

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>)