

The Los Gatos Community Grant Program

Thirty-four years of grants, what the 2026-27 cycle showed, and seven recommendations

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Presented in his individual capacity. This presentation states no position of the Commission.

Thirty-four years of community grants

The Town has made community grants since at least 1992. The last comprehensive framework is from 1993.

When	What happened
1992	Resolution 1992-123 sets the first rules for community grants.
1993	Resolution 1993-173 adopts Rules and Regulations and a standard grant agreement for all community grants from that point forward.
2020	Council updates the program and directs that the scoring rubric come back before it is used. That return has not been located.
2021–25	\$725,000 in ARPA grants and two \$100,000 direct grants, each voted on individually by the Council.
2024–25	Council motions set today's shape: sustaining grants, a \$10,000 competitive cap, the every-other-year and in-Town rules, and the commissioner reading pool.
2026	The 2026-27 awards are published in August. In September the Town Manager pauses the cycle and commits to bringing the awards to the Council.

The Council has voted on every six-figure grant in the record. It has never voted on the list of competitive awards.

Six years of community grant funding

General Fund grants by category, plus ARPA replacement grants. 2026-27 is awarded, not yet paid.

Fiscal year	Competitive	Sustaining	Other budget lines	General Fund total	ARPA
2021-22	\$78,013	\$57,000	\$19,500	\$154,513	\$500,000
2022-23	\$81,100	\$62,000	\$21,000	\$164,100	—
2023-24	\$229,000	\$66,000	\$121,000	\$416,000	\$225,000
2024-25	\$230,000	\$70,000	\$128,800	\$428,800	—
2025-26	\$55,700	\$99,300	—	\$155,000	—
2026-27	\$85,700	\$110,500	—	\$196,200	—
Total	\$759,513	\$464,800	\$290,300	\$1,514,613	\$725,000

Grand total, 2021-22 to 2026-27: \$2,239,613

\$1,514,613 from the General Fund and \$725,000 in ARPA replacement grants.

“Other budget lines” covers Innovation Grants, departmental lines and direct requests to the Council. The \$15,000 a year service contract is not included. The \$759,513 competitive column is the only part the Council has never approved grant by grant.

Sources: Attachment 1 to the August 19, 2025 Council agenda report, Item 13; Council minutes August 19, 2025; Town Community Grant Programs page, viewed September 20, 2026.

FY 2026-27: how the awards were made

As Town staff described it in writing on September 8, 2026, and as the published rules state.

1

Council adopts a total in the budget.

2

Staff prepare the rules and an eight-criterion rubric (42 points).

3

Each commission picks its own readers from its members.

4

Each reader scores alone, from a 21-question online form.

5

Staff average the scores.

6

Top scorers funded in order until the money runs out. The rules call this “final.”

7

The Town Manager signs the agreements.

8

The awards are published on the Town website.

The Town Council never approves a competitive grant. It sets the total at step 1 and takes no further part.

Steps 2 through 8 happen with no agenda, no meeting, no staff report and no vote.

FY 2026-27: who was funded, and who was not

Twenty-two competitive applications, average scores out of 42. Sustaining awards appear with Problem 5.

Funded, in score order

Score	Funded	Request	Award
41.6	Los Gatos Museum Association (NUMU)	15,000	15,000
41.2	Los Gatos Education Foundation	20,000	20,000
40.2	Marine Science Institute	5,000	5,000
39.6	Girls on the Run of Silicon Valley	10,000	10,000
39.2	Jewish Silicon Valley	16,107	16,107
39.2	Congregation Shir Hadash	5,000	5,000
39.2	Alta Vista Elementary (Union SD)	3,180	3,180
39.0	FTC Team 31788	5,000	5,000
38.8	Asian Law Alliance	20,000	6,413*
Total			85,700

* Partial award, based on remaining funding.

Not funded

Score	Not funded	Request
37.2	Homenetmen Santa Clara Ani Chapter	2,830
37.0	Yavneh Day School	5,000
36.8	Veterans Memorial & Support Fdn.	11,700
36.25	Rotary Club of Los Gatos	10,000
36.2	Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & Carousel	11,700
35.8	Grassroots Ecology	8,540
35.8	Los Gatos Public Media / KCAT TV	12,000
35.8	Unplugged Collective	8,800
35.2	Art Docents of Los Gatos	2,500
34.4	Eat Happy Now	10,000
31.8	India Community Center	5,000
28.4	Senior Veteran Home Solutions	5,000
19.4	Petals N Plush Society	none stated
Total		93,070

\$192,357 was requested against \$85,700 available. The top nine were funded in order, the ninth in part. Eight of the thirteen not funded scored within 3 points of the last award (in red); 1.6 points separated funded from not funded.

None of these scores has been published. With margins this narrow, that is the case for scoring in public.

Feeds Recommendations 4 and 5

Problem 1: the award is decided out of public view

Every step of the 2026-27 decision happened in private, on the strength of one online form.

No public meeting

No agenda, staff report, discussion or vote between the deadline and the published list.

Scores not published

No score appears in any Council material or on the Town website.

No one appears

No applicant presents or answers a question. Readers never meet the organizations they fund.

One online form

Twenty-one questions, completed in one sitting, with nothing attached.

No one accountable

The rules say the readers decide. Staff say no one does. The Council never votes.

The award turns on how well an application is written, read by commissioners the public is not told the names of.

Whether the reading panel is subject to the Brown Act is with the Town Attorney. Whatever the answer, the remedy is the same: score in public, and approve in public.

Feeds Recommendation 4

Problem 2: the scores are unreliable

From the Town's FY 2024-25 scoring sheet. Five readers each scored every application alone; the scores were then averaged.

