

Grant Guidelines

2026-2027 Grant Cycles: Community Enhancement and Music



Mission, Vision and Purpose

The purpose and vision of the Rancho Bernardo Community Foundation (RBCF) is to improve the quality of life and meet emerging needs by increasing responsible and effective philanthropy, building a community endowment, providing funds annually to community organizations and causes, and giving the community a vehicle for legacy planning and gifts that will benefit Rancho Bernardo now and forever.

RBCF, a proud affiliate of San Diego Foundation (SDF), is committed to the financial support of organizations, projects and programs dedicated to improving the lives of those who live, work and play in Rancho Bernardo.

Focus Areas (2)

RBCF is in its 37th year of grantmaking to enhance the quality of life for those who live, work and play in Rancho Bernardo.

- 1. Music:** RBCF will award between \$1,500 and \$5,000 to programs involving music to be awarded from the Rancho Bernardo Symphony on the Green Fund.
- 2. Community Enhancement:** RBCF will award between \$1,500 to \$10,000 to programs that inspire community pride, revitalization and increase the quality of life of the broader community.

Eligibility Criteria

Projects must clearly address Rancho Bernardo-specific issues and needs, including activities that promote creativity and enhance civic engagement and must also clearly address the impact on Rancho Bernardo residents.

These projects should be practical, achievable within a 12-month time frame and have prospects for long-term sustainability. Funding may be used to expand existing programs, replicate programs tested in other communities or to launch new efforts. RBCF will fund programs managed by nonprofit organizations, schools, or government agencies that embrace one or more of the following:

- Demonstrates and/or fosters collaboration with other successful entities in the community to achieve a common goal or objective
- Is a current project that has strategic impact, i.e., provides long-lasting, ongoing benefit to the community or the distinct population it is intended to serve
- Is based on a proven track record of success as demonstrated through process, leaders and/or experienced partners
- Impact is clearly defined, measurable results that are attainable within a reasonable time frame;
- Demonstrates sustainability, i.e., is replicable, repeatable and/or scalable
- Focuses on problem areas, opportunities or populations that otherwise are not funded and serviced by existing nonprofits, educational organization mandates or state or federal programs

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. PDT, Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the application deadline?

The deadline for application submission is 5:00 p.m. PDT on Wednesday May 20, 2026. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Who is eligible to apply for RBCF funding?

To be eligible for a grant from RBCF, organizations must have tax-exempt status and provide services in Rancho Bernardo. 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. RBCF at San Diego Foundation does not make grants to supporting organizations or private, non-operating foundations.

How much can we request?

- 1. Music:** RBCF will award between \$1,500 and \$5,000.
- 2. Community Enhancement:** RBCF will award between \$1,500 to \$10,000.

What is the grant period?

Grants are made for one year. This grant cycle runs from December 1, 2026 through November 30, 2027.

What will RBCF not fund?

Generally, RBCF does not make grants for:

- Annual campaigns and fundraising events
- Capital campaigns for buildings of facilities
- Stipends for attendance at conferences
- Endowments or “chairs”
- For-profit organizations and individuals unaffiliated with a qualified fiscal sponsor
- Projects that promote religious or political doctrine
- Research (medical or otherwise)
- Scholarships
- Existing obligations/debt

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

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

What is the RBCF timeline?

- **Wednesday, May 20, 2026** – Grant applications due no later than 5:00 p.m. PDT
- **July 2026** – Site visits conducted with all finalists
- **September 2026** – Selection of award recipients
- **Thursday, November 19, 2026** – Grants Celebration
- **Tuesday, December 1, 2026** – Program funding start date

Application Instructions

San Diego Foundation has a [grant application portal](#). All nonprofit applicants are required to create a new user account through the SDF online portal to submit their application for the grant cycle. After creating your account, applicants must click the “Apply” button to access the application. For additional guidance regarding creating a new user account, please [see this tutorial](#). [Register/apply today](#).

Note: SDF highly recommends updating all of your organizations contact information in Foundant including address and Employer Identification Number (EIN) as well as fully updating your profile in [Candid](#).

Organization Information

- **Type of Organization***: Which describes your organization?
 - A 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization
 - Fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization
- **DBA**: Please provide if the organization name you use is different from your legal name
- **Mission Statement***: Describe the organization’s mission and goals.
- **Geographic Areas Served (list)***: Please provide how your project specifically serves the Rancho Bernardo community

Fiscal Sponsor Information (if applicable)

- **Fiscal Sponsor Name***
- **Fiscal Sponsor EIN***: Please be sure to format it correctly (##-#####)
- **Fiscal Sponsor Agreement***: Please upload a letter demonstrating the agreement between your organization and your fiscal sponsor. A letter or MOU will suffice.

Project Information

- **Project Name***
- **Amount Requested***
- **Executive Summary***: Briefly describe the purpose of the project including goals, impact and how many people will be served. Include how this program addresses identified community needs and provide information about the population served.

Project and Organizational Budget*

Please enter your annual operating budget based on your last fiscal year.

- **Annual Operating Budget*:** Please enter your annual operating budget based on your last fiscal year.
- **Project Budget Narrative:** Describe your specific line items.
- **Project Budget:** Please fill in your Project Budget (example below).

Expense Category	Requested Amount	Program Budget
1. Equipment & Project Materials (Example)		
2. Consultants & Contractors (Example)		
3. Curriculum (Example)		
4. Training (Example)		
	Total Requested Amount:	Total Program Budget:

- **Other Sources of Funding:** List other sources of funding secured for this project.