# RESPONSIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

## JUNE 2024

# READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND CRITERIA CAREFULLY

## ORGANIZATION AND GRANT BACKGROUND

The mission of Sierra Health Foundation is to invest in and serve as a catalyst for ideas, partnerships and programs that improve health and quality of life through convening, educating and strategic grantmaking.

Sierra Health Foundation forges new paths to promote health, racial equity and racial justice in partnership with communities, organizations and leaders in 26 counties in Northern California.

Sierra Health Foundation's funding region includes the following counties: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano (eastern), Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba.

Since 2008, our organization has awarded approximately $8.3 million through the Responsive Grants Program in support of community-driven efforts to **improve health**, **promote access** and **reduce health inequity** throughout our 26-county funding region.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AND BACKGROUND

Responsive grants are available to qualifying nonprofit organizations and public agencies that serve people living in Sierra Health Foundation's 26-county funding region (see map on page 4). Sierra Health Foundation has committed a total of $400,000 to this program in 2024, with grants of up to $10,000 available to support projects and activities that advance health and racial equity and improve health and quality of life. This opportunity will prioritize strategies affected by the California budget deficit, that impact health and quality of life for Californians.

**Social Determinants of Health and Health and Racial Equity**
Sierra Health Foundation has a broad definition of health, believing there is much more to health than healthcare. Health is influenced by many factors, including socioeconomic conditions, environment, education, income, housing, neighborhood safety and other drivers of health outcomes—factors that have come to be known as the Social Determinants of Health. Where we live, work and play have a considerable influence on our health.

Health equity means achieving the highest possible standard of health for all people and giving special attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health, based on social conditions.[1]  Racial equity "is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices,

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[1] Braveman, Paula. "What Are Health Disparities and Health Equity?
We Need to Be Clear." Public Health Reports. 2014 Supplement 2, Volume 129.
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3863701/

attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them."[2]

Through the Responsive Grants Program, Sierra Health Foundation will invest in communities and organizations that promote health and racial equity to address health disparities and the social determinants of health.

**Addressing the California State Budget Funding Gaps**

Sierra Health Foundation supports community-based organizations and public agencies that may be impacted by these budget cuts and will prioritize related projects in the selection process. Based on the May revise of the California State Budget, there are potential and possible budget cuts not limited to the following areas:

- Health
- Homelessness and Housing
- Economic Security
- Education
- Justice System
- Workforce and Climate Change

For more information, please refer to the California Budget and Policy Center and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

**Funding for Rural Communities of Northern California**

At least 30 percent of Responsive Grants Program funds will be available to support projects that benefit rural areas of Sierra Health Foundation's funding region. The remaining funds will be available for activities benefiting urban areas and urban/rural areas.
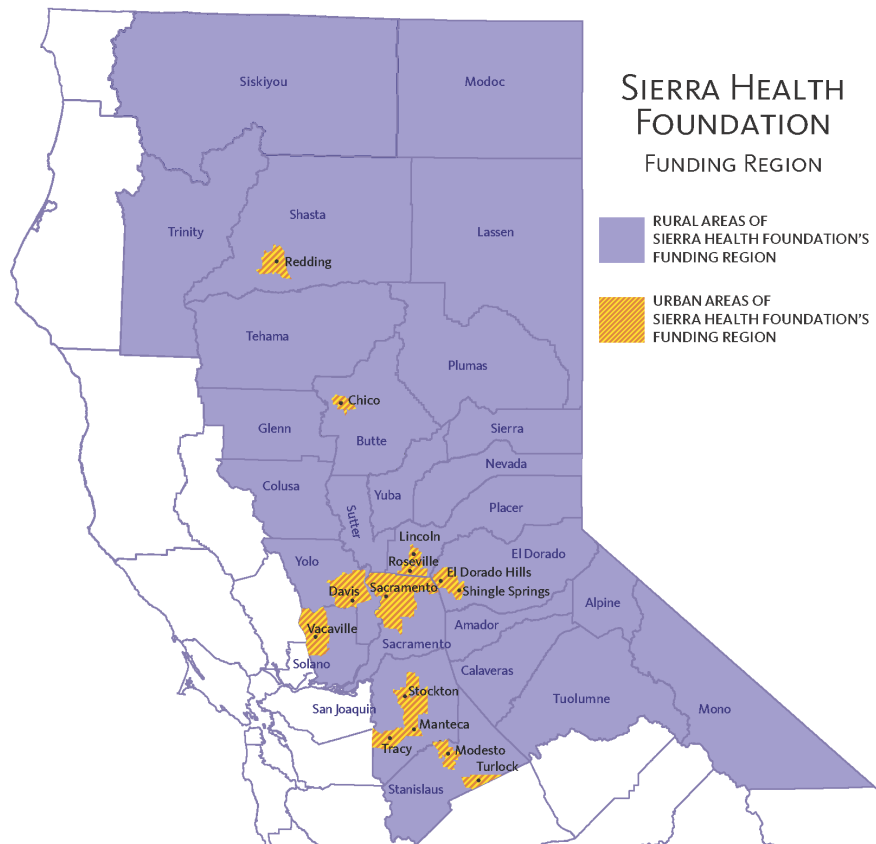
**What is Rural?**

