

# Frequently Asked Questions

Following are answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs) about The California Wellness Foundation's grantmaking program. These FAQs include answers to questions about our application policies, the types of programs we fund, which organizations are eligible, and other issues related to our mission to improve the health of Californians.

## Our Grantmaking Program

### **Q** In what areas do you fund?

**A** The Foundation has a Responsive Grantmaking Program with eight health issues that are prioritized for funding: diversity in the health professions, environmental health, healthy aging, mental health, teenage pregnancy prevention, violence prevention, women's health and work and health. We also have funding for special projects in order to respond to emerging health issues or issues outside the eight we have prioritized for funding.

### **Q** What kinds of programs or organizations do you fund?

**A** We encourage requests for core operating support – also known as general operating support – from nonprofit organizations that work to improve the health of underserved populations in California. Requests for project funding are also welcome. Please access the grants database on [CalWellness.org](http://CalWellness.org) for a list of our current and previous grants. For eligibility requirements, review the “Who is Eligible” section.

### **Q** How can core operating support be used?

**A** Core operating support can be used to help underwrite the regular, ongoing health care, health promotion and disease prevention activities of nonprofit organizations with existing health programs. Such funds can be used for ongoing organizational costs such as salaries for key administrative staff or operating expenses (rent, phone, office supplies), as well as for capacity-building activities such as strategic planning, board development, etc.; however, core support may not be used for new programs or new project support.

### **Q** Why does TCWF emphasize core operating support?

**A** Our experience during the past decade has taught us that core operating support can make all the difference to nonprofit organizations by providing flexible funding to cover the ongoing costs of day-to-day operations. This type of support can free nonprofits to become more strategic about how they tackle the challenges they face, to craft their own solutions to enhance their effectiveness, to strengthen their staff, and to continue to build their infrastructure.

### **Q** Should I focus on just one of the eight health issues in my request for core operating support?

**A** Yes. Whether you are requesting core operating or project support, you should identify which one of the Foundation's eight prioritized health issues best fits your request. If you are working on a health issue other than these, then address your letter of interest (LOI) to special projects. For guidelines on this issue, see the *How To Apply* brochure or the “How To Apply” portal of our website.

### **Q** Why do you have funding for special projects?

**A** Each year, the Foundation sets aside a pool of dollars to respond to emerging issues or health issues outside the eight we have prioritized for funding.

**Q** What types of special projects are you interested in funding?

**A** Within special projects, the Foundation has placed an emphasis on grants to support and strengthen health care safety net providers, to help low-income consumers understand and navigate the health care system, and to inform policymakers and opinion leaders about health care issues affecting the underserved. The Foundation has also provided significant funding to organizations addressing the health care needs of the California-Mexico border population, the oral health care needs of underserved populations, and culturally appropriate programs for underserved ethnic populations. Other health issues are occasionally funded as well.

**Q** Can special projects include substance abuse, prevention of cancer, HIV/AIDS, obesity, domestic violence, or other health-related issues not listed here or on your website?

**A** Special projects can include any health issue other than the eight prioritized by the Foundation; however, TCWF's funds are limited and the chances of receiving a grant for a health issue not currently emphasized are low.

**Q** What does the Foundation consider as "project funding" as opposed to funding for general operating support?

**A** A project can be a new health-related program or activity that is not a component of an organization's ongoing core operations. Moreover, a project may focus on such topics as increasing health services or producing and disseminating a new report on a health policy issue. Examples include: 1) developing and disseminating a report on shortages in the health care workforce; 2) establishing a bachelor of nursing program for underrepresented minority students; or 3) developing and implementing a new comprehensive health care program for at-risk teens. Other examples can be found in the grants database on [CalWellness.org](http://CalWellness.org).

**Q** How much do grantees usually receive?

**A** Grants range from \$20,000 to about \$300,000 for a period of one to three years. More typically, grants do not exceed \$150,000 over three years.

**Q** Do you give grants to individuals?

**A** Yes, but under very limited circumstances. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) places specific restrictions on grants to individuals made by a foundation of our type. For this reason, TCWF has limited such grantmaking to a few programs for which we have preauthorization from the IRS.

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**Q** Under what circumstances are grants given to individuals?

**A** The Foundation selects three individuals each year to receive the TCWF California Peace Prize and three individuals to receive the TCWF Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award. Each honoree receives a cash award of \$25,000.

**Q** How are honorees for the California Peace Prize and the Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award chosen?

**A** Honorees are chosen through a rigorous, confidential nomination and selection process, with final ratification by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

**Q** Do the nonprofit leaders who are recognized with the TCWF Sabbatical Program Award also receive grants?

**A** No. The TCWF Sabbatical Program Award provides each selected organization with a \$35,000 grant to cover the leader's salary and expenses during the sabbatical.

**Q** How has TCWF responded to the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?

**A** TCWF has prioritized three areas of funding with regard to the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: 1) sustaining the health care safety net; 2) increasing the health care workforce and its diversity; and 3) supporting advocacy and public policy efforts to inform underserved populations, policymakers and opinion leaders about the new law.

**Q** How do I learn more about the Foundation's grantmaking program and the kinds of programs that have been funded?

**A** To learn about our Responsive Grantmaking Program, we suggest that you review the *How To Apply* brochure, the searchable grants database, past editions of *Grantee* magazine and TCWF's *Annual Report*, all of which are available on our website, [CalWellness.org](http://CalWellness.org). You may also request printed materials by calling the Foundation at (818) 702-1900.

## Who Is Eligible?

### **Q** What types of organizations are eligible to receive TCWF grants?

**A** With rare exception, the Foundation funds nonprofit organizations that are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and that are not private foundations as defined in IRC Section 509(a) or are public charities as defined in IRC Section 170(b)(A)(vi). The Foundation also funds government agencies. The Foundation does not fund Section 509(a)(3) Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organizations.

