



Main Office - Department of Housing
264 Harbor Blvd., Building A, Belmont, CA 94002-017

Housing Community Development
Tel: (650) 802-5050

Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo
Tel: (650) 802-3300



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA) FOR THE EQUITY INNOVATION FUND

Issued: December 5, 2023

Responses Must be Received by
5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024 PST

APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME

**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY
FOR
EQUITY INNOVATION FUND**

Applications must be submitted to: www.citydataservices.net

NEW USER(S): Create an account on citydataservices.net by using the following login information:

Username: SMC2024

Password: SMC2024

Contact Person: Eleazar Malabanan

emalabanan@smchousing.org

Responses Must be Received by 5:00 p.m. PST on Thursday, January 18, 2024

APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME

Note regarding the Public Records Act:

Government Code Section 6250 *et seq.*, the California Public Records Act (PRA), defines a public record as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public business. The PRA provides that public records shall be disclosed upon written request and that any citizen has a right to inspect any public record unless the document is exempted from disclosure.

Be advised that any contract that arises from this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is a public record in its entirety. Also, all information submitted in response to this NOFA is itself a public record **without exception**. Submission of any materials in response to this NOFA constitutes a waiver by the submitting party of any claim that the information is protected from disclosure. By submitting materials, (1) you are consenting to release of such materials by the County if requested under the Public Records Act without further notice to you and (2) you agree to indemnify and hold harmless the County of San Mateo for release of such information.

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SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

The San Mateo County Department of Housing (the “Department”) is seeking applications through this NOFA for equity and justice in housing and community development projects and programs under the San Mateo County **Equity and Innovation Fund (EIF)**. The EIF was established to inspire applicants to explore solutions to housing and community development issues that are outside of traditional programs and projects and have the potential to create new opportunities to address community needs in innovative ways, and to foster approaches that integrate greater equity into meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and diverse populations in San Mateo County.

Estimate available funding for the EIF is expected to be approximately **\$482,986 for FY 2024-2025**. The timelines for the County’s NOFA public participation and funding approval process can be found at www.smchousing.org.

NOTE: No funding has been identified for the EIF after FY2024-2025.

The minimum EIF award will be **\$25,000**, and the maximum award will be **\$100,000**.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In 2021, the County reinforced its commitment to delivering services and evaluating existing structures through a lens of equity and inclusion. The County seeks to ensure all people can reach their full potential in San Mateo County regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status, income, zip code, ability, gender, sexual orientation or age. The County intends to weave equity into every aspect of how we provide for all residents, especially those who are most vulnerable by bringing an equity lens to issues such as housing, jobs, transportation and food access. The EIF is one tool designed to support these goals in the area of housing and community development. By launching the EIF, the Department seeks to identify and invest in innovative strategies that broaden opportunity and equity in the County.

The Department’s current support for public services is funded primarily with federal and State funding sources which are subject to conditions and requirements that can limit the potential scope and creativity in how that funding is allocated. The Department has identified a pool of funding that is more flexible and creates an area of opportunity for the investment of programs and activities that are typically not eligible for funding from the Department via its traditional federal and State programs.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT this NOFA is NOT seeking to solicit additional applications from developers to fund affordable new-construction multifamily rental housing projects of the type funded through the Affordable Housing Fund, or through other existing sources of affordable housing funding administered by the County.

1.3 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

This NOFA seeks the submission of applications to provide services from all interested and qualified applicants. The seeks to obtain the listed services in a manner that maximizes the quality of services while also maximizing value to the County and, by extension, the residents of the County. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they can perform the proposed services. Such evidence includes, but is not limited to, the respondent's demonstrated competency and experience in delivering services of a similar scope and type and local availability of the applicant's personnel and equipment resources.

Competency may be demonstrated by traditional organizational biographies, individual resumes and narrative statements of background, qualifications, experience, learning, practical skills and other relevant information. If a creative and innovative applicant does not yet have a proven track record of performance on prior projects, they should provide alternate references along with a detailed work plan.

SECTION II: SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 DESCRIPTION

Successful applications are not expected to be comprehensive solutions, but they should at a minimum provide County policymakers with a solid foundation of strategies and data upon which to base future program designs or additional studies.

Successful applications will propose projects that principally benefit lower-income persons, support racial, ethnic, gender, and economic equity in San Mateo County through housing and community development efforts **AND** meet one or more of the following funding priorities:

1. Improving the capacity of governmental and nonprofit organizations engaged in housing and community development work in San Mateo County to identify and pursue opportunities to promote equity in the County.
2. Leveraging and complementing preexisting County investments and third-party sources of funding in ways that better promote racial, ethnic, gender, and economic equity in housing and community development initiatives.
3. Promoting housing stability in communities, defined by geography, race, ethnicity, gender identification, etc., that have historically been subject to disinvestment.
4. Expanding supportive and transitional housing opportunities to underserved populations.

