Grant Program FAQ

Updated 10/21/20

**Funding timeline**
- What is the timeline for the Request for Applications (RFA) and when will applications be available? When will they be due?
  - The portal to officially submit grant applications has opened. To access the application portal, please visit: [https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/108mkzt2whe9d](https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/108mkzt2whe9d).
  - Applications will be due **October 31, 2020 by 11:59 pm PST**.
  - Please see pages 3 and 4 in the RFA.
- Can funding be used to pay for services that will be provided after the RFA is released?
  - Yes – if your organization plans to provide a service between the time of the application and the end of the grant period (December 30, 2020), you are eligible to receive a grant that would reimburse you for eligible expenses once those services have been delivered.
- Will there be funding for 2021 as the impact of COVID and unemployment is sure to last beyond Dec 30, 2020?
  - We do not have information about future rounds of federal funding. The CARES Act funds provided through this program must follow federal guidelines and be spent by Dec 30, 2020.
- Would reimbursement funds be disbursed monthly? What about retroactive funds?
  - Organizations seeking reimbursement for services provided from March 1-September 30, 2020 (Covered Period 1) will receive a one-time payment in November. Organizations seeking reimbursement for services to be provided in Covered Period 1 as well as from October 1-December 30, 2020 (Covered Period 2) may receive up to two payments.

**Funding amount, rules, and restrictions**
- If we've previously received CARES Act funding through the County are we eligible to apply for this grant?
  - Yes, you are still eligible to apply for this grant. The original stature hindering organizations that had previously received CARES Act funding from the County has been removed.
- What is the maximum amount we can ask for?
  - The maximum award amount is $2,000,000.
- Is this grant program separate from the CARES grant offered thru EFSP?
  - Yes. This is a separate program.
- Why are you limiting the program to 40 grants? Will these be of equal size or will they vary depending on size of program and needs addressed?
  - Number of grants has been estimated based on institutional capacity to administer grant contracts under strict CARES Act timing guidelines. Currently,
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forty is an estimated number. Grant size will vary depending on need and funding available. Grant sizes will vary.

Reporting requirements

- How should we demonstrate that program expenses were necessary due to COVID, and not just part of our usual costs?
  - If you seek to be reimbursed for expenses associated with an expansion of an existing program, you may reference program data that demonstrates an increased demand for the program – for example, by comparing the overall cost of the program in 2020 to the cost of it in 2019, or level of services provided before versus after COVID.
  - You will be asked to provide a copy of your most recently approved budget prior to March 27, 2020 as per CARES Act guidelines, a copy of your general ledger, receipts/invoices, and other documentation necessary to verify incurred costs.

Eligible organizations

- If school districts don't have a 501c3 status can they apply?
  - Yes, the Program Funds may be used to provide grants to nonprofits, community-based organizations, local education agencies, and public (not-for-profit) post-secondary institutions.

- Are new nonprofits eligible?
  - Yes, if you have 501c3 status.

- Can we use the funds to support our Food Pantry?
  - Yes, if the food pantry meets the eligibility requirements outlined above.

- Can grants be available for coalitions/team of agencies? My organization’s budget is $600K, and we would not be able to apply on our own.
  - No. Grant rules do not allow for sub-grants to be released by a fiscal sponsor or for applications by coalitions.

Priority populations

- Are people who have COVID considered a priority population?
  - Yes. USC research has found that people who reported a COVID diagnosis or symptoms were at higher risk of food insecurity.

- Could this grant be used specifically for families with young children through school district nutrition/meals programs?
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- Yes, if you are seeking funding for expenses that were not reimbursed or paid for by another source of federal funding (such as the USDA’s CACFP or NSLP programs).

- Are immigrants, including those who are undocumented, considered a priority population?
  - Yes. Our analysis of existing programs has found that undocumented individuals face barriers to accessing food assistance.

**Eligible expenses**

- Can the funds be used to purchase food for food drives?
  - Yes.

- Can the funds be used to pay for shelter meals provided by professional catering kitchens?
  - Yes.

- Can funding go towards vehicles or space needed for storage or transportation of food?
  - Yes. Please note that the awarding of grant funds does not guarantee the approval of every proposed expense, and capital expenses may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Can funding go towards community garden expenses?
  - Yes, if you show that the community garden activities increased access to food and that the expenses were new or increased due to COVID.

- Our organization has a kitchen and wants to begin a new grocery box program for low-income residents affected by Covid-19. Can this grant help us start this program or is this funding just for pre-existing programs?
  - The funds may be used to cover new program expenses that are incurred before December 30, 2020. If you plan to use the funding to help start a new program, you must demonstrate that you have capacity to launch the program in the proposed time frame. Funding would only be allowed for reimbursement of eligible expenses under the Covered Period of March 1-December 30, 2020.

- Can we use the funds to purchase delivery subscriptions from a business or organization that provides prepared food such as hot meals?
  - Yes, if you show that the prepared food was provided to people who faced barriers to preparing their own food (such as people with disabilities, or people without access to kitchens).

- Can funding go toward the staffing expense of hazard pay?
  - Yes, if it meets other grant criteria.
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- Could funding go toward new positions?
  - Yes, if you show that it was necessary to fund a new position due to increased demand for food-related services.

- What is the max for administration/staffing?
  - There is no maximum portion of the grant that can be used for staffing expenses, if you can show the staff time was spent doing food-related work that was necessary because of COVID. For example, if you normally have one position dedicated to food distribution, and during COVID you had to dedicate an additional position to food distribution due to increased demand, staffing expenses for the second position would be eligible for reimbursement.
  - Please note, funding indirect costs is not allowable under CARES Act guidelines.

- Can the funds go toward expansion of services?
  - Yes, if you show that the services were expanded to meet COVID-related demand and detail how the services were expanded.

- Would lactation support services be considered eligible?
  - Yes, if you can show that the services were provided to fill a COVID-related gap or increase in demand.

- Would distributing food vouchers/gift cards to eligible community members be acceptable for reimbursement?
  - Yes, if you can show that the gift cards were used only to purchase food.

- Are household supplies (ex. dishwashing liquid, masks, toilet paper) which were distributed with food in pantry boxes considered an eligible expense?
  - No. The food purchased for pantry boxes would be eligible for reimbursement by this program, but not the household supplies purchased for the same boxes.

- Can funds be used to cover supplemental programs, like a phone reassurance program where clients are referred to additional resources?
  - Yes, staff time for outreach and promotion of resources that can help mitigate food insecurity is considered an eligible expense.

- Will you consider food storage (refrigeration) and transportation? We have incurred costs because we store perishable items.
  - Yes, refrigeration and other food storage costs and the cost of transporting food are considered eligible expenses.

- Will PPE costs be eligible?
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- Yes, provided you show that the PPE was necessary for the delivery of food-related services.

- Will print materials be considered an eligible expense?
  - Yes, if you show that you printed materials provided information about food resources.

- Can the funds be used to serve immigrant populations, including people who are undocumented?
  - Yes. Grantees will be required to show that their food-related services are targeted to a population that faces high risk of food insecurity and/or barriers to accessing food, and our research shows that people who are undocumented fall into that category.

- Will food expenses for outreach volunteers be eligible?
  - Yes, with sufficient documentation.

If you still have any unresolved questions please email:

caresforfoodsecurity@calfund.org.