

City and County of San Francisco  
**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
**(RFP 101)**

**Background**

Rooted in community, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) works in service of the City's anti-discrimination laws by protecting civil rights, upholding dignity, and advancing equitable outcomes in San Francisco. The persistent disparities impacting marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, LGBTQI+, immigrant, and low-income populations require culturally responsive support and sustainable investments in community-driven initiatives.

The Dream Keeper Initiative's (DKI) goal is to address social disparities and systemic barriers that disproportionately affect San Francisco's Black communities. DKI was created, in part, to address the significant capacity building constraints of newer and often smaller community-based organizations doing this equity work. These organizations often lack the financial resources, administrative infrastructure, and donor networks of their counterparts. These nonprofits are often deeply entrenched in successfully providing acute direct services while not always having the operations experience necessary for sustainability and growth. This Request for Proposals (RFP), "Empowerment and Capacity Building" (ECB), addresses this gap by investing in foundational growth and sustainability for these types of organizations.

\* \* \*

This RFP seeks proposals from equity-focused foundations experienced in administering grants. The selected foundation partner will manage a grant process tailored for small community-serving organizations, offering financial resources, technical assistance, and organizational support to:

- Conduct a fair, transparent grantmaking process adhering to City standards.
- Provide capacity-building resources, mentorship, and fiscal management support.
- Support sustainable organizational growth and readiness for future funding.

Any community-based organization and associated programming that is funded must demonstrate clear alignment with the mission of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Dream Keeper Initiative. Data driven results, measurable impact and leading with meaningful community engagement are critical to the success of this initiative. Funded projects must be able to demonstrate a fundamental understanding of working with community-based organizations with a track record of providing culturally competent, client-informed, and results-driven services.

**Anticipated Grant Term**

The grant term is two (2) years, with an optional no-cost extension for one additional year, based on performance and transition plans.

**Anticipated Grant Budget**

Not-to-exceed amount of \$10 million, total anticipated funding of \$7 million distributed as follows:

- Year 1: Up to \$3.5 million
- Year 2: Up to \$3.5 million

Funds will support the administration, distribution, and capacity-building of multiple grants awarded to emerging and smaller community-based organizations.

**Schedule (All Dates in 2026)**

- RFP Issued: March 3
- Informational Session: March 9
- E-Question Period: March 3–March 11,
- Proposal Deadline: March 23 (12:00pm Pacific)
- Review & Scoring: March 24–April 10
- Notice of Intent to Award: April 30
- Negotiation Period: May 1–31
- Grant Start Date: July 1

Dates are tentative and subject to change. Visit <https://www.sf.gov/information--human-rights-commission-funding-opportunities> for updates.

**RFP Contact Information**

For submissions and inquiries, email: [hrcgrants@sfgov.org](mailto:hrcgrants@sfgov.org)

**No Subcontracting Requirement**

No Local Business Enterprise (LBE) subcontracting requirement applies; however, qualified LBE proposals are strongly encouraged.

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# 1 RFP Overview

## 1.1 Background

### About the City

San Francisco is the fourth largest city in California and serves as a center for business, commerce, and culture for the West Coast. The City and County of San Francisco, known as the “City”, was established by Charter in 1850. It is a legal subdivision of the State of California with the governmental powers of both a city and a county under California law. The City’s powers are exercised through a Board of Supervisors serving as the legislative authority, and a Mayor and other independent elected officials serving as the executive authorities. The services provided by the City include public protection, public transportation, construction and maintenance of all public facilities, water, parks, public health systems, social services, planning, tax collection, and many others.

### About the Human Rights Commission

Rooted in community, the **San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC)** works in service of the City’s anti-discrimination laws by protecting civil rights, upholding dignity, and advancing equitable outcomes in San Francisco. HRC is charged with and committed to advancing equity, stability, and opportunity by funding initiatives and programs that address systemic disparities in health, housing, economic mobility, education, and public safety. Historically marginalized and underserved communities continue to experience significant barriers to accessing essential resources, contributing to disparities in physical and mental health, financial security, and social well-being. The HRC’s funding strategy prioritizes investments in community-driven solutions that provide direct services, build sustainable infrastructures, and promote long-term resilience. By funding culturally responsive programming in areas such as healthcare access, mental health support, food security, housing stabilization, workforce development, and violence prevention, the HRC seeks to address historic inequities and create a more inclusive and just San Francisco.

