

Letter of Intent (LOI) Guidelines



2024-2025 Grant Cycle: Outdoor Community Enhancement

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is the first step in a two-step application process, which will facilitate the allocation of funding for Escondido-centered projects. The funding range is \$15,000 to \$40,000. ECF will evaluate all LOI submittals and qualify those that meet the program and eligibility criteria.

The deadline for submitting the LOI is **5:00 p.m., Monday, January 22, 2024**. Organizations that are moved forward through the LOI process will be invited to submit a full application by **February 21, 2024**. Those organizations invited to submit a full application will submit completed applications by **March 18, 2024**.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of Escondido Community Foundation (ECF) is to improve the quality of life in Escondido by meeting emerging needs through:

- Encouraging and increasing responsible and effective philanthropy,
- Building a community endowment,
- Providing funds annually to organizations and causes, and
- Giving the community a vehicle for legacy planning and cash gifts that will benefit the residents of Escondido annually and in perpetuity.

The vision of ECF is to inspire a culture of giving that supports, strengthens and enriches the quality of life in the Escondido community now and for generations to come.

Introduction

Each year, ECF selects a focus area based on the most immediate needs of the community. For our 18th grant cycle, ECF invites nonprofits serving Escondido to submit applications for projects that will upgrade community spaces. We want to encourage people to gather and enjoy the outdoors, whether in urban places, open spaces or recreational facilities. The improvements must be outdoor, permanent and accessible to the public and/or participants of the organization's programs. The space must be located in Escondido.

Focus Area

We will accept Letters of Intent for projects that will upgrade community spaces in Escondido. Many organizations want to improve their facilities but do not have the money. Youth sports organizers often wish for improvements at their playing fields and senior centers want to provide more recreational opportunities for patrons. City and nearby county parks often need updating, schools can benefit from better playgrounds and nature centers need better information kiosks. During the hottest times of the year, more shade and water are much needed.

Examples:

- Benches
- Shade trees
- Shade structures
- Playground improvements
- Splash pads
- Playing field improvements
- Water stations
- Lighting
- Workout stations
- Informational signs in nature areas

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible all applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Grants must be administered by a 501(c)(3) public charity, or an organization that is fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3), a school or other government agency. ECF does not make grants to supporting organizations or private, non-operating foundations.
- If an organization is using a fiscal sponsor, a cooperative relationship between the two must be clearly demonstrated.

Projects **must** meet the following criteria:

- Serve Escondido residents within the geographic boundaries of the Greater Escondido area (as defined by the Escondido Union High School District boundaries to include the San Pasqual Valley, up to Deer Springs Road by Lawrence Welk and out toward Del Dios).
- The project must be achievable within a 12-month timeframe.
- The project must have prospects for long-term sustainability.

Grant Seekers Forum

A voluntary online informational workshop will be held for applicants interested in learning more about the application process.

- **Date:** Thursday, November 30, 2023
- **Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- **Location:** Zoom

RSVP to Eve Childs at echilds@sdfoundation.org to receive a Zoom link.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the LOI deadline?

The deadline for LOI submission is 5:00 p.m., Monday, January 22, 2024. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

How do we apply?

Letters of Intent (LOI) must be submitted online by no later than 5:00 p.m. on or before January 22, 2024. For 2023, SDF has introduced a [new grant application portal](#) to submit your LOI.

Whether you have submitted an SDF LOI and/or grant application in previous years or not, all nonprofit applicants are required to create a new user account to submit your ECF LOI. After creating your account, click the “Apply” button to access the application.

For additional guidance regarding creating a new user account, please [see this tutorial. Register/apply today.](#)

Who is eligible to apply for Escondido Community Foundation funding?

To be eligible for a grant from Escondido Community Foundation, organizations must have tax-exempt status and provide services in the community of Escondido. An organization may serve as a fiscal sponsor for a charitable organization that does not have tax-exempt status if a cooperative relationship between the two can be clearly demonstrated, and the fiscal sponsor must be willing to administer the grant if awarded. Escondido Community Foundation at San Diego Foundation does not make grants to supporting organizations or private, non-operating foundations.

How much can we request?

Escondido Community Foundation will accept requests in the range of \$15,000 to \$40,000.

What is the grant period?

Grants are made for one year. This grant cycle is October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.

What reporting is required?

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m., Monday, January 22, 2024.

Escondido Community Foundation requires periodic reporting and site visits (the details of which will be specified in the grant award letter). Any nonprofit that is awarded funding will be required to submit 5 high-resolution photographs plus a short cellphone video showcasing the result/impact of the grant with the required final report.

What will ECF not fund?

ECF does not fund:

- Capital or annual campaigns
- Existing obligations/debt
- Scholarships
- Projects that promote religious or political doctrine

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

For program questions or technical questions regarding the online application, please contact Eve Childs at echilds@sdfoundation.org.

What is the Escondido Community Foundation Timeline?

- November 30, 2023 – Grant Seekers Forum
- January 22, 2024 – Letters of Intent due by 5:00 p.m.
- February 26, 2024 – Invitations to submit full proposals (by invitation only)
- March 18, 2024 – Full grant applications due by 5:00 p.m. (by invitation only)
- April/May 2024 – Site visits conducted with finalists
- August 2024 – Selection of award recipients
- September 2024 – Grant Awards Celebration
- October 1, 2024 – Start of program funding

Letter of Intent Application Process

To submit your information, all applicants will need to access the [secure online LOI application form](#). The application includes information about your organization, as well as long-form questions about your proposed program.