5. Promoting projects/programs and services that target low-income populations within **low-resource and below categorized opportunity areas** of San Mateo County. See CTCAC Opportunity map here: [2023 CTCAC HCD Opportunity Map \(berkeley.edu\)](https://www.ctcac.org/2023-CTCAC-HCD-Opportunity-Map)
6. Promoting projects/programs of 501(c)(3) organizations who have a total asset value or annual revenue of **less than \$1,000,000**.

Applicants are highly encouraged to engage in cross collaborative efforts with other organizations who perform services inside of the County of San Mateo to submit joint applications to address local community needs that demonstrate an ability to leverage human, financial and other resources.

2.2 LENGTH OF AGREEMENT

Twelve Month Contract Term: The County will prepare a 12-month contract, to commence July 1, 2024, until-June 30, 2025.

2.3 FUNDING

The Department has allocated up to **\$482,986** to the EIF. The minimum award will be **\$25,000** and the maximum award will be **\$100,000**.

2.4 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS

Measure K is a countywide half-cent sales tax extension passed by local voters in November 2016 and is the source of funding for the EIF. All programs and projects applying for the EIF available through this NOFA must the following additional criteria:

1. The applicant is legally authorized to operate in the State of California.
2. The applicant is a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status, a faith-based organization or a for profit that has proven experience in running programs that meet the needs of low-income households, or:
3. The applicant is a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status, a faith-based organization or a for profit that has proven experience building institutional competency or capacity supporting governmental or public service organizations.

SECTION III: NOFA PROCEDURE

This section describes the general NOFA procedure used by the Department, and the remaining sections of this NOFA list detailed requirements.

3.1 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

| EVENT | TARGET DATE* |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. NOFA Release Date | December 5, 2023 |
| 2. Deadline to Submit Written Questions | December 18, 2023 |
| 3. Technical Assistance Session | January 4, 2024 |
| 4. Application Deadline – Applications Must be <u>RECEIVED</u> by 5:00 p.m. PST on This Date | January 18, 2024 |
| 5. Formal Review of Applications | January 22, 2024 – February 12, 2024 |
| 6. Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC) Meeting to Finalize Funding Recommendations | February 29, 2024 |
| 7. Board of Supervisors Meeting to Approve Funding | April 23, 2024 |

*Dates/times are subject to change, please see the Department of Housing website for the most recent schedule: <https://www.smcgov.org/housing>

3.2 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

A. Submission Requirements: Submit one application per program funding request submitted through [City Data Services](#). Paper applications will not be accepted.

B. Submission Deadline. Applications are due on

January 18, 2024, at 5:00 PM PST. Late applications will not be accepted.

C. Where to Submit. applications will be available on [City Data Services](#).

NEW USER(S): Create an account on citydataservices.net by using the following login information:

- Username: SMC2024
- Password: SMC2024

D. Information and Assistance. Staff is available to answer questions regarding the NOFA and preparation and submittal of the application. You may contact the following staff:

| Name | Phone | E-Mail |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Eleazar Malabanan | (650) 222-3105 | emalabanan@smchousing.org |

3.3 APPLICATIONS ARE PUBLIC RECORDS

California Government Code Sections 6250 *et seq.* the California Public Records Act (PRA) defines a public record as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public business. The PRA provides that public records shall be disclosed upon written request and that any citizen

has a right to inspect any public record unless the document is exempted from disclosure. The Department, which is part of the County of San Mateo, is subject to the California Public Records Act.

Be advised that any contract that arises from this NOFA is a public record in its entirety. Also, all information submitted in response to this NOFA is itself a public record **without exception**. Submission of any materials in response to this NOFA constitutes a waiver by the submitting party of any claim that the information is protected from disclosure. By submitting materials, (1) you are consenting to release of such materials by the County if requested under the Public Records Act without further notice to you and (2) you agree to indemnify and hold harmless the County for release of such information.

If the County/Department receives a request for any portion of a document submitted in response to this NOFA, the County will not assert any privileges that may exist on behalf of the person or entity submitting the application and the County reserves the right to disclose the requested materials without notice to the party who originally submitted the requested material. To the extent consistent with the PRA and applicable case law interpreting those provisions, the County/Department and/or its officers, agents, and employees retain discretion to release or withhold any information submitted in response to this NOFA.

