Community Small Grants 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 construction and the kiosk helps achieve one or more of the grant goals. Applicants should contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org) or call 503-232-0010 x 2 if they have questions.

- **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.