One application, five readers

19

Reader 1

30

Reader 2

30

Reader 3

47

Reader 4

10

Reader 5

Scored 10 by one reader and 47 by another. Its average, 27.2, is what was ranked.

The disagreement is bigger than the differences

18.4 points

Average gap between readers on the same application

13.6 points

Gap between the best and worst application in the pool

Readers had steady habits: one averaged 35.7 across every file, another 21.8. Change one reader and the top ten changes.

In FY 2024-25 the scores did not even decide: the top-scored application got nothing, one at 26.8 lost to one at 26.25, and \$45,000 went to organizations never scored. FY 2026-27 followed its scores, by margins no one outside can test.

Feeds Recommendation 2

Problem 3: the Town knows the name, not the organization

Should know	Today	Proposed: all must be met
Nonprofit status	"Registered non-profit," as stated	Its own 501(c)(3), in force and not revoked; staff verify
Federal filings	Not asked	Latest annual return filed and accepted; a 990-N is not enough above \$5,000; staff verify
State Registry	Current or exempt, as stated	Current, or a confirmed statutory exemption; staff verify
Prior Town grants	None last cycle, as stated	Also no report outstanding and no funds unreturned; staff verify
The board	Not asked	Named roster; majority independent; no board member or family paid by the organization
Conflicts policy	Not asked	Adopted written policy requiring disclosure and abstention, attached
Town relationships	Not asked	Every relationship with Town officials, commissioners and staff disclosed
Size	Not asked	Annual budget, paid staff and volunteers
Location	Affirmed; settled by average score	Address stated and decided as a fact, not scored

The application asks for a name, an address and a tax ID. The Town knows whom to pay, not whether it should. Proposed Form A-1, in Appendix A, closes the gap.

Feeds Recommendation 3

Problem 4: grants need not serve any Council priority

Los Gatos today

Council priorities are an optional question worth 2 bonus points, and “Other” is allowed.

Santa Clara

Three published focus areas, including Youth. An application must fit one to be eligible.

Proposed focus area	What it rests on	FY 2026-27 awards
Residents in need	Priorities: unhoused residents; older adults; housing	\$95,500 (seven)
Youth	Not yet a Council priority; Santa Clara has one	\$45,000 (five)
A welcoming community	Priority: a welcoming, family-oriented, inclusive community	\$36,107 (three)
Safety and preparedness	Priorities: emergency preparedness; transportation safety	\$19,593 (three)
Place, environment and economy	Priorities: charm; natural environment; local businesses	none this cycle

Every 2026-27 grant fits one of these five, so the requirement excludes none of this year’s grantees. What it adds is a stated purpose and a measurable outcome for each.

Sources: 2026-27 Community Grant Rules, Question 21 and Scoring Rubric; Santa Clara Community Grant Program Focus Areas; Town Community Grant Programs page. Each award placed by its funded activity as the Town describes it.

Feeds Recommendation 6

Problem 5: sustaining grants are contracts in all but name

FY 2026-27 sustaining awards

Live Oak Senior Nutrition	33,000
LG Anti-Racism Coalition, rental	20,000
West Valley Comm. Services, CARE	20,000
Next Door Solutions	10,000
LG United Methodist, showers	7,800
St. Luke's Episcopal, food pantry	6,000
CASSY, student mental health	5,000
St. Vincent de Paul, rental	5,000
St. Vincent de Paul, laundry	3,700
Total	110,500

What a sustaining grant is

Core operating support for “select human services non-profits with long partnership histories with the Town.” Not competed, chosen by Council motion, funded every year.

What it lacks

Criteria beyond that one sentence. No term, no defined output, no review. The grant rules even forbid the operating costs it exists to pay.

Fiscal year	Lines	Amount
2021-22 to 2024-25	Four	\$57,000 rising to \$70,000
2025-26	Eight	\$99,300
2026-27	Nine	\$110,500

They are larger (averaging \$12,278 against \$9,522 for competitive awards), they recur, and they pay for the core of a service the Town wants delivered. That is a contract for services.

The Town already buys one such service by a five-year contract, from a sustaining recipient that now receives up to \$35,000 a year under two instruments.

Supports Recommendations 1, 4 and 5

How comparable cities run the same program

	Los Gatos	Santa Clara	Solana Beach	Mountain View
Governing document	1993 Rules, Council motions, annual staff rules	Council Policy 049, adopted 2018, revised 2022 and 2024	Annual Council guidelines	Council-approved program
Who decides awards	Commissioner readers; rules say “final”	City Manager, under express Council policy	City Council, at two public meetings	Staff
Largest award	\$20,000 request	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
How applications are judged	Eight-criterion rubric, averaged scores	Published criteria, no scoring	Stated preferences, no scoring	Program goals
Eligibility checked?	Self-certified	Reviewed for compliance	Documents required at application	Reviewed by staff
Other City funding	Permitted (2024 motion)	Barred	Not addressed	Not addressed
Conflicts	Not addressed	May reject on appearance of conflict; requests to Council referred to staff	Not addressed	Not addressed
Closeout	Report and video; paid up front	Receipts in 30 days; unspent returned	Receipts required or funds repaid	Reimbursement only

Every comparison city has an identifiable decision-maker. None scores through a commissioner panel, and none calls that scoring final.

Sources: Santa Clara Council Policy 049 and application; Solana Beach FY 2026-27 guidelines and application; Mountain View 2025 Community for All program page; Los Gatos 2026-27 rules.

Recommendation 1 in detail

A proposed Community Grant Policy

Built from Santa Clara’s Policy 049 and Solana Beach’s decision route, scaled to Los Gatos.

