



GRANT GUIDELINES Board Empowerment Program

ABOUT

The Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) embraces a countywide vision of **Healthy, Safe and Vibrant** communities. The CFMC's grant programs focus on the people and places of Monterey County, California, highlighting impact and seeking measurable results. CFMC's Board Empowerment Program offers structured support for nonprofits to make meaningful changes in board structure, policy or practices over ten months, with opportunities to embed lasting changes in their culture and practices beyond the program.

Grant Awards

The \$5,000 unrestricted funds are intended to encourage the organization's full engagement in the Board Empowerment Program. Funding from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation is available for up to six organizations. Funding from the Phyllis Geer Krystal Fund for Animal Welfare is available for up to an additional six animal welfare organizations. The CFMC expects to receive more grant requests than is possible to fund.

Compelling proposals meet eligibility requirements and:

- The nonprofit has an organizational mission with importance to the communities of Monterey County, including areas of the County that have been historically under-invested.
- The nonprofit is able to describe what an effective and empowered board of directors would make possible for the organization and its impact.
- The board of directors of the organization is open, ready and committed to systemic changes with time available to dedicate to the program.

Project Types:

In addition to grant funding, organizations participating in the Board Empowerment Program Cohort will receive an assessment and ongoing coaching toward board development goals in areas such as the following:

- Governance Structures: E.g., board succession planning, term limits, bylaws updates.
- Board pipeline and Recruitment
- Board Composition and Culture: E.g., developing leadership that reflects the community
- Board-Executive Dynamics: E.g., improving alignment, communication and trust.
- Fundraising and Financial Oversight: E.g., board fundraising, improving financial governance.
- Strategic Planning/ Program Development: E.g., aligning board activities with mission and goals.
- Knowledge Management: E.g., leveraging technology for board operations, communication, service delivery, and team cohesion.

Assessment and coaching will be provided by Coral Collective.

Timeline

Board Empowerment Program grant proposals are due on Friday, January 30, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. or earlier. The subsequent program timeline is as follows:

- March 2026	Grants awarded; cohort orientation call via Zoom
- March	Action plans completed
- April-January 2027	Monthly coaching with consultant via Zoom
- May-January	Cohort in-person convening (details to be announced)
- February 2027	Grant evaluation reports due

Program Participation

Executive Director and Board President or Governance Chair participate together as a team. Teams can expect to dedicate five hours per month to the program.

Eligibility/Requirements

CFMC does not support organizations that discriminate in their practices, volunteer opportunities or delivery of programs and services on the basis of race, religion gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation or any other characteristics protected by law.

- Open to 501(c)3 public benefit organizations**. Fiscally sponsored organizations are not eligible.
- Organizations must have had a board of directors in place for at least two years. Board representative participating in this program should have at least two years of experience on this board.
- Businesses and individuals are not eligible (except for social enterprises associated with a nonprofit).
- Applicants must demonstrate a significant agency-wide commitment to the success of their identified goals. Including active participation by the Executive Director and Board President/Chair.
- Applicants may have a recent Organizational Development grant as long as it does not duplicate the type of support offered through the Board Empowerment Program.
- Organizations must be current on reporting obligations for past Community Foundation competitive grants of any type.
- Organizations are not eligible for concurrent Board Empowerment Program and Organizational Development grants.

Exclusions:

**While schools, faith-based organizations (for secular programs) and public agencies are eligible to apply for a grant from the CFMC, grants are infrequently awarded to such organizations due to our limited funds.

Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) does not prohibit the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with its application-based grant requests. If grantseekers use AI tools to prepare their grant proposals, CFMC encourages the following:

- The grantseeker to proofread the proposal/report before submission;
- The incorporation of the organization's voice; and
- Including local data and information to personalize and support their statements.

Prospective grantseekers are encouraged to contact a Center for Nonprofit Excellence staff member to explore fit with the Board Empowerment Program. Please contact Susie Polnaszek or Reid Norris at 831.375.9712.