

2023 Early Childhood Initiative Equitable Opportunities Grant Guidelines



About the Early Childhood Initiative

San Diego Foundation is committed to supporting a resilient region where all have equitable access to opportunity. Understanding that early childhood care is essential to supporting families and ensuring long-term success for children, the Early Childhood Initiative strives to increase access to quality, affordable early childhood education and developmental care in San Diego County. The Early Childhood Initiative works collaboratively with regional partners to:

- Strengthen families
- Increase health equity
- Bolster the regional workforce
- Support economic growth

The Funding Opportunity

San Diego Foundation and the Dr. Seuss Foundation are committing \$1 million in total funding for the 2023 Early Childhood Initiative Equitable Opportunities Grant. This total includes \$500,000 in funding from the San Diego Foundation Early Childhood Initiative and \$500,000 of funding from the Dr. Seuss Foundation. Nonprofit organizations are invited to apply through 2:00 p.m., Friday, February 10th. Maximum awards are expected to range between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Background

The San Diego Foundation Early Childhood Initiative strives to increase access to quality, affordable early childhood education and developmental care in San Diego County. This year's grant builds on the [2022 Early Childhood Initiative Equitable Opportunities Grant](#) launched in partnership with the Dr. Seuss Foundation, which expanded to include a focus on early literacy.

This ongoing collaboration supports early grade-level readiness and equitable access to opportunity that ensures a strong foundation for literacy in the earliest years. This approach recognizes the connection between educational readiness and social determinants of health, such as whole family health, financial security and access to supportive services.

Understanding that the earliest years of life are a critical time for mental and behavioral development that impacts educational readiness and opportunities for a lifetime, the 2023 Early Childhood Initiative Equitable Opportunities Grant will continue to support:

- Early literacy and access to early education;
- Instructional quality improvements and educational staff support;

- Healthy, equitable starts for children and parents;
- And Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) screening, prevention and intervention.

Grants will support high-impact nonprofit organizations that provide critical services focused on regional resilience and long-term solutions.

Grant Goal

The 2023 Early Childhood Initiative Grant supports nonprofit organizations implementing strategic efforts to build the region's resilience by increasing equitable access to educational opportunity and supportive services for young children and their caretakers.

Strategies

The following are strategies that support the goal of the 2023 Early Childhood Initiative Equitable Opportunities Grant. Organizations will be asked to identify the lead strategy they plan to employ in their application. The program or project should address one or more of the descriptions under the chosen lead strategy. All applicants are encouraged to address service and support for low-to-moderate income families, and communities experiencing negative social determinants of health.

Early Literacy and Access to Early Education

- Support evidence-based programs that strengthen language development and early literacy for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, including family literacy, to provide a strong foundation for early grade-level readiness;
- Increase the number of spaces available for children ages 0-5, or make early education services available to more families through expanded access to early learning.

Instructional Quality Improvements and Educational Staff Support

- Support professional training, curriculum development, program implementation, materials and/or mentorship to improve instructional practices and support early childhood staff. Projects should have potential to impact a group or network of early childhood professionals;
- Work to eliminate bias and further the equitable treatment of all children in the early education and care sector, including but not limited to addressing preschool expulsion/suspensions as part of an effort to ensure greater equity within programs and services.

Healthy, Equitable Starts for Children and Parents

- Expand services that aim to achieve birth equity and promote safe, healthy pregnancy and birth conditions for mothers and babies, bolstered by access to supportive services and/or care coordination;
- Support parents of children ages 0-5 through evidence-based parenting education programs with a focus on positive parenting skills and knowledge about early childhood development and early learning.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Screening, Prevention and Intervention

- Expand access to ACEs screening for children ages 0-5 and provide referral pathways for trauma-informed care;
- Strengthen mental and behavioral health services to prevent and address trauma for young children and their families experiencing crises (including children involved in foster care and child welfare services).

Eligibility

- Each proposal must be led by a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) public charity status, operating in and serving San Diego County.
- A 501(c)(3) public charity may serve as a fiscal sponsor for another applicant to administer the grant and provide regular financial reporting to SDF.
- Organizations may be part of more than one proposal, but may only serve as lead applicant for one proposal.
- Projects must be completed within a 12-month timeline.
- Previous applicants or recipients of Early Childhood Initiative funding are eligible to apply.
- San Diego Foundation will not fund endowments, existing obligations/debt, scholarships, or projects that promote religious or political doctrines.
- Projects must expand care for low-to-moderate income communities and/or populations experiencing health disparities or negative social determinants of health.
- Given our focus on long-lasting solutions and building the capacity of this sector, projects must demonstrate having other significant resources or plans in place to ensure program longevity.

Recommendations

- Leverage, align funds and catalyze investment with other partners
- Articulate a strategy for project success
- Show potential for community impact
- Exhibit organizational strength, past performance and strong community partnerships
- Demonstrate ability to connect authentically with the community served

Partnerships

Applicants interested in applying as part of a partnership should communicate how participating organizations will achieve stated goals by establishing a division of labor, a clear accountability framework, and a shared budget related to specified and/or joint responsibilities.

For applications that identify multiple Funded Partners, the maximum award total is \$100,000 between all funded partners, with the lead organization receiving no more than \$75,000.

For applications that identify a lead organization and Unfunded Supporting Partners, the application maximum is \$75,000.

Funded Partners

Proposals may identify more than one funded organization, with one lead 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Only lead applicants will receive the grant funding and be responsible for correspondence with, and reporting to, San Diego Foundation. All other coordination and communication should occur between the lead applicant and their program partners. Organizations must demonstrate relevant financial capacity, as well as related past performance. As part of the application, all funded partners will be required to submit a letter of support communicating the organization's commitment to implementing the goals of the partnership.

Unfunded Supporting Partners

Proposals may include one lead organization with supporting partner entities that will not receive direct funding as a result of the grant. As part of the application, organizations will be asked to describe the nature of the partnership.

How To Apply

Organizations are asked to complete an [online application](#) on the MySDF grant application portal.

A preview of the application is [available here](#).

The deadline to submit your online application is 2:00 p.m. PDT, Friday, February 10, 2023.

MySDF is the San Diego Foundation grant application portal. [Click here for detailed instructions](#) on how to set up your user account to access the application. A video tutorial is also [available here](#). You can also send questions about setting up your account to communityimpact@sdfoundation.org.

Q&A Webinar

To answer your questions, we will host an optional virtual Q&A webinar at 11:00 a.m. PDT, Wednesday, January 25, 2023. [Please register here](#).

Timeline

Dates	Milestones
January 9, 2023	Grant Guidelines released
January 25, 2023 - 11:00 a.m.	Q&A Webinar (Register here)
February 10, 2023 - 2:00 p.m.	Application submission deadline
May 2023 (Tentative)	Grant funding announcements