Section	What it would provide
Scope	One-time competitive grants and direct requests. Sustaining support becomes service contracts in the operating budget, listed alongside so the full picture of Town funding is visible.
Eligibility	Own 501(c)(3); Registry current or a confirmed statutory exemption; activity in Los Gatos; no outstanding prior-grant reports; independent board majority; conflict-of-interest policy; a named focus area from a list the Council adopts. Verified by staff before any application is read, with a five-day document cure.
Decision	Applications scored at a noticed public meeting of the reviewing committee, where applicants present and every score is recorded. The Council then approves recipient, amount and purpose by resolution.
Amounts	Request, total project cost, and what a partial award would do, on the application. A written rule for when and how amounts are reduced.
Conflicts	Disclosure of every relationship with Town officials, commissioners and staff. Requests made to Council members referred to staff. Recusal to follow from the Policy 2-04 review.
Money	Paid in advance on execution. Spending proved at closeout by receipts reconciled to the award and certified by two people. Unsupported funds repaid. Five-year Town audit right. An unresolved prior grant bars a new award. Annual report to the Council.
Review	Reviewed every two years. Amends or replaces Resolution 1993-173.

Sources: Santa Clara Council Policy 049; Solana Beach FY 2026-27 guidelines; Resolution 1993-173; proposed Form A-1 (Appendix A).

Feeds Recommendation 7

How the money would flow

Paid in advance, proved afterwards: the Town's past practice, with the back end made real.

1 Approve

Council approves recipient, amount and purpose. Agreement within 30 days; nothing spent before it counts.

2 Pay

One payment on execution up to \$10,000. Above that, half now and half on an accepted interim report.

3 Spend

Grant spending on its own ledger line. No transfer to another organization without written consent.

4 Prove

Receipts mapped to the budget; award equals spent plus returned; certified by two people.

5 Close

Staff accept or reject in writing. Unsupported funds repaid in 30 days. Town may audit for five years.

A departure from Resolution 1993-173

The 1993 Rules pay only against invoices and supporting data, with quarterly reports attached. Advance payment requires the Council to amend them.

A departure from most comparison cities

Mountain View and San Francisco pay only against receipts; Santa Clara verifies reimbursement requests. Solana Beach, closest to our scale, pays a lump sum up front, and requires receipts or repayment.

Advance payment moves the control from the front of the process to the back. Once the money is out the Town is an unsecured creditor, so reporting and auditing carry the whole weight. A report nobody reconciles, or an audit right nobody uses, is no control at all.

The real sanction is the next cycle: an unresolved prior grant bars a new award.

Proposed motion

The Finance Commission recommends that the Town Council:

Change	What the Council would do
1. Adopt a policy	Adopt a Community Grant Policy by Council action, amending or replacing Resolution 1993-173, and review it every two years.
2. Know the grantee	Require a staff-verified eligibility screen before any application is read: legal standing, filings, board independence, a conflict-of-interest policy, disclosure of Town relationships, prior grants and location, with a five-day document cure. Refer requests made to Council members to staff; Council and commissioner recusal will follow from the Policy 2-04 review.
3. Tie grants to priorities	Require every grant to fit a focus area from a Council-adopted list, including youth, with a measurable outcome reported at closeout.
4. Score in public	Score applications at a noticed public meeting of the reviewing committee, where applicants present their case and every score is recorded and published. Use anchored, calibrated criteria and a written rule for setting amounts, including partial awards. This is where the real work is done.
5. Approve in public	Approve every grant (recipient, amount and purpose) by resolution at a noticed Council meeting, acting on the recommendation of staff or the reviewing committee. This closes the process: no applicant presentations, only the public comment the law requires. Begin with the paused 2026-27 awards.
6. Contract for core services	Convert sustaining grants into service contracts in the operating budget, with firm written criteria for which services qualify, defined outputs and three-year terms reopened to competition. First examine their growth from four lines and \$57,000 in 2021-22 to nine lines and \$110,500 in 2026-27.
7. Control the money	Pay in advance; prove spending at closeout with reconciled receipts certified by two people; recover unsupported funds; keep a five-year audit right; bar new awards while a prior grant is unresolved; report to the Council annually.

What this would change

For an applicant

It would know before applying what qualifies it, and afterwards how it was judged and why it was or was not funded.

For a resident

The scoring and the award would both happen in public, where anyone can follow them and be heard.

For the Council

It would be answerable for decisions made in its name, the same standard it already applies to every six-figure grant.

None of this is novel. Three California cities already do most of it, one of them with a program smaller than ours.

Thank you.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Form A-1: Applicant Eligibility Screen

The eligibility screen in Recommendation 2. Seven items, checked by staff before any application is read; items the current application does not ask for are marked in red.

Appendix B: FY 2024-25 scoring detail

Every score given by each reader to all 38 applications, the Town's averages, and what each applicant was awarded.

Appendix C: FY 2026-27 Community Grant Rules and Eligibility

The Town's rules, eligibility requirements, application questions and scoring rubric for the 2026-27 cycle, attached as issued.

Town of Los Gatos Community Grant Program

Form A-1: Applicant Eligibility Screen

Proposed for the Finance Commission's consideration as part of the Community Grant Program review. It has not been adopted and is not Town policy.

Authority

On December 6, 1993 the Town Council adopted Resolution 1993-173, which adopted Rules and Regulations Governing Community Grants and a standard form of Community Grant Agreement. The resolution superseded Resolution 1992-123 and states that it applies to all agreements regarding community grants made by the Town from that point forward. The Rules are incorporated by reference into every grant agreement, and the Agreement requires the recipient to warrant that it has read them and is bound by them.