Submission of an application constitutes a complete waiver of any claims whatsoever against the County/Department and/or its officers, agents, or employees that the County has violated an applicant's right to privacy, disclosed trade secrets, or caused any damage by allowing the application to be inspected.

3.4 APPLICATIONS EVALUATION

All applications received will be evaluated by Department Staff. During the evaluation process, the Department may require an applicant's representative to answer specific questions orally and/or in writing. The Department may also require a visit to the applicant's offices, other field visits or observations by Department representatives, or demonstrations as part of the overall NOFA evaluation. Staff will recommend the most qualified individual(s) or organization(s), based on the overall strength of each application, and the evaluation is not restricted to considerations of any single factor such as cost. These recommendations may also be reviewed by the HCDC at the Department's discretion. and will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval.

Responses to this NOFA must adhere to the format for applications detailed in Section IV – Application Submission Requirements. The criteria used as a guideline in the evaluation will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Threshold Criteria.** The project application must be received on time, be complete, and meet the requirement that the project be both eligible and qualify under County regulations.

B. Evaluation Criteria. Once a project is determined to meet the threshold criteria, the proposed project is then evaluated against the additional criteria:

1. Sponsor Capacity Maximum 10 Points: Ability of project sponsor to carry out proposed project/program. Organizations that have an asset value/total annual revenue of less than \$1,000,000 will be considered for full points in this section.
2. Project Readiness Maximum 15 Points: Reasonableness of proposed timeline for implementing and completing project in the near term. Requests for funding to support community or public service programs must be for programs in the upcoming fiscal year.
3. Cost Effectiveness and Leveraging Maximum 20 Points: Extent to which project is cost effective in serving new or additional clients and to which other funding sources have been or will be sought and committed to Project or Program.
4. Supports Funding Priorities Maximum 20 Points: Extent to which the organization, program, or project addresses one of the NOFA funding priorities listed in Section II of this NOFA.
5. Innovation Maximum 20 Points: Ability of the program to meet needs, remove economic barriers, ease cost of living and address gaps toward equitable living in other methods not currently being employed in the County.
6. Serves Higher Needs Populations and/or Low-Resourced Opportunity Areas Maximum 15 Points: Extent to which program serves persons with special needs, as defined above, persons with low or very low incomes, populations demonstrably underserved, or low-resourced opportunity areas determined by the tax credit allocation committee by programs currently supported with County funds.

The Department may consider any other criteria it deems relevant and is free to make any recommendations it deems to be in the best interest of the Department and/or the County. Inaccuracy of any information supplied within an application or other errors constitute grounds for rejection of the application. However, the Department may, in its sole discretion, correct errors or contact an applicant for clarification.

Note that the Department reserves the right to evaluate applications solely based on each applicant's submission. In relation to written materials, evaluation will be performed only on the material included directly in the application itself unless otherwise indicated or requested by the Department. The evaluation team will not access company web sites or read sales brochures, marketing materials, or white papers in evaluating applicant experience or proposed methodology unless doing so is in the Department's best interest. An applicant may submit additional materials or reference on-line information in their application, but these will not necessarily be considered during the application evaluation process.

The Department reserves the right to accept other than the applications with the lowest costs and to negotiate with applicants on a fair and equal basis when the best interests of the Department are served by doing so.

3.5 APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION

Department staff will make recommendations as to which proposals to fund, how much funding for each selected project, and which proposals and projects to not fund. These recommendations will be reviewed and approved by Department management and may also be reviewed and approved by the HCDC at the Department's discretion. These recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval. The Department reserves the right to negotiate with any applicant to finalize an agreement in relation to the applicant's response.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The application should be submitted in the following format:

4.1 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

All applications will be submitted through CDS, and all attachments, with the exception of budgets and financials, must be submitted in PDF format.

All applications should adhere to the specified content and sequence of information described by this NOFA.

Although there is not a maximum length for applications, it is expected that applications will be presented in a clear, concise and focused manner.

1. City Data Services Sections and Narrative

a. Project Summary

The project summary must state the amount of the award requested and give a short summary of the application in 200 words or less. Unless the applicant is an individual, all applications must be signed with a firm/company/partnership/entity name and by a responsible officer or employee indicating that officer or employee's authorization to commit the applicant to the terms of the application. Obligations assumed by such signature must be fulfilled.

b. Applicant Information

- i.* Identification. Business name and principal contact person, including office location, address, telephone number, website and email. In the case of

applications submitted by an applicant team, the team must submit this information for each involved entity and designate one lead organization and a primary contact person from the lead organization.