HRC provides leadership and advocacy in securing, protecting, and promoting human rights for all people. For over 60 years, HRC has grown in response to San Francisco’s mandate to address the causes of and problems resulting from prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and discrimination. HRC has the good faith and commitment of San Francisco’s leaders to be an independent voice of human rights protection for all people and leads the way on groundbreaking initiatives in the realm of human and civil rights.

HRC performs its Charter-mandated obligations and duties pursuant to the following City ordinances and laws:

- **San Francisco Charter**
  - Article IV, Section 4.107: HRC as a Charter agency
- **San Francisco Administrative Code**
  - Chapter 12A: Powers and Duties of HRC
  - Chapter 12H: Sanctuary City Ordinance

- Chapter 12N: LGBT Youth Sensitivity Training
- Article 131.3: Nondiscrimination in Contracts and Property Contracts
- **San Francisco Police Code**
  - Article 1.2: Non-Discrimination in Housing Against Families with Minor Children
  - Article 33: Non-discrimination in Housing, Employment, and Public Accommodations
  - Article 38: Non-Discrimination Based on HIV Status
- **Commission Bylaws**

## About the Dream Keeper Initiative

The Dream Keeper Initiative is a multi-million dollar investment in community grants with the goal of addressing racial inequities in San Francisco’s Black community. This investment exemplifies the City’s dedication to equity and economic empowerment for marginalized communities. DKI not only strengthens citywide economic growth but also paves the way for community resilience and deepens civic engagement. DKI grants are aligned across three major sub-portfolios—Arts & Culture, Health & Well-Being, and Workforce & Education— as well as one major foundation partnership. This investment reflects the City’s commitment to meaningful partnerships with organizations embedded in and proximate to the marginalized communities we strive to uplift.

### 1.2 Guiding Principles

Once a foundation partner is selected, that partner will manage a mini-grant process tailored for small community serving organizations called the Empowerment and Capacity Building (“ECB”) grant program. The ECB program is guided by principles that center equity, community empowerment, organizational growth, and systemic change:

- **Equity and Access:** Prioritize funding for grassroots and emerging organizations that may otherwise face barriers to traditional grant opportunities, particularly those providing acute direct services to marginalized communities including, but not limited to, San Francisco’s Black community.
- **Community-Centered Capacity Building:** Support smaller organizations with culturally competent, community-centered capacity building and technical assistance that strengthens organizational infrastructure and respects local knowledge, cultural expertise, and lived experiences.
- **Sustainability and Growth:** Foster organizational sustainability by providing foundational support for learning opportunities, resources, and mentorship that extend beyond financial assistance to support administrative infrastructure, diversification of funding, and the overall health and longevity of organizations.
- **Collaboration and Impact:** Encourage collaborative partnerships among funded organizations to build networks of mutual support, resource-sharing, and collective advocacy.
- **Transition Readiness:** Prepare organizations for future funding opportunities by providing structured support to enhance fiscal and operational capacity, ensuring they can successfully transition post-funding.

### 1.3 Statement of Need and Intent

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) seeks a qualified Foundation Partner to administer a dedicated Empowerment and Capacity Building (ECB) grant portfolio. The ECB grant portfolio intends to strengthen nonprofits and community-based organizations by providing financial resources, capacity building support, and technical assistance to enhance their operational efficiency, leadership, and long-term sustainability. These initiatives empower organizations to better serve their communities to achieve their missions effectively and strengthen San Francisco as a whole.

Recognizing that City contracting requirements may limit smaller, community-based organizations' participation, the ECB grant aims to bridge this gap and invest in the foundational stabilization, growth, and sustainability of these organizations, thereby continuing to fulfill the promises of DKI through citywide investments. This solicitation invites proposals from equity-focused foundations with demonstrated capacity and expertise to efficiently develop, administer, support, and enhance the capabilities of emerging community-focused organizations through tailored project proposals that amplify the impact of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and ensure alignment with HRC's commitment to building systemic equity. It is important that funding awards reflect citywide investment and geographic equity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and least visible communities.