Most of this form is not new. Three of the seven items in Part 3 restate a requirement the Rules or the standard Assurances already impose. What the form changes is timing: the Rules require these documents within fifteen days after the grant agreement is executed, which is after the award decision has been made and the money committed. The form asks for the same documents before an application is scored.

Items that go beyond the Rules say so in their Source line. They are proposed on their own merits. A 1993 resolution cannot have anticipated the California Registry of Charities and Fundraisers or electronic postcard filings, and treating it as the outer limit of what may be asked would freeze the program at the standards of 1993. If any item conflicts with the resolution, the resolution governs and the item should be dropped or the resolution amended, which is a decision for the Council and not for a form.

How this form is meant to work

- Every applicant completes it. Staff verify it before any application is read or scored.
- Three of the seven items are matters of public record. Staff check those themselves; the applicant attaches nothing for them.
- Each numbered item is pass or fail. There are no points and nothing here is weighed against anything else.
- An applicant that fails any item is not scored, and the application does not go forward.
- Cure period: an applicant that fails is told which item and has five calendar days to supply or correct a document. The cure is limited to documents. No narrative, budget or work plan may be revised after the deadline.
- The completed screen is published with the award list.

Burden. The applicant attaches one document, its conflict-of-interest policy, completes the board table, and answers five short questions. Everything else is checked by staff against public records.

Part 1: The applicant

Full legal name of the organization	Any name under which it does business
Employer Identification Number	Website
Mailing address	
Name and title of the person submitting this form	Telephone and email
The applicant must hold its own 501(c)(3) determination in its own name. Applications submitted through a fiscal sponsor, or by a group applying under another organization’s nonprofit status, are not accepted.	

Part 2: The board and the organization

New: the current application asks nothing about the board or the size of the organization.

A board member is independent if the organization does not pay them as an employee, agent or subcontractor, and they are not related to anyone it pays. Continue on a second sheet if the board has more than ten members.

Total annual budget of the organization _____	Most recent fiscal year ended _____	Paid staff (full-time equivalents) _____
Active volunteers _____	Total members of the board _____	Of those, how many are independent _____

Name	Position on the board	Year joined	Paid by the organization as an employee, agent or subcontractor?	Related to anyone the organization pays?
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Part 3: Eligibility items

Any single failure ends the application, subject to the cure period above. Red marks what the Town's current FY 2026-27 application does not ask for.

	Requirement	Applicant	Staff determination
E1	Federal tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) is in force, the organization does not appear on the IRS Automatic Revocation List, and the most recent required annual return has been filed and accepted. For requests above \$5,000 a Form 990-N postcard alone does not satisfy this item. Staff verify on IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search. Nothing to attach. <i>Source: Rules IV.A.3; the filing test goes beyond them</i> Current application: New. The current rules require only a "registered non-profit" and nothing is checked.	Staff verify	☐ Pass ☐ Fail
E2	Registration with the California Registry of Charities and Fundraisers is listed as Current. Staff verify on the Registry search page. Nothing to attach. <i>Source: Beyond the 1993 Rules: the Registry post-dates them</i> Current application: Already a stated rule, but self-certified. New: staff verify it, and the "stated exempt" alternative is dropped.	Staff verify	☐ Pass ☐ Fail
E3	No report is outstanding and no funds are unreturned from any prior Town grant. Staff verify against Town records. Nothing to attach. <i>Source: Rules X.C; Exhibit C, II</i> Current application: New.	Staff verify	☐ Pass ☐ Fail
E4	No member of the Board of Directors, and no member of a Director's family, is a paid employee, agent or subcontractor of the applicant. Completed in Part 2. No separate attachment. <i>Source: Rules III.B</i> Current application: New.	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Pass ☐ Fail

	Requirement	Applicant	Staff determination
E5	The board has adopted a written conflict-of-interest policy that applies to directors and officers, requires disclosure of a financial interest in any matter before the board, and requires the interested person to abstain from voting on it. Attach: the policy, with the date the board adopted it. A policy missing any of the three elements above does not satisfy this item. <i>Source: Beyond the 1993 Rules; supports Assurances 5 and 6</i> Current application: New.	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Pass ☐ Fail
E6	One hundred percent of the activity to be funded takes place within the municipal boundaries of incorporated Los Gatos. State the address or addresses of the activity. <i>Source: Council direction, August 19, 2025</i> Current application: Already a rule, and affirmed in Question 1. New only in that staff determine it as a fact, instead of readers averaging a score.	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Pass ☐ Fail
E7	The application names one focus area from the Council's adopted list and states a measurable Los Gatos outcome. Staff check only that both are given; how well the project fits is scored later. Complete the focus-area box below the table. <i>Source: Council Strategic Priorities 2025-27, plus a proposed youth area; Santa Clara Council Policy 049 model</i> Current application: New as a requirement. Today it is optional Question 21, worth up to 2 bonus points, and "Other" is allowed.	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Pass ☐ Fail

E7. Focus area: tick one, and state the outcome

- ☐ Youth: young people's health, learning and development (proposed; not yet a Council priority)
- ☐ Residents in need: unhoused residents; older adults; housing opportunities
- ☐ A welcoming community: a welcoming, family-oriented and inclusive community
- ☐ Safety and preparedness: emergency preparedness; transportation safety; a safe community
- ☐ Place, environment and economy: preserving charm; the natural environment; local businesses

The measurable Los Gatos outcome this grant will achieve, and how it will be counted

Part 4: Relationships with the Town

New: the current application asks nothing about relationships with Town officials.