- ii.* History. Briefly describe the applicant’s history, the names of the Board of Directors if any, number of years in business, and description of services the entity provides. In the case of applications submitted by an applicant team, each organization included as a member of the applicant team must provide this information.
- iii.* Team Organization and Roles. Describe proposed team organization and staffing plan for the project indicating the roles and responsibilities of each team member entity and involved staff member.

c. *Qualifications and Experience*
Organization Capacity

- i.* Titles and names of staff members who will be on the team responsible for the project, as well as the expected availability of the various individuals. If requested, include the resume of a dedicated, full-time project manager.
- ii.* All applicable licenses and license numbers relevant to the project, the names of the holders of those licenses, and the names of the agencies issuing the licenses.
- iii.* If portions of work will be performed by subcontractors, names of proposed subcontractors other than suppliers and descriptions of their respective responsibilities.

Experience

- i.* The number of years providing services similar to those contemplated in the application.
- ii.* The number of years providing services to government entities.
- iii.* If the applicant does not yet have a proven track record of performance on prior housing related projects, they should provide a sample of any written work product proposed along with a detailed work plan.

d. Customer Service:

- i.* In the event of a problem in connection with the proposed program, who is to be contacted within your organization?

- ii. In the event of the identification of a problem by the Department, describe how you will address problems and the timeframe for addressing them.

2. **Attachments**

Be sure your application includes the following attachments in your submission:

- a. **Attachment 1 Proposed Approach:** This section describes your proposed approach for meeting the services required by the Department, as listed above. Relevant considerations include the quality and feasibility of your approach to meeting these needs, the way you plan to provide adequate staffing (if applicable), and equipment or other resources provided by you (if applicable). Keep these considerations in mind as you respond to the following:
 - i. Describe how you will fulfill the needs of the Department included in this NOFA. Please attach a work plan, if appropriate.
 - ii. Identify how you will meet all other aspects of the scope of work and related requirements and list any items you cannot provide.
 - iii. Describe the measurements/metrics/deliverables/assessments you will provide on at least a quarterly basis to allow the Department to assess the services you will provide.

- b. **Attachment 2 Uses of the Funding for Provided Services:**
 - i. Provide a detailed explanation and proposed budget for all costs associated with your providing the requested services if you are selected.
 - ii. Is travel time to the Department expected? If so, will it be billable? If so, how will travel time invoices be calculated? Generally, applications that do not include such travel time or expenses are preferred unless the services requested require travel as part of the service.
 - iii. Include start-up costs if any.

- c. **Attachment 3 References:** Provide at least three references from successfully completed projects of similar nature to that described in the application, including the name of the organization for which work was performed, and the name, phone number, and e-mail address of an individual at the organization who was responsible for managing and accepting the work. Ensure that contact information is current. If the County cannot contact the reference because of incorrect or out-of-date information, the reference will be deemed not to have been provided.

- d. **Attachment 4 Location of Services:** Please identify which opportunity areas (California Fair Housing Task Force's *Methodology for the 2021 CTCAC/HCD Opportunity Map* outlines areas in every region of the State whose characteristics have shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families) your proposed program/project will serve and the category of resource level, as indicated in this link:

<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/2023-ctcac-hcd-opportunity-map>

- e. **Attachment 5 Claims and Violations Against You or Your Organization:** Please list any current violations or claims against you/your organization and those having occurred in the past five years, especially those resulting in claims or legal action against you.

SECTION V: GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **Read all Instructions.** Please read the entire NOFA before preparing your application.
2. **Application Includes the NOFA.** This NOFA constitutes part of each application and includes the explanation of the Department's needs, which must be met.
3. **Application Costs.** Costs for developing applications are entirely the responsibility of the applicant and shall not be charged to the Department or otherwise reimbursed by the County.
4. **Application Becomes County Property.** The NOFA and all materials submitted in response to this NOFA will become the property of the County.
5. **Questions and Response Process.** Submit all questions relating to this NOFA in writing by emailing emalabanan@smchousing.org

All questions must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on December 18, 2023 PST.**

If changes to the NOFA are warranted, they will be made in writing, clearly marked as addenda to the NOFA, and posted to the Department website [[NOFA's, Bids & Proposals | County of San Mateo, CA \(smcgov.org\)](#)]. It is the responsibility of each applicant to check the website listed above for changes and/or clarifications to the NOFA prior to submitting a response, and an applicant's failure to do so will not provide a ground for protest.

6. **Alteration of Terms and Clarifications.** No alteration or variation of the terms of this NOFA is valid unless made or confirmed in writing by the Department. Likewise, oral understandings or agreements not incorporated into the final contract are not binding on the department.