For purposes of this grant program, Sierra Health Foundation defines rural, including frontier, as a Medical Service Study Area (MSSA) that has a population density of 250 persons or less per square mile and has no incorporated area greater than 50,000 people.[3] To determine if the geographic area to be served by your proposed project is rural, see the map below, which shows the urban and rural MSSAs in Sierra Health Foundation's funding region. If you need further clarification on your service area's rural/urban designation, contact Sierra Health Foundation by sending an email to rgp@sierrahealth.org with subject line: Rural Eligibility.

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[2] https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/racial-equity

[3] MSSA is a designation defined by the California Health Manpower Policy Commission. As a rule, MSSAs are deemed to be "rational service areas" for purposes of designating health professional shortage areas, medically underserved areas, or medically underserved populations. An MSSA is composed of one or more complete census tracts. Sierra Health Foundation combines rural and frontier communities into its rural category for the purposes of this grant program. Source: California Health Manpower Policy Commission, California Rural Health Policy Council, a program of the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

Sierra Health Foundation's funding region includes the following counties: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano (eastern), Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Sierra Health Foundation will fund nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are designated a 509(a)(1) or 509 (a)(2) organization or tribal or urban Indian entities. Proposed projects or activities must benefit people living in one or more of the 26 counties of Sierra Health Foundation's funding region (see map above).

Sierra Health Foundation will also fund public agencies. Fiscal sponsors for entities that are not qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Fiscal sponsors may apply on behalf of more than one organization or collaborative group.

For applicants that are not fiscal sponsors, only one grant proposal per eligible 501(c)(3) organization or public agency will be considered. This limitation applies to multiple departments of a government agency or university, and multiple chapters of an organization using the same tax-exempt ID number. If we receive more than one application per eligible applicant organization, we will only consider the first application received. Fiscal sponsors are exempt from this limitation.

## FUNDING INFORMATION

Grants will cover activities for the period September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025.

The maximum grant amount is $10,000. Applicants may request less than $10,000.

Grants for capital equipment will be considered.

Up to 15% of direct costs may be requested for indirect costs.

## FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

The following will not be funded:
- Debt retirement
- Operational deficits
- Partisan activities
- Individuals
- Religious organizations for explicit religious activities
- Activities that exclusively benefit the members of sectarian or religious organizations
- 509 (a)(3) supporting organizations
- 501 (c)(4) organizations or lobbying activities

## FUNDING EXAMPLES

These are just some examples of types of projects that would be considered for funding. What applicants propose is not limited to these examples:
- Increasing access to and quality of health services by supporting infrastructure of clinics that serve medically underserved populations.
- Increasing bilingual community health workers in underserved neighborhoods where English is a second language through internship and leadership development classes.
- Providing infrastructure support for crisis lines.
- Increasing access to shelter in rural communities through shelter operational support.
- Addressing homelessness by supporting street outreach.
- Increasing food access through organizational support to food pantries.
- Reducing domestic violence through prevention and outreach activities.
- Increasing assistance for people with disabilities through housing support programs.
- Increasing access to higher education through programs designed to provide support for low-income students and students of color, such as housing, food and transportation programs.
- Creating and/or supporting coalitions to address racial and gender equity by advocating for justice reform.
- Promoting clean air and preventing pollution through education or enforcement of relevant air quality policies.
- Supporting community groups or coalitions advocating for increased and equitable walking/biking safety and access.

Examples of approaches that could be used to implement projects (proposed approaches are not limited to these examples):

- Coalition Building/Partnership Development
- Policy Development
- Leadership Development
- Community Engagement, Organizing and Advocacy
- Research/Participatory Action Research
- Multi-Ethnic/Multi-Racial Collaboration
- Organizational Capacity Building
- Communications/Outreach and Education
- Youth Engagement, Organizing and Advocacy
- Peer Learning
- Direct Service

## SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applicant selection will be based on a complete and responsive application demonstrating a mix of experience, capacity, and potential impact on the community. Applications will be reviewed on how well the proposed activities match the funding opportunity's intent, anticipated overall impact, and the strength of the project team and proposal.