The standard Assurances already require an applicant to comply with the Political Reform Act of 1974 (Government Code section 87100 and following), to promptly advise the Town of the facts and circumstances concerning any disclosure relating to conflicts of interest, and to establish safeguards against the use of position for private gain, particularly by those with whom an official has family, business or other ties. This part gives those assurances effect at the point they matter.

D1. Does any member of the applicant's board, any officer, or any paid employee have a relationship with a Town of Los Gatos elected official, appointed official, commissioner, or Town employee?

Relationship is to be read broadly. It includes, without limitation:

- Being that person, or their spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or the equivalent by marriage, adoption or step-relation.
- Sharing a household with that person.
- A business relationship: partner, co-owner, employer, employee, co-investor, landlord or tenant, lender or borrower.
- A professional relationship, current or within the last two years, including as adviser, consultant, contractor or client.
- Serving together on the board or a committee of any other organization.
- Any financial interest held in common.
- Any other connection that a reasonable member of the public might think could affect the impartiality of a Town decision on this application.

☐ No such relationship exists ☐ Yes, and every one is listed below

Board member, officer or employee	Town official, commissioner or employee	Nature of the relationship

Board member, officer or employee	Town official, commissioner or employee	Nature of the relationship

D2. If any relationship of the kind described above arises, or comes to the applicant's attention, after this form is submitted and before the Town decides the award, the applicant will notify the Town in writing within five calendar days.

A disclosed relationship does not by itself disqualify an applicant. Failure to disclose one does.

Part 5: Funding information

F1 and F2 are asked now (Questions 12 and 18). F3 is new.

Not pass or fail. These answers are recorded, published with the award list, and used when the award amount is set.

F1. Amount requested from the Town
F2. Total cost of the project or program, including all other sources
F3. If the Town awards less than the amount requested, will the project still go ahead? If so, what would be reduced or removed, and is there a minimum amount below which it cannot proceed? (New. The FY 2026-27 rules already allow partial awards above \$10,000.)

Part 6: Certification

New: the current application has two yes/no affirmations and no signed certification.

I am authorized to submit this form on behalf of the applicant. The answers are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge, and the attached documents are true copies. I understand that under the Rules and Regulations a material misrepresentation of any nature with respect to information furnished to the Town is grounds for corrective action, up to and including termination of the grant agreement.

Signature _____	Date _____
Printed name _____	Title _____

Part 7: For staff use

Verified by _____	Date of initial determination _____	Items failed _____
Cure notice issued _____	Cure deadline _____	Final determination: ☐ Eligible ☐ Ineligible _____

Reporting after award (proposed)

The Rules adopted in 1993 also govern what happens once a grant is made. They were written for service agreements with established agencies, and applied literally they are disproportionate to a \$4,500 grant to an organization run by volunteers. Under Exhibit A, a \$12,000 grant to an organization with a \$100,000 budget triggers an accountant's report, which can cost a meaningful fraction of the grant. The Rules also require prior written Town approval for any purchase over \$100, worth roughly \$220 today, and a board Treasurer's signature on all receipts, disbursements and balances every month.

What follows is a proportionate alternative for the Commission to consider. It keeps the controls that matter and removes the ones that cost the recipient more than they protect.

How the money flows

Awards are paid in advance, on execution of the agreement: one payment up to \$10,000, and above that half on execution and half on acceptance of an interim report. Nothing spent before the agreement is executed may be charged to the grant, and no grant funds may be passed to another organization without the Town's prior written consent.

This departs from Resolution 1993-173 and from most comparison cities. The 1993 Rules pay only against invoices with quarterly reports attached, and Mountain View and San Francisco pay only against receipts. Solana Beach, the closest in scale, pays a lump sum up front as proposed here. Advance payment moves the control to the back of the process: once the money is out the Town is an unsecured creditor, so reporting and auditing carry the whole weight. The Town retains the right to examine the recipient's books and records for five years after final payment, and an unresolved prior grant bars any further award.

Proposed reporting, scaled to the award

Award	Reporting	Financial evidence
Up to \$10,000	One final report.	Paid receipts and invoices for the full grant amount, and a statement of revenue and expenditures for the grant approved by the board.
\$10,001 to \$30,000	One interim report at the midpoint, and one final report.	The above, plus the organization's own balance sheet and revenue and expenditure statement.
Over \$30,000	Two interim reports, and one final report.	The above, plus reviewed or audited statements if the organization already prepares them; if it does not, a schedule of grant expenditures certified by two officers.

Every final report states what was delivered against what was promised, the number of Los Gatos residents served, and the outcomes achieved. Due within 60 days of completion.

What should not be relaxed

- Every dollar proved at closeout by paid receipts and invoices, reconciled so that the award equals the amount spent plus the amount returned, and certified by two people: the preparer and an officer who did not prepare it. No standing waiver of the backup documentation requirement.
- Funds for which receipts are not produced, or which were spent outside the approved budget, are repaid to the Town.

- Records kept for five years after final payment, the period already in the Town's grant agreement, and the Town, or its agent, may examine and audit them.
- Staff report to the Council once a year on the prior year's completed grants.

What a small organization should not be asked to do

- Commission an accountant's report or an audit it does not already produce. Where an organization already has reviewed or audited statements, it should provide them; where it does not, board-certified statements and a schedule of grant expenditures should suffice.
- Obtain prior written Town approval for every purchase over \$100. A threshold of \$1,000 for equipment, and prior approval for subcontracting a material part of the funded work, achieves the same control.
- Have a board Treasurer sign off on all receipts, disbursements and bank balances monthly. The board approving the grant expenditure report before it is submitted gives the Town the same assurance for the grant funds.

These are relaxations of requirements the Council adopted. They cannot be made by staff or by a form. If the Commission agrees they are sensible, the recommendation is that the Council amend Resolution 1993-173 to say so. The same principle that applies to adding requirements applies to removing them.