Persistent disparities impacting marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, LGBTQI+, immigrant, and low-income populations, require culturally responsive support and sustainable investments in community-driven initiatives. The project seeks to provide tailored support, resources, and advocacy to improve the well-being and quality of life for marginalized individuals in San Francisco.

#### Stated Goals

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify a foundation partner that will develop a capacity building program in partnership with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and administer grants to emerging Non-profit organizations. The goal of the partnership and program is to ensure the long-term sustainability of impactful emerging community-based organizations that have experience and expertise serving San Francisco's Black and other historically marginalized communities. Through this partnership, the Human Rights Commission seeks to promote equitable and transparent grantmaking that prioritizes grassroots organizations; strengthen operational capacity, fiscal health, and leadership development; encourage collaboration and shared learning across organizations and sectors; and prepare grantees for sustainability and future public or private funding opportunities.

Over time, the Dream Keeper Initiative seeks to create lasting structural change; cultivating stable, well-resourced organizations that can deliver effective, culturally grounded services; drive local economic opportunity; and deepen civic participation across Black and other historically marginalized neighborhoods. Through this partnership, the Human Rights Commission envisions a durable network of community institutions that not only survive grant cycles but continue to thrive, collaborate, and shape the city's equity and inclusion efforts for generations to come.

#### Grant Deliverables

The selected Foundation Partner shall design, administer, and implement the Empowerment and Capacity Building (ECB) grant program in partnership with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC), in a manner consistent with HRC's Charter mandate, applicable City, state, and federal laws, and the goals of the Dream Keeper Initiative.

## **1. Program Design and Grant Administration**

Design and administer a transparent, equitable, and City-compliant grant program serving emerging community-based organizations, with documented eligibility criteria, selection processes, scoring methodology, and conflict-of-interest safeguards.

While CBOs selected for an ECB grant must provide services to eligible participants regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin, CBOs should detail how their outreach, recruitment, retention, and cultural responsiveness strategies will effectively serve diverse residents, including but not limited to Black San Franciscans.

CBOs cannot be selected based on the racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin of the CBO's leadership, staff, or board of directors.

## **2. Grant Disbursement and Fiscal Management**

Disburse ECB grant funds in accordance with approved budgets and timelines, maintain accurate financial records, and ensure full compliance with City, state, and federal fiscal, audit, and reporting requirements.

## **3. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance**

Provide structured, culturally responsive capacity-building and technical assistance to grantees to strengthen governance and financial management. Capacity-building support must include impact measurement, data collection, and evaluation capacity. This includes strengthening grantees' ability to track outcomes, demonstrate effectiveness, and position their organizations to secure future public and private funding. Technical assistance should include but are not limited to the following areas:

- Governance and organizational management
- Financial systems and fiscal controls
- Program design, evaluation, and data capacity
- Fund development and revenue diversification
- Compliance readiness for public-sector funding

## **4. Organizational Sustainability and Readiness**

Support grantees in building long-term sustainability, including fiscal health, internal systems development, and preparedness for future public and private funding opportunities.

## **5. Collaboration and Peer Learning**

Facilitate opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and resource exchange among grantees to strengthen the community-based organizational ecosystem.

## **6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting**

Implement robust monitoring and evaluation processes to track mini-grant selection, performance, organizational progress, and program outcomes.

The Foundation Partner shall:

- Provide HRC with a written report identifying all mini-grant recipients selected, the amount awarded to each, and a clear description of the selection criteria, evaluation methodology, and decision-making process used.

- Maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate that mini-grant awards were made in accordance with the approved program framework and applicable City requirements.
- Submit timely narrative and financial reports to HRC, including an annual report summarizing grantee progress toward stated program goals, performance metrics, and community impact.
- Cooperate with any reasonable requests from HRC for additional documentation or clarification necessary to ensure proper tracking and oversight of mini-grant funds.

## 7. Transition Planning

Develop and implement a transition strategy to support mini-grant recipient sustainability beyond the ECB funding period, including identifying capacity-building needs, potential alternative funding sources, and recommendations to strengthen long-term program continuity.