The most competitive applications will:
- Respond to gaps in the California State budget.
- Promote health and racial equity and address health disparities.
- Support projects that improve health and quality of life.
- Demonstrate approaches to solving issues that impact health, such as education, employment, housing, environment, neighborhood safety and other drivers of health outcomes.
- Clearly explain why the applicant organization and, where appropriate, partner agencies are best suited to be successful with the proposed project.
- Clearly describe the target population, utilizing data.
- Make a data-driven case for the need related to the target population.
- Leverage resources and/or demonstrate sustainability, if applicable.
- Include a reasonable project scope and budget, based on Responsive Grants Program parameters.
- Describe the anticipated difference the project would make.

Additionally, the geographic and demographic diversity of the region and variety of issue areas will be considered in the selection process. Priority will be given to organizations that demonstrate fiscal impact from California state budget cuts.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

Grants will cover activities for the following time period: September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Awardees will be required to submit narrative and financial reports 30 days following the end of the funding period, reporting on activities and outcomes included in the proposal. Report forms may vary and potentially include videos or photos, utilizing other materials, or verbal reporting.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

At Sierra Health Foundation's discretion, the application timeline below is subject to change to best meet programmatic needs and funding requirements.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**
July 9, 2024, at 1 p.m. (Pacific Time)

**REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:**
July - August 2024

**APPROXIMATE AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT:**
August 2024

**NOTE: All funding will be backdated to September 1, 2024, even if grants are signed after September 1.**

To be considered, your proposal must be submitted by 1 p.m. (Pacific Time) on the deadline date. Proposals received after the due date/time will not be reviewed. Submission before the deadline date is advised in case you experience technical difficulties with submitting your application through the portal. We may not be able to respond to your requests for help on the deadline date.

## RFA INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR AND APPLICANT INFORMATION SESSION

We have scheduled an RFA informational webinar and an in-person information session to review the funding opportunity and to answer questions. The content of the sessions will be the same. This webinar will be recorded and posted on the Sierra Health Foundation website along with application materials. Webinar attendance, or review of the recording, is strongly recommended, though not required.

**RFA Informational Session (In-Person)**
**June 20, 2024**
**2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.** (Pacific Time)

Sierra Health Foundation

1321 Garden Hwy, Sacramento, CA 95833

Registration Link

*Due to space restrictions, please register no more than two people from your organization.*

**RFA Informational Webinar (Virtual)**

**Friday, June 21, 2024**

**9 a.m. – 10 a.m.** (Pacific Time)

Register for the webinar on Zoom

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Initiate the funding application on Sierra Health Foundation's online portal. The link is also posted on the Sierra Health Foundation website.
- Required Application Attachments
    - Proposed project budget completed in Sierra Health Foundation's Proposed Budget Template
    - 501 (c)(3) IRS Determination Letter
    - Applicant organization's W-9
    - Financial Reports – Please provide financial reports that show organizational and/or institutional revenue and expenses for your most recent fiscal year. We prefer to receive both your most recent 990's (tax returns) and audited financial statements (AFS). If you have neither tax returns nor AFS's, please submit alternate statements that show your most recent financial activity.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applications received after the above-mentioned deadline will not be considered. If you are unable to submit your application online or need technical assistance, please contact us at rgp@sierrahealth.org with the subject line: Responsive Grants Program Application Online Help.

**Send questions and inquiries related to this funding opportunity to rgp@sierrahealth.org with the subject line: Responsive Grants Program RFA Question**

## Important Application Guidelines

**To help us process your application, please follow these submission guidelines:**

We encourage you to submit your application before the deadline date in case you need help with any of the RFA components.

- Applications are due no later than 1 p.m. (Pacific Time) on July 9, 2024.
- Submit the application via our online portal.
- Respond to all required fields (marked with an *).
- Upload all attachments listed under "Application Checklist" below.

- On the portal, you may click "Save my progress and resume later." Enter your e-mail and determine a password to return to the saved application through the same link at a later date.

- To return, use the same link and click on "Resume a previously saved form."

- You may submit your application only once. Be sure your application is complete and accurate, including required documents, before submitting it. Revised applications will not be accepted.

- If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at rgp@sierrahealth.org with the subject line: Responsive Grants Program Application Online Help.

## SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION USING THE ONLINE PORTAL

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Be sure to read the request for applications carefully before beginning your application. Required fields and attachment uploads are marked with *.

You may save your in-progress application at any time and return to it later using the link you will receive in an automated e-mail.