Sources: Town of Los Gatos Resolution 1993-173, adopted December 6, 1993, and its attached Rules and Regulations Governing Community Grants, standard Community Grant Agreement, Assurances, and Exhibits A, B and C; Council agenda report of August 19, 2025, Item 13.

APPENDIX B

FY 2024-25 scoring detail: competitive applications

Every score given by each of the five readers, the Town's average, and the amount each applicant was awarded in FY 2024-25. Applicants in the order of the Town's sheet.

Competitive one-time applications (32)

Applicant	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Average	Awarded
Art Docents of Los Gatos	31	28	34	40	23	31.2	\$4,500
AWO (Africa at Your Fingertips)	28	20	31	29	23	26.2	none
Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad	20	33	33	44	24	30.8	\$10,000
Boldly Me	17	27	28	23	8	20.6	none
Catalyze SV	19	24	25	43	14	25.0	none
Chabad of San Jose	21	22	37	29	17	25.2	none
CADRE	19	30	30	47	10	27.2	\$10,000
Girls on the Run of Silicon Valley	32	21	35	44	30	32.4	\$10,000
Jewish Silicon Valley	24	30	28	40	24	29.2	\$10,000
KPCR 92.9FM	22	23	35	28	19	25.4	none
Kyle J. Taylor Foundation	31	21	39	27	31	29.8	\$10,000
LG Community Concert Association	26	30	30	31	21	27.6	\$7,500
LG Foundation for Older Adults	26 · 29 · 47 · 23 *					31.25	\$1,500
LG Museum Association (NUMU)	28	30	34	42	34	33.6	\$10,000
Los Gatos Music and Arts	27	27	35	27	19	27.0	\$10,000
Los Gatos Public Media	22	36	35	36	18	29.4	\$10,000
Los Gatos Union School District	32	35	33	38	33	34.2	none
Los Gatos Youth Park	28	32	33	28	22	28.6	\$10,000
Louise Van Meter Home & School	22	25	35	30	23	27.0	\$10,000
Omniware Networks	16	25	37	19	14	22.2	none
Parents Helping Parents	29	30	38	29	20	29.2	\$10,000
Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley	27 · 26 · 38 · 21 *					28.0	\$7,500
SASCC	29 · 31 · 29 · 15 *					26.0	none
Screaming Horse Ranch	19	21	29	28	10	21.4	none
Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival	28	27	35	41	26	31.4	\$10,000
Special Olympics Northern California	17	26	37	30	16	25.2	none
St. Vincent de Paul Society	26	27	39	42	27	32.2	\$4,000
The Yay Foundation	19	22	37	35	9	24.4	none
Tianmu Education Foundation	23	26	39	47	15	30.0	\$10,000
Veterans Memorial & Support Fdn.	22 · 31 · 31 · 21 *					26.25	\$5,000
West Valley Muslim Association	21	26	32	29	13	24.2	none
West Valley Youth Theater	23	26	30	39	16	26.8	none

* Scored by four readers, not five. Which reader did not score is not recorded on the Town's sheet.

APPENDIX B

FY 2024-25 scoring detail: rental assistance and sustaining

The same readers scored the rental assistance and sustaining applications on the same rubric.

Rental assistance (2)

Applicant	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Average	Awarded
LG Anti-Racism Coalition, rental	31	29	43	45	37	37.0	\$12,500
St. Vincent de Paul, rental	28	27	37	47	27	33.2	\$12,500

Sustaining (4)

Applicant	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Average	Awarded
CASSY	30	32	33	47	32	34.8	\$13,000
Live Oak Senior Nutrition	31	34	32	30	27	30.8	\$23,000
Next Door Solutions	29	25	36	34	28	30.4	\$13,000
West Valley Community Services	26	28	35	47	30	33.2	\$21,000

Notes on the data

- Scores and averages are copied exactly from the Town's FY 2024-25 scoring totals. Each average is the mean of the scores given; every one has been checked.
- Readers are shown as R1 to R5 in the column order of the Town's sheet. Their names appear on the sheet.
- Awards are from the FY 2024-25 columns of Attachment 1 to the August 19, 2025 Council agenda report, Item 13.
- Three one-time awards that year went to organizations that do not appear on this sheet: Los Gatos Education Foundation, \$10,000; West Valley Community Services, \$10,000; and Live Oak Senior Nutrition, \$25,000, which the Town's footnote describes as Council-earmarked and not competed.
- Of the 32 competitive applications, 19 were funded. The highest average, 34.2, received no award.

APPENDIX C

FY 2026-27 Community Grant Rules and Eligibility

The Town's rules, eligibility requirements, application questions and scoring rubric for the 2026-27 competitive grant cycle, attached exactly as issued. Deadline for applications: July 10, 2026. The rubric is on the three landscape pages at the end.

Where the presentation relies on it

Eligibility requirements

In-Town use of funds, one grant every two years, registered nonprofit current with the Registry or stated exempt. Stated, but self-certified (Problem 3).

"The decisions of the grant readers are final"

The rules name the readers as the decision-makers (Problem 1).

Requests up to \$20,000; partial funding above \$10,000

Explains the three awards above \$10,000 and the partial award in 2026-27 (slide 5).

Twenty-one application questions

Name, address and tax ID; nothing on governance, conflicts or size (Problem 3).

Scoring rubric

Eight criteria of 5 points plus 2 bonus points, 42 in all. "Direct Benefit" is enforced by averaged score (Problems 1 and 3). Council priorities earn bonus points only (Problem 4).