If an applicant discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in the NOFA, the applicant must immediately notify the Department of such error in writing and request modification or clarification of the document. If an applicant fails to notify the Department of an error in the NOFA prior to the date fixed for submission, the applicant shall submit a response at his/her own risk, and if the applicant enters into a contract, the applicant shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time by reason of the error or its later correction.

Modifications or clarifications to the NOFA will be posted to the Department website as outlined above, without divulging the source of the request for same. The Department may, at its discretion, also give electronic notice by email to all parties who have notified the Department of their electronic contact information in response to this NOFA, but no party that fails to receive email notice has any basis for protest given that all clarifications will be available online. It is the obligation of all applicants to check the Department website for updates regarding the NOFA if they wish to be kept advised of clarifications prior to submitting an application.

7. **Selection of applicants(s).** The selection of an applicant will be memorialized in the form of an agreement, authorized by a resolution of the County Board of Supervisors, and signed by both parties.

The Department reserves the right to reject any or all applications without penalty. The Department's waiver of an immaterial deviation in the application shall in no way modify the NOFA documents or excuse the applicant from full compliance with the specifications if the applicant enters into a contract.

Once an applicant is selected, the agreement with that applicant must still be negotiated and may need to be submitted to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors for approval. There is no contract between the selected applicant unless and until an approved agreement is executed by the County and the counterparty. Selection of an application for negotiation of contract terms and eventual submission to County leadership by way of a draft agreement does not constitute an offer, and applicant acknowledges by submission of an application that no agreement is final unless and until the Board has approved the funding and an agreement has been executed by the County and the counterparty.

8. **Equal Benefits.** The applicant must comply with the County Ordinance prohibiting discrimination in the provision of employee benefits between a full-time employee with a registered domestic partner and one with a spouse.
9. **Jury Duty.** The applicant must comply with the County Ordinance requiring that the contractor have and adhere to a written policy that provides its full-time employees who live in San Mateo County with no fewer than five days of regular pay for actual jury service in San Mateo County. This policy may provide that employees deposit any fees received for such jury service with the contractor or that the contractor deducts the from the employee's

regular pay the fees received for jury service. If the applicant has no employees that qualify for jury duty in San Mateo County, the applicant may satisfy this requirement by providing the Department with written confirmation of the fact that (1) it has no such employees and (2) its policy is to comply with the jury duty pay ordinance with respect to any future qualifying employees.

10. **Insurance.** The County has certain insurance requirements that must be met. Depending on the nature of the work being performed some of these requirements may not be applicable, or alternatively, additional requirements may need to be met. In most situations those requirements include the following: the contractor must carry \$1,000,000 or more in comprehensive general liability insurance; the contractor must carry motor vehicle liability insurance, and if travel by car is a part of the services being requested, the amount of such coverage must be at least \$1,000,000; if the contractor has two or more employees, the contractor must carry the statutory limit for workers' compensation insurance; if the contractor or its employees maintains a license to perform professional services (e.g., architectural, legal, medical, psychological, etc.), the contractor must carry professional liability insurance; and generally the contractor must name the County and its officers, agents, employees, and servants as additional insured on any such policies (except workers compensation).
11. **Incomplete Applications May be Rejected.** If an applicant fails to satisfy any of the requirements identified in this NOFA, the applicant may be considered non-responsive, and the application may be rejected.
12. **Contact with County/Department Employees.** As of the issuance date of this NOFA and continuing until the final date for submission of applications, all applicants are specifically directed not to hold meetings, conferences, or technical discussions with any County or Department employee for purposes of responding to this NOFA except as otherwise permitted by this NOFA. Any applicant found to be acting in any way contrary to this directive may be disqualified from entering into any contract that may result from this NOFA.

Applicants should submit questions or concerns about the process as outlined in Section 5 above. The applicant should not otherwise ask any County/Department employees questions about the NOFA or related issues, either orally or by written communication, unless invited to do so.

13. **Miscellaneous.** This NOFA is not a commitment or contract of any kind. The County/Department reserves the right to pursue any and/or all ideas generated by this NOFA. The County/Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications and/or terminate the NOFA process if deemed in the best interest of the County and/or Department. Further, while every effort has been made to ensure the information presented in this NOFA is accurate and thorough, the County/Department assumes no liability for any unintentional errors or omissions in this document. The County/Department reserves the right to waive or modify any requirements of this NOFA when it determines that doing so is in the best interest of the County/Department.

14. **Wage Assumptions.** As required by Chapter 2.88 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, Applicant certifies all contractors and subcontractor(s) obligated under this contract shall fully comply with the provisions of the County of San Mateo Living Wage Ordinance, including, but not limited to, paying all Covered Employees the current Living Wage and providing notice to all Covered Employees and Subcontractors as required under the Ordinance.