### **Q** Our nonprofit organization is small, has a simple structure and an annual operating budget of under \$200,000. Can we still apply?

**A** Yes. Organizations of any size are eligible for funding. One reason TCWF requires a letter of interest as the first step in the application process is to make it easier for smaller organizations to apply. We have an open-door policy that enables applicants of any size to have an equal opportunity to apply for a grant.

### **Q** Do you provide grants to agencies outside California?

**A** We rarely fund organizations outside California; but when we do, the grants are given to those agencies that operate programs that have an effect on the health of the people of our state.

### **Q** Are there any health-related projects that TCWF will not fund?

**A** Grants are generally not awarded for annual fund drives, building campaigns, capital campaigns, major equipment or biomedical research. The Foundation will not consider activities that exclusively benefit the members of sectarian or religious organizations.

### **Q** Do you sponsor fundraising banquets, award dinners and other charity events?

**A** We occasionally do provide such funding with our administrative dollars. Requests of this type should be directed to the Foundation's Communications Department, which can be reached by calling (818) 702-1900.

### **Q** Can a grantwriting organization send in a funding request on behalf of another organization?

**A** No, we do not accept such requests.

## Getting Started

### **Q** How do I apply for a grant from TCWF?

**A** First, read about TCWF's grantmaking program on our website, CalWellness.org, or in our printed materials. If you feel that your organization falls within our grantmaking guidelines, please follow the specific steps listed on the "How To Apply" portal of our website or on page 6 of the *How To Apply* brochure.

### **Q** Would you explain TCWF's grantmaking process?

**A** When we receive a letter of interest, written notification of its receipt is sent and it is assigned to one of our program directors for review. Typically, a decision is made within 90 days to either request a full proposal or to recommend denial — applicants are notified in writing of this decision. Many factors enter into this decision, including availability of funds, alignment with the Foundation's priorities, assessment of the organization's capabilities, the region and population served, and the project goals, if applicable. Applicants who are encouraged to submit full proposals will receive guidance on what to send. After a full proposal has been received, there are three levels of review: First, a program director conducts a thorough analysis of the proposal — typically including a face-to-face meeting with the applicant. The program director may then decide to prepare a written recommendation for funding. Second, the Foundation's president and vice president of programs review the written recommendations with the program directors each quarter and decide which grant requests will be presented to the Board of Directors. And third, at its quarterly meetings, the Board makes the final funding decisions.

### **Q** Are there deadlines for grant applications?

**A** No. We employ an open application process, accepting letters of interest throughout the year.

### **Q** May I fax or e-mail my letter of interest?

**A** No. The Foundation requires an original copy of your letter.

### **Q** Do we need to submit a budget with our letter of interest?

**A** No. A line-item budget is not required with your letter of interest, but the total dollar amount of your operating budget must be included.

**Q** How many copies of my letter of interest should I send?

**A** Only one copy should be submitted.

**Q** Will the Foundation confirm receipt of my letter of interest? How will I know you got it?

**A** Yes. Once your letter is received, the Foundation will send you a postcard. If you provided your e-mail address, you'll also receive an electronic confirmation.

**Q** How long does it take to receive grant funding?

**A** If your request is approved for funding, it usually takes between six and nine months from the time the letter of interest is received by the Foundation before a grant receives fund approval.

**Q** May we invite a TCWF program director to visit our organization or arrange for a presentation at your office about our program?

**A** No. The Foundation's process begins with the submission of a letter of interest. TCWF staff may request a face-to-face meeting or phone conversation after a full proposal has been requested.

**Q** What are "Meet the Grantmaker" events and how are they arranged?

**A** TCWF program directors periodically participate in "Meet the Grantmaker" meetings around the state and throughout the year. These are often sponsored by regional associations of grantmakers, such as the Northern California Grantmakers, San Diego Grantmakers, the Southern California Grantmakers, and other nonprofits and institutions.

**Q** We recently applied and were turned down for a grant. How can we find out the reason for the decline so we can rework our request to be more competitive the next time we apply?

**A** Your denial letter includes the name of the program director who reviewed your request. If you have questions, you are always welcome to call this staff member.

**Q** May I apply for more than one grant at the same time, in the same area or addressing different health issues?

**A** We prefer that you submit only one request at a time; however, multiple requests are not prohibited.

## About The California Wellness Foundation and How To Reach Us

**Q** How did The California Wellness Foundation get started?

**A** TCWF is a private independent foundation created in 1992 by a substantial endowment from Health Net, one of California's largest health maintenance organizations. When a nonprofit health plan converts to for-profit status, it does so under the direction of the California Department of Corporations and must transfer the value of its assets to a charitable purpose. TCWF was created when Health Net became a for-profit corporation. TCWF's operations are totally independent of Health Net.

**Q** If I have a question that doesn't appear in this document, how can I get an answer?

**A** If you have other questions about our grantmaking program or application process, or you need to contact the Foundation for more information, please direct your inquiries to the Grants Management Department, which can be reached by calling (818) 702-1900. You may also pose your questions to us via e-mail by visiting [CalWellness.org](http://CalWellness.org) and clicking "Contact Us."

**Q** What is the San Francisco branch office's address and phone number?

**A** The address and phone number for the San Francisco branch office are listed below, but please note that all letters of interest and phone inquiries must be directed to our headquarters in Woodland Hills:

The California Wellness Foundation  
575 Market Street, Suite 1850  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Phone: (415) 908-3000

**Q** Where should I send my letter of interest?

**A** All letters of interest should be directed to:

Grants Management Department  
The California Wellness Foundation  
6320 Canoga Avenue, Suite 1700  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

**CalWellness.org**