2026-27 Town of Los Gatos Community Grant Rules for Non-profit Organizations

General Information

- Deadline for submission: Friday, July 10, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered.
- Community Grants are one-time grants for a project, program, service, or event. One-time Community Grants are highly competitive. The decisions of the grant readers are final. No organization is guaranteed funding. We recommend you review the scoring rubric found at the end of this document prior to beginning your application to assist you in crafting a strong application.
- You must complete your application in one sitting. There is no option to save an unfinished application to complete later. We recommend reviewing the list of questions at the end of this document, writing your responses beforehand, and copy/pasting into the application fields when you are ready to submit.
- The Community Grants funding pool is limited, and awards are made with the goal of maximizing overall community impact by supporting multiple applicants. Applicants may request up to \$20,000; however, requests over \$10,000 must score with competitively high rankings and may be awarded only partial funding depending on the number of qualified applications and the amount of funding remaining. Applicants are encouraged to request only the amount necessary to carry out their proposed project, event, or service. In recent years, most awarded grants ranged from \$4,000 to \$12,000.

Eligibility Requirements

- Organizations are not required to be headquartered or physically located in the Town of Los Gatos to be eligible for funding. However, all grant funds awarded through the Town of Los Gatos Community Grants program must be used exclusively to support events, projects, programs, initiatives, or services that take place within the incorporated boundaries of the Town of Los Gatos. Organizations operating regional services, programs, or initiatives must clearly demonstrate that Town of Los Gatos grant funds will be used exclusively for the Los Gatos portion of the work and not be used to supplement the cost of activities or services provided to areas outside the incorporated boundaries of the Town of Los Gatos.

- Organizations are only eligible to receive a Town of Los Gatos One-time Community Grant once every two years. Only organizations that did *not* receive a Town of Los Gatos Community Grant in last year's grant cycle are eligible to apply this year. If you received a Town of Los Gatos Community Grant in last year's grant cycle (Fiscal Year July 2025 through June 2026) you are NOT eligible to apply this year, however, you will be eligible to apply again in next year's grant cycle.
- Your organization must be a registered non-profit organization at the time of application to be eligible. Your organization must be current (or stated exempt) in its filings with the California Office of the Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts.

General Rules

- If your organization is selected to receive a Community Grant, your organization will be required to obtain/renew a Town of Los Gatos Business License prior to distribution of grant funds.
- Grants cannot be used to fund scholarships for activities or institutions outside of the incorporated boundaries of Los Gatos.
- Record-keeping requirements of grant recipients include copies of all invoices, receipts, and expenditures of grant funds with supporting documentation showing that the expenditures were used directly for the grant project as proposed and conforming with all other rules of the grant.
- In the case of grant funds used for staff costs for the project, payroll records must be submitted showing the payment of funds to the assigned staff persons clearly coded with the time spent working on the grant project at an hourly rate not exceeding the staff person's regular hourly pay rate.
- Records of grant expenditure must be included with your organization's final report and additionally must be kept by your organization for five years if needed for further Town review or audit.
- Grant funds may not be used for indirect expenses incurred by your organization.

- Grant funds may not be used for general operational purposes of your organization.
- Grant funds may not be used for lobbying or for endorsing political candidates or parties.
- Grant funds may not be used for purchases of alcohol.
- Equipment and supplies purchased must be used for the project in the manner described in the grant application, with no cross-purpose for general operational use by your organization.
- Grant funds must be spent by June 30, 2027 regardless of the date of receipt of the grant funds. Grant funds awarded that remain unspent by June 30, 2027, must be returned to the Town. Grant funds may be used for reimbursing project expenditure prior to receipt of grant funds so long as the expenditure takes place after July 1, 2026 and the expenditure fits directly within your project as described in your application.
- Grant funds spent by the organization that are found to be either outside the scope of the proposal in the application or not in compliance with the rules stated here, must be returned to the Town.
- All applications are judged based on a standardized rubric, rated by a panel of selected Town Commissioners. The scoring produced and decisions for awards are final.
- Limit one application per organization.
- Grantees are required to submit a final report consisting of a narrative section, expenditure details, and a 90 second video presentation by July 31, 2027.

The following questions will be found in the application:

1. Do you acknowledge and affirm that, if awarded grant funding from the Town of Los Gatos, those grant funds will be used only to support the portion of your service, event, project, or program that takes place within the incorporated boundaries of the Town of Los Gatos?
2. Do you affirm that your organization did NOT receive a Town of Los Gatos Community Grant during last year's grant cycle (Fiscal Year July 2025 through June 2026)
- 3.Name of Organization
- 4.Address of Organization
- 5.Name of Coordinator for this Application/Project
- 6.Contact Phone Number for Project Coordinator
- 7.Contact Email for Project Coordinator
- 8.Name of Organization's Executive Director/President
- 9.Contact Email for Organization's Executive Director/President
- 10.Organization's EIN
- 11.Title of Project/Proposal
- 12.Amount of funding requested (refer to the rules listed above)
- 13.Provide a concise one sentence overview of your project/proposal (maximum 120 characters).
14. Briefly describe how this project fits within the goals and mission of your organization.
- 15.Fully describe your proposed project, what you intend to deliver, and how you plan to accomplish it.
- 16.Please describe how the program need was identified, the target audience, the number of people that will participate, and the direct benefit to the Los Gatos community.
- 17.Please describe your project timeline.
- 18.Please give a breakdown of your project budget. If additional funding is needed to cover the full cost of the project, please briefly identify what sources of funding will be covering those additional costs.
- 19.How will you evaluate the success of the project?

