



## 2026 GRANT GUIDELINES

### ABOUT THE SOUTHERN MONTEREY COUNTY FOUNDATION

Founded in 2014, the Southern Monterey County Foundation (SMCF) is an affiliate fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County. Our mission is to inspire philanthropy and be a catalyst for strengthening communities throughout Southern Monterey County.

The SMCF provides grants to nonprofit organizations that benefit the communities of Southern Monterey County, which we define as King City and all points south, excluding the coastal region. By strategically leveraging our donors' investments, the SMCF aims to bring about positive change for Southern Monterey County.

For more information about the Southern Monterey County Foundation, visit [cfmco.org/SMCF](https://cfmco.org/SMCF)

### SMCF GRANTS

Each year, the SMCF determines where its available grant support can be invested for greatest impact on our communities' highest priority needs. Using these grantmaking guidelines, the SMCF Advisory Council, made up of community volunteers, carefully reviews grant applications and recommends a slate of grants to the CFMC board, which has final authority for grant decisions.

### 2026 GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

SMCF seeks to support nonprofit organizations that have the leadership and capacity to provide important community resources and services in Southern Monterey County communities. Funding will be prioritized for grant proposals addressing:

- **Health and Wellness:** Programs that address nutrition and health, mental health, access to physical exercise activities that promote healthy living and programs that increase emotional well-being
- **Education (preK-12), youth leadership and career exploration:** Out-of-school academic supports especially (literacy, math and arts), youth-led programs, entrepreneurship skill-building, and financial literacy.

Preference is given to locally based organizations that have less access to other sources of support, and where a small grant can make a meaningful difference. Proposals selected for funding will demonstrate strong community support for the project or program and a viable plan for achieving results.

### GRANT AWARD

A total of \$30,000 is available for grantmaking. Applications will be accepted for a maximum grant request of \$6,000. The number and size of grants awarded may vary depending on the Advisory Council's assessment of a proposed project's impact on Southern Monterey County communities. Grant recipients will be expected to use all funds and provide a written evaluation of the project within 12 months of the grant date.

### ELIGIBILITY:

SMCF grants are open to:

- 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations
- Public programs (schools, parks, public health, etc.)
- Faith-based sponsored activities with benefit beyond their own membership
- Organizations and collaboratives that are not legally incorporated—for these, CFMC requires an agreement with a “Fiscal Sponsor” defined as a tax exempt 501(c)3 organization accountable for financial management of the grant.
- Organizations may only submit one application. However, if an organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for a collaborative or unincorporated group, it may also apply for a grant to benefit its organization.

**WHAT GRANT FUNDS MAY SUPPORT:**

- Pre-development or construction costs for facility construction or renovation
- Matching grants to leverage other funding
- Developmental costs for new programs
- Personnel expenses that relate to specific program goals
- Equipment, materials and/or facilities expenses that directly benefit participants or are an identifiable part of project

**WHAT GRANT FUNDS WILL NOT SUPPORT:**

- Projects that discriminate or with political or partisan purposes
- Religious activities or services that are non-secular and/or promote a religious doctrine
- Funding to schools and public agencies that would supplant tax-supported, mandated services
- Individual sports teams
- Annual fundraising campaigns or events
- Creation of, or addition to, endowment funds
- Payment of debt or legal settlements
- Expenses incurred prior to the grant award date
- Attendance at conferences for staff or volunteers
- Research projects
- Grants to provide college or other educational scholarships to individuals
- Grants to provide financial assistance directly to individuals

Visit [cfmco.org/SMCFGrants](https://cfmco.org/SMCFGrants) for more information on how to apply online.

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.

Grant requests to the South Monterey County Fund are due **by 11:59 pm, August 7, 2026**, or earlier. Funding decisions will be announced in October.

For questions, please contact Daniela Cervantes, Community Impact and Equity Officer, at 831.375.9712 x133 or [danielac@cfmco.org](mailto:danielac@cfmco.org)