## 8. Communications and Public Accountability

Coordinate with HRC to document and communicate mini-grant program outcomes and community impact in a manner consistent with City transparency, public disclosure, and accountability requirements.

This includes:

- Supporting HRC in publicly reporting aggregate program outcomes;
- Ensuring that communications regarding mini-grant awards accurately reflect the selection process and program objectives; and
- Providing information necessary for HRC to respond to public, legislative, or oversight inquiries regarding distribution and tracking of mini-grant funds.

### 1.4 Philanthropic Match

Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage philanthropic or other non-City funds to support the administration, design, and delivery of the Empowerment and Capacity Building (ECB) program.

While a dollar-for-dollar match of the expected funding amount is not required, Applicants should demonstrate a clear plan to secure sufficient non-City resources to cover some or all administrative and programmatic infrastructure costs, with the goal of maximizing the proportion of City funds distributed directly to community-based organizations.

Applicants must clearly identify any committed or anticipated matching funds, their sources, and how such funds will be used to support program administration, technical assistance, evaluation, or other non-grantmaking costs.

## 2 Scope of Work

Design and administer a transparent, equitable grant making process aligned with the goals of the Human Rights Commission and deliverables described above.

The selected Foundation Partner will:

- Administer a grant solicitation to seek applicants to receive funding. ECB grantees must:
  - Serve communities within San Francisco
  - Have an operating budget of less than \$2.5M.

- Organizations with prior applications to HRC funding processes may receive preferential consideration in evaluation.
- Distribute allocated ECB grant funds to selected grantees and provide structured technical assistance, mentorship, and fiscal guidance.
- Conduct regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ensure compliance with City and County of San Francisco regulations and performance measures.
- Facilitate capacity-building workshops and resources aimed at enhancing grantees' organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability.
- Support ECB grantees in becoming more competitive for future public and private sector funding opportunities with the goals of supporting the organizations to become fiscally healthy, programmatically impactful, and sustainable.
- Develop and implement a structured transition plan to support organizations in securing future funding and maintaining operations post-grant cycle.
- Partner with HRC to broadly and effectively communicate the impact of Dream Keeper Initiative funding.

### **Use of Grant Funds and Capacity-Building Support**

ECB grants awarded through the selected Foundation Partner are intended primarily to support the core programming and services of eligible nonprofit community-based organizations. Grant funds distributed to ECB nonprofit grantees may be used to advance mission-aligned programs that directly serve communities and contribute to organizational stability and impact.

In addition, a portion of the total funds awarded to the Foundation Partner is intended to support the design and delivery of a coordinated capacity-building program for ECB nonprofit grantees. This capacity-building support shall be provided alongside programmatic grant funding and may include, but is not limited to, technical assistance, mentorship, fiscal management support, evaluation and data capacity, compliance readiness, and organizational development services.

Applicants must describe how their proposed program integrates programmatic grantmaking with capacity-building support in a manner that strengthens nonprofit sustainability, effectiveness, and readiness for future public or private funding.

By ensuring alignment with these critical programmatic components, the ECB RFP intends to create lasting positive impacts in San Francisco's communities by assisting organizations to become empowered and resilient. If needed, the City will negotiate the specifics of your scope of work to include services, budget, deliverables, and timeline as part of contract negotiations.

## **3 Proposal Narrative Requirements**

Applicants must respond to the narrative sections outlined below using Attachment II: Proposal Template. The sections below are designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Applicant's program model, organizational capacity, and the impact the program will have on the target population. Each numbered section corresponds directly to a scoring criterion and must be responded to in 1,000 words or less per section.

The table below summarizes how each proposal narrative section maps to the scoring criteria. For full prompt language and sub-questions, refer to Attachment II: Proposal Template.