20. Please articulate how your proposal and/or the mission of your organization aligns with the Town of Los Gatos commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

21. Optional - Please select if one of the following Council Priorities is supported by this project:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Preserve charm and/or provide housing opportunities
- Transportation safety, including for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Conserve the natural environment
- Foster vitality of local businesses
- Enhance a welcoming, family-oriented, safe, and/or inclusive community
- Meet the needs of unhoused residents
- Meet the needs of older adults
- Other

COMMUNITY GRANT SCORING RUBRIC FY2026-2027

Applications are ranked on total points. A score of 0 points in any category is not disqualifying, *except* for the single category of “Direct Benefit to Los Gatos Community” in which a minimum category score of 3 points (averaged from all grant readers) is necessary to prevent disqualification of the application.

Criteria	5 points Exemplary	3-4 points Good	1-2 points Passable	0 points Evidence not demonstrated
Project overview	Proposal clearly explains the project and the scope, steps, methods and intended results with logical and systematic detail.	Proposal adequately explains the scope, steps, methods and intended results of the project in general terms.	Proposal explains the general scope and intended results but lacks detail of the project steps and methods.	Proposal lacks sufficient detail to convey the scope or intended results of the project.
Advancing new ideas or surmounting new challenges	The project clearly represents the implementation of a new insight or idea that has not been piloted previously, or surmounts a new challenge that has been identified in the community.	The project clearly represents the implementation of an emerging innovation or trend that has been piloted in other communities but will be new to the Los Gatos community.	The project clearly represents the adoption of a change, addition, or variation to an already established program for the Los Gatos community.	The project continues an already established program or service verbatim, or the proposal lacks information or evidence to suggest that it is a new project or service.
Community Impact	Target audience/population clearly and specifically defined. Strong presentation of the meaningful positive impact to the target audience/population provided with specific local evidence or data to support the need for the project.	Target audience/population reasonably well defined. Sufficient presentation of meaningful positive impact to the target audience/population provided with general evidence or data to support the need for the project.	Target audience/population very broadly defined. Presentation of positive impact based on realistic assumptions despite gaps in evidence.	Target audience/population not sufficiently defined or too broadly defined. Proposal lacks demonstration of meaningful impact to target audience/population.

Direct Benefit to Los Gatos (Please see rules regarding proposal eligibility to avoid disqualification of application)	Proposal is highly local within the incorporated Los Gatos Community (whether or not the organization is based in Los Gatos).	Project is regional but specifically is targeting expansion into the incorporated Los Gatos Community, shows direct benefit to the Los Gatos Community, and clearly demonstrates that grant funding will only support the portion of the project within incorporated Los Gatos.	Project is regional and gives evidence for how the incorporated Los Gatos Community will directly benefit but lacks clear demonstration of how grant funds will be used exclusively for the portion of the project within incorporated Los Gatos. APPLICATION DISQUALIFIED	Project is regional with a wide regional target audience indicating only an indirect benefit for the Los Gatos Community. APPLICATION DISQUALIFIED
Budget Analysis	Strongly detailed and realistic budget with sound use of funds. Any funding necessary above the limit of the grant is both accounted for and secured through commitments from other means.	Realistic budget with general detail to show responsible use of funds. Any funding necessary above the limit of the grant is accounted for with reasonable certainty or commitment.	Budget generally appears to support the project activities as described although there are gaps in detail. Applicant has realistic opportunity to secure necessary funding above the limit of the grant even if commitment from those sources is not certain.	Described proposal is not supported by the budget or no reliable source of funding is presented to provide any necessary funding beyond the limit of the grant.
Feasibility (continues next page)	Applicant demonstrates it has superior experience or knowledge in the field as it relates to completing the project. Project, personnel, available resources, and timeline are realistic and congruent with project descriptions and outcomes.	Applicant demonstrates it has adequate experience or knowledge in the field as it relates to completing the project or expertise in a related field that would transfer to the project. Deficiencies or overestimations may exist in project, personnel, available resources or timeline within	Applicant has gaps in experience or knowledge as it relates to the proposal but demonstrates that it can reasonably bridge gaps to successfully accomplish the project. Project, personnel, timeline or resources as described expose weaknesses in the proposal that will leave gaps.	Applicant does not demonstrate the experience or knowledge to complete the project. Insufficient information about personnel, resources, project or timeline to gauge feasibility.

	High likelihood of project being achievable based on information presented.	tolerable range. Outcome appears achievable despite some gaps or leaps.	Project outcome's ability to be achieved is questionable at the level proposed, but likely will be achievable at a smaller level.	
Assessment/Evaluation	Clear definition of success of program. Clear picture of how data will be collected to demonstrate degree to which outcomes are met.	Good understanding of anticipated specific results of success, but plan lacks details about data or methods.	Success difficult to ascertain, flawed by untestable outcomes, inappropriate methods, or lack of useful data collection.	Evaluation plans missing or unusable.
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts are strongly demonstrated and articulated both at the organizational level and within the scope of the proposal.	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts are strongly demonstrated and articulated at an organizational level, although not necessarily within the scope of the proposed project.	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion impacts or commitments are expressed in highly general terms.	The proposal does not address a commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at either a project level or an organizational level.

Bonus points for alignment with Council priorities:

2 bonus points may be awarded for proposed projects that specifically meet one of the criteria listed as one of the Council Strategic Priorities 2025-27.

These include:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Preserve charm and/or provide housing opportunities
- Transportation safety, including for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Conserve the natural environment
- Foster vitality of local businesses
- Enhance a welcoming, family-oriented, safe, and/or inclusive community
- Meet the needs of unhoused residents
- Meet the needs of older adults
- Other (refer to <https://www.losgatosca.gov/2851/Strategic-Priorities>)