If you have questions, send an e-mail to [rgp@sierrahealth.org](mailto:rgp@sierrahealth.org) with the subject line: Responsive Grants Program Application Online Help.

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Applicant Organization Information Organization Name***
*Enter the organization's legal name.*

**Is the applicant organization a fiscal sponsor for this proposal?** *
*A fiscal sponsor is an organization that applies on behalf of an entity or group that does not have legal standing with the IRS. Select Yes or No.*

**Name of fiscally sponsored organization, if applicable.**
*Enter the name of the organization that will be implementing the project, otherwise known as the fiscally sponsored organization.*

Applicant Organization Address*

City*          State*               Zip Code*            County*          Phone*

**Website URL (optional)**

**Tax Exempt ID # or Employer ID #***
*Enter the applicant organization's Tax-ID or the Employer ID if the organization is an individual.*

**Organizational Status***
*Organization has 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with the IRS. Select Yes, No, or Unsure.*

**Annual Budget***

*What is the applicant organization's annual budget amount?*

**Proposal Contact Information (for questions related only to this proposal)**
First Name*          Last Name* Title*

E-mail Address*

Office Phone*          Extension

**Applicant Organization CEO/Director Information**
First Name*          Last Name* Title*

E-mail Address*

Office Phone*          Extension

**Program Contact Information**
First Name*          Last Name* Title*

E-mail Address*

Office Phone*          Extension

**Additional Program Contact Information – optional**
First Name          Last Name Title

E-mail Address

Office Phone          Extension

**Data Contact Information – optional**
First Name          Last Name Title

E-mail Address

Office Phone          Extension

**Financial Contact Information – optional**
First Name          Last Name
Title

E-mail Address

Office Phone          Extension

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Project Information**
**Project Name*** (10 words maximum):

**Brief Summary and Purpose of Project**\* (100 words maximum):

**Project Start Date**: September 1, 2024
**Project End Date**: August 31, 2025

**Total Amount Requested:** \* $_____
*Up to $10,000*

**Project Geography (County-level)** \*
*Please indicate what percentage of activity will be spent in which California counties. Total must add up to 100.* (A list of all 58 California counties is in the online application, but only the 26 counties within Sierra Health Foundation's funding region are eligible. Please refer to the funding region on page 4.)

**Population to be Served**
**Focus Populations (Race/Ethnicity)** \*
For the racial and ethnic populations that will be affected, provide your best estimate of the percentage of the total people of each population (Total must add up to 100.)
☐ African American/Black: **%**
☐ American Indian/Alaska Native: %
☐ Asian-American: %
☐ Indigenous (e.g., Mixteco, Purepecha, etc.)
☐ Latino/Hispanic: %
☐ Middle Eastern or North African
☐ Mixed race: %
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ White: %
☐ Other: % [please specify]

**Focus Populations (Age Groups)** \*
For the age groups that will be impacted, provide your best estimate of the percentage in each age group. (Total must add up to 100.) *There are no age restrictions/limits for individuals served with these funds.*
☐ Under 5: %
☐ 5 - 9: %
☐ 10 - 14: %
☐ 15 - 19: %
☐ 20 - 24: %
☐ 25 - 54: %
☐ 55+: %

**NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**

1. **Organization Description**. Provide a brief overview of your organization (the entity that is conducting the project), including: a) when it was established, b) its mission, and c) goals. Describe your organization's experience providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the focus population(s) to be served. Briefly describe 1-3 examples of your work with this community (or communities). (300 words maximum)

2. **Funding Need.** Describe the impact of potential California budget cuts on your program and the need for additional funds. (300 word maximum)

3. **Opportunity.** Describe the opportunity, need, challenge or issue the project will address, as well as current access barriers, including the proposed populations/communities and disparities that exist within the affected population. (300 words maximum)

4. **Project Goal and Activities.** Describe your project's overall goal. Frame this in terms of the project's long-term aspirations. Briefly describe the proposed activities for this project. In your description, tell us about the timeline for the implementation of these activities. (500 word maximum)

5. **Monitoring and Determining Success.** Describe how you will monitor your project activities and measure your success. (300 words maximum)

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Proposed Project Budget*

    - Download Sierra Health Foundation's budget form from the application. Fill it in and upload it in Excel format.

- 501 (c)(3) IRS Determination Letter*
- Applicant organization's W-9
- Financial Reports – Please provide financial reports that show organizational and/or institutional revenue and expenses for your most recent fiscal year. We prefer to receive both your most recent 990's (tax returns) and audited financial statements (AFS).  If you have neither tax returns nor AFS's, please submit alternate statements that show your most recent 12-month financial activity.