Section	Proposal Narrative Section	Scoring Criterion	Points
1	Community and Cultural Alignment	<i>Community and Cultural Alignment</i>	<b>25</b>
2	Grant Management Expertise	<i>Grant Management Expertise</i>	<b>20</b>
3	Fiscal Health and Operational Capacity	<i>Fiscal Health and Operational Capacity</i>	<b>25</b>
4	Capacity Building Approach	<i>Capacity Building Approach</i>	<b>25</b>
5	Transition Planning	<i>Transition Planning</i>	<b>5</b>
6	Staffing Plan	<i>Evaluated across criteria</i>	—
7	Philanthropic Match	<i>Supports program feasibility</i>	—
<b>Total Scored Points</b>			<b>100</b>

Sections 1–5 are individually scored. Sections 6 and 7 are not separately scored but inform the panel’s assessment across scored criteria. The Staffing Plan (Section 6) has no formal word limit. The Philanthropic Match (Section 7) should not exceed 500 words.

[Please note: Proposers should not submit, and the City will not consider, any demographic data about the racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin make up of Proposer’s staff, leadership, and/or board of directors.]

### 3.1 Available Funding

The ECB RFP has a not-to-exceed amount of \$10 million, with anticipated funding of up to \$7 million, distributed as follows:

- Year 1: Up to \$3.5 million
- Year 2: Up to \$3.5 million

Funds are designated explicitly for the administration and disbursement of capacity-building grants for emerging community-based organizations through the selected Foundation Partner. Potential for a one-year, no-cost extension in Year 3 is contingent upon demonstrated efficacy, available funding, and ongoing compliance with contract terms.

Applicants must propose a clear allocation of the total available funds between:

- (1) grant funds distributed directly to community-based organizations, and
- (2) costs associated with program design, administration, capacity building, technical assistance, evaluation, and reporting.

The Human Rights Commission expects that the substantial majority of funds will be distributed as grants to eligible community-based organizations. Administrative and program support costs must be reasonable, clearly justified, and proportional to the scope of work.

### 3.2 Service Period

The initial service period for the selected Foundation Partner will run for two years, with the possibility of one additional year for no additional cost. This optional third year is intended for transitioning organizations to sustain their initiatives post-grant.

### 3.3 Schedule

The anticipated schedule for awarding initial funding is as follows:

- RFP Issued: March 3
- Informational Session: March 9
- E-Question Period: March 2–March 11
- Proposal Deadline: March 23 (12:00 PM Pacific)
- Review & Scoring: March 24–April 10
- Notice of Intent to Award: April 30
- Negotiation Period: May 2026
- Grant Start Date: July 1, 2026

Each date is subject to change. For the latest schedule, check <https://sf-hrc.org/grant-opportunities>.

### 3.4 City-Applicant Communications

From the date this RFP is issued until the completion of the competitive process (either by cancellation or final award), Applicants and their subcontractors, vendors, representatives, and/or other parties under the Applicant's control must communicate solely with the Contract Administrator(s) listed in this RFP. Any attempt to communicate with individuals other than the designated Contract Administrator(s)—including any City officials, representatives, or employees—is strictly prohibited.

Failure to comply with this communications protocol may, at the sole and absolute discretion of HRC, result in the disqualification of the Applicant or potential Applicant from the competitive process. This protocol does not apply to communications with the City regarding business not related to this RFP. Unauthorized contact may be cause for rejection of proposals at HRC's sole and absolute discretion.

All documents under this RFP process are subject to public disclosure per the California Public Records Act (California Government Code sections 7920.000 et seq. (formerly found in Government Code sections 6250 et seq.)) and the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance (San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 67). Contracts, proposals, and all other records of communications between the City and Applicants shall be open to inspection immediately after a contract has been awarded. Nothing in this Administrative Code provision requires the disclosure of a private person's or organization's net worth or other proprietary financial data submitted for qualification for a contract or other benefit unless that person or organization is awarded the contract or benefit.

If the City receives a public records request ("Request") pertaining to this RFP, City will use its best efforts to notify the affected Applicant(s) of the Request and to provide the Applicant with a description of the material that the City deems responsive and the due date for disclosure ("Proposal Date"). If the Applicant asserts that some or all of the material requested contains or reveals valuable trade secret or other information belonging to the Applicant that is exempt from disclosure and directs

the City in writing to withhold such material from production (“Withholding Directive”), then the City will comply with the Withholding Directive on the condition that the Applicant seeks judicial relief on or before the Proposal Date. Should Applicant fail to seek judicial relief on or before the Proposal Date, the City shall proceed with the disclosure of responsive documents.

### 3.5 Deadline for RFP Questions (Questions Submitted Electronically)

All questions about the RFP should be sent by email to [hrcgrants@sfgov.org](mailto:hrcgrants@sfgov.org), no later than the stated deadline. This includes general administrative questions, program area questions, and technical questions about how to find or navigate the RFP application.

### 3.6 Summary of Information Requested and Presented

A summary of all questions, answers, and addenda pertaining to this RFP will be posted on HRC’s website at <https://sf-hrc.org/grant-opportunities>. It is the Applicants’ responsibility to check this website for any updates.

### 3.7 City Communication Following Receipt of Proposals

The HRC may contact Applicants for clarification or correction of minor errors or deficiencies in their proposals prior to deeming a proposal as non-responsive. Clarifications do not give an Applicant the opportunity to revise or modify its proposal. Minor errors or deficiencies are defined as those that do not materially impact the HRC’s evaluation of the proposal; for example, failing to label the “original” proposal as an “original”. For information regarding the HRC’s Selection Criteria, the Selection Criteria section.

## 4 Application Process

### 4.1 Proposal Package and Checklist

A complete proposal package shall include all of the items listed in the Proposal Package Checklist below. Instructions and tips on completing all proposal package documents are included following the Checklist and all templates noted can be downloaded from <https://sf-hrc.org/grant-opportunities>.

The following items must be completed and included in the proposal package:

- Attachment I: Applicant Coversheet and References (Fillout Form – No Separate Upload Required)
  - *Applicants must complete the online Fillout Form: <https://form.fillout.com/t/c7Tnta4EZuus>*
  - *The completed and submitted Fillout Form will automatically serve as Attachment I.*
  - *Applicants should not upload a separate coversheet or reference document.*
- Attachment II: Proposal Template
- Last three (3) fiscal years' Form 990 or Equivalent

***Failure to submit required Attachments may result in disqualification.***

Additional Reference Materials and Guidelines:

Please complete the template(s) and verify that you meet all requirements. Only submissions with all required attachments may be considered for funding. Alternative formats of templates may also be provided to individuals with disabilities by contacting [hrcgrants@sfgov.org](mailto:hrcgrants@sfgov.org) before the submission deadline.

### 4.2 Submission Deadline and Confirmation

**Deadline:** Proposal Packages and all related materials (“Complete Proposal Packages”) must be received by the stated deadline. Complete Proposal Packages must be submitted electronically via email to [hrcgrants@sfgov.org](mailto:hrcgrants@sfgov.org).

**Confirmation:** Upon successful submission, you will receive an email response to confirm your submission was received by the deadline. Save this information for future reference.

**Corrections:** If you discover an error in your submission and need to submit a revised proposal, compile all items on the Proposal Package Checklist, follow the same steps as outline above, and ensure that the revised submission is submitted by the deadline.

**LATE SUBMISSIONS:** ANY SUBMISSIONS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS RECEIVED AFTER THE STATED DEADLINE, MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED. EARLY SUBMISSION IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.

### 4.3 Best Practice Tips

- **General Requirements for Submission**
  - Each proposal should use the template provided in **Attachment II: Proposal Template** to ensure consistency with the scoring criteria.

- **Failure to address all required sections or provide required attachments** may result in disqualification.
- For complete criteria, refer to the Selection Criteria section of this RFP document.
- **Best Practice Tips for a Strong Proposal**
  - **Use the Submission Package Checklist** to verify that your proposal is complete and meets all requirements.
  - Write **clearly and succinctly, responding directly** to the questions asked. Do not include extra materials that are not requested.

## 5 Evaluation Process

HRC will review all submissions to determine if they are complete and eligible. Incomplete, late or otherwise ineligible submissions may not be considered, and Applicants will be notified if their proposals have been disqualified or require further attention.

The HRC may reach out to applicants to clarify potential application errors or request missing required documentation before making a final initial screening determination.

The evaluation process consists of three phases to ensure a fair and transparent selection of proposals. First, **Initial Screening** determines whether submissions meet basic requirements, such as completeness and compliance. Next, proposals that pass the Initial Screening undergo a **Minimum Qualifications (MQs) Check** to verify eligibility criteria. Finally, eligible proposals advance to **Evaluation & Scoring**, where a panel of reviewers scores them based on the criteria included in this RFP.

The evaluation process will include review of each proposal by a panel of individuals selected by HRC. The review by the panel of individuals will be based on the criteria included in this RFP. Additionally, HRC may conduct oral interviews with Applicants as part of the evaluation process. If a proposal is selected to begin negotiations with HRC, such selection of a proposal for negotiations shall not imply acceptance by HRC of all terms of the proposal. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated in a reasonable time, HRC, in its sole discretion, may terminate negotiations and begin contract negotiations with another qualified Applicant.

### 5.1 Initial Screening

HRC will review each proposal for an initial determination on responsiveness and acceptability in an initial screening process. Elements reviewed during the initial screening include, without limitation: compliance with submission requirements.

Proposals are not scored during the initial screening process. Initial Screening is a pass/fail determination as to whether a proposal meets the threshold requirements described above. ***By the stated deadline, the RFP proposal deadline, any proposal that does not demonstrate that Applicant meets requirements will not be eligible for consideration.***

The HRC may reach out to applicants to clarify potential applications errors.

### 5.2 Minimum Qualifications

The Applicant **must meet all** of the following minimum qualifications to be considered eligible:

#### 1. Nonprofit Foundation Status:

- Must be a registered 501(c)(3) public charity in good standing with federal and state authorities.
- Clearly demonstrate an active mission and significant experience in grant-making, fiscal sponsorship, and/or capacity-building services.

#### 2. Financial Capacity and Stability:

- Possess a documented annual operating budget of at least \$10 million, demonstrated cumulative experience over the past three fiscal years.

- Provide audited financial statements and Form 990 for the three most recent fiscal years showing a history of financial health, stability, and organizational growth.
3. **Grant Administration Experience:**
    - Demonstrated experience administering grants totaling at least \$5 million annually.
    - Proven history of managing competitive grant processes and/or capacity building initiatives as demonstrated by at least 3 previous grantmaking rounds in the last 5 years.
  4. **Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:**
    - At least five years of demonstrated cumulative experience in providing organizational capacity-building services and technical assistance to grantees either directly or through a qualified and effective partner organization. Must demonstrate experience delivering these services specifically for small community-based organizations with operational budgets of less than \$2.5 million.
  5. **Compliance and Contracting Capability:**
    - Demonstrated experience in managing complex grants or contracts in compliance with local government or public-sector funding regulations.
    - Documented administrative and compliance staff capacity to ensure rigorous adherence to City requirements and reporting standards.
  6. **Physical Presence and Local Knowledge:**
    - Maintain a significant operational presence or demonstrated grantmaking history in San Francisco, or within the broader Bay Area, for a minimum of four cumulative years.
    - Demonstrated understanding of San Francisco's historically marginalized communities, including familiarity with community challenges, resources, and opportunities.
  7. Is not debarred or suspended from participation in local, State or Federal programs.
  8. Can comply with all local, state or federal laws and regulations if funded.
  9. No City agencies, departments, or City department foundation partners, such as foundations or other similar organizations that are considered "friends of" groups of a City department, may apply for or receive funding under this RFP.
  10. One or more members of the lead staff must demonstrate a minimum of three (3) years of recent experience providing technical assistance (such as training or coaching) to nonprofit organizations serving people from marginalized backgrounds, including but not limited to Black communities.

## Collaboratives

Collaboratives (i.e., joint ventures or a team of agencies with complementary skills and experience) are permitted to respond to this RFP. Proposals from collaboratives must designate a lead agency to serve as the fiscal sponsor for the partners. The lead agency will be the signatory to the contract with the HRC and responsible for planning and managing the delivery of services with partners as described in this RFP. The lead agency must also demonstrate the management and financial capability needed to oversee the delivery of the proposed programming and account for the grant funds for all collaborative partners.

## 6 Selection Criteria

### 6.1 Proposal Review Process and Notice of Intent

Applications will be evaluated based on the selection criteria outlined in this section. Point values reflect the relative importance of each criterion, and scores will be awarded based on how effectively the proposal addresses the stated requirements.

Applicants must complete **Attachment II: Proposal Template**. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

This section provides an overview of the evaluation guidelines used to assess proposals and determine **Notices of Intent to Award**.

### 6.2 Applicant Information

Each Applicant must provide the following details in their submission:

1. **Organization and/or Partner Name(s)**
2. **Requested Total Funding Amount**

### 6.3 Guiding Principles for a Strong Proposal

The scoring criteria and detailed questions for your proposal are provided in **Attachment II: Proposal Template** and in the Proposal Narrative Requirements section above. As you prepare your response, keep the following principles in mind. These reflect the considerations the review panel will use when evaluating proposals.

- **Depth & Clarity:** Present a well-reasoned, detailed, and actionable plan. Avoid vague or general statements; use specific examples, data, and evidence to support your approach.
- **Alignment with RFP Goals:** Demonstrate clear alignment with the Guiding Principles, program goals, and deliverables described in this RFP. Your proposal should show that you understand the intent of the ECB program and the communities it is designed to serve.
- **Feasibility & Readiness:** Show that your approach is realistic, appropriately resourced, and grounded in relevant experience. Identify potential risks and how you would address them.
- **Impact & Sustainability:** Articulate the meaningful, long-term community benefits your program will produce. Demonstrate how the work will outlast the grant period and contribute to lasting change for the organizations and communities served.

## 6.4 Scoring Breakdown

The maximum score is **100 points**, distributed across the criteria below.

- **Community and Cultural Alignment (25 points):** Demonstrate alignment with ECB goals through past initiatives that clearly reflect culturally competent and equity-driven outcomes.
- **Grant Management Expertise (20 points):** Proven experience and documented success managing comparable intermediary grant programs and mini-RFP processes.
- **Fiscal Health and Operational Capacity (25 points):** Ability to manage substantial financial resources transparently, efficiently, and compliantly.
- **Capacity Building Approach (25 points):** Innovative and culturally responsive strategies to enhance the operational effectiveness, sustainability, and future readiness of smaller grantees.
- **Transition Planning (5 points):** Clear strategy for transitioning grantees toward sustainability after ECB funding concludes.

### 6.4.1 Final Considerations

- Strong proposals should clearly align with RFP priorities, demonstrate community-driven planning, and present structured implementation strategies.
- Proposals that lack specificity, fail to address required criteria, or provide insufficient evidence of impact may receive lower ratings.
- Final selection and award decisions will reflect a balanced assessment of panel scores, fiscal and operational readiness, programmatic alignment, and strategic considerations as identified by HRC leadership.

## 7 Notice of Intent Award Process

### 7.1 Selection

Upon completion of the initial review, proposals will be evaluated and scored by a review panel convened by the HRC. The review panel will assess proposals based on the criteria outlined in this RFP, including programmatic quality, alignment with HRC and City priorities, organizational capacity, and fiscal soundness.

Following the panel review, evaluation scores, panel recommendations, and relevant fiscal and programmatic considerations will be consolidated and forwarded to the HRC Executive Director and executive leadership team for final review. The executive review will consider the work of the initial review panel alongside broader factors such as overall portfolio balance, equity considerations, City and departmental priorities, fiscal stewardship, and programmatic alignment with HRC's mission and strategic goals.

Proposals demonstrating strong alignment with the City's needs—as evidenced by evaluation scores, fiscal capacity, and departmental assessment—may be invited to negotiate a grant agreement. **Final selection and award decisions will reflect a balanced assessment of panel scores, fiscal and operational readiness, programmatic alignment, and strategic considerations as identified by HRC leadership.**

**Applicants acknowledge that HRC reserves the right to reject all proposals or cancel this RFP in whole or in part at any time prior to entering into a grant agreement and may republish the RFP.**

The tentative award may be conditioned on inclusion of changes and/or additional terms. If HRC is unable to negotiate a satisfactory agreement with the winning Applicant(s), HRC may terminate negotiations with that Applicant and proceed to negotiate with other qualified Applicants in the descending order of their ranking in the evaluation process. This process may be repeated until a satisfactory grant agreement has been reached. Final award of the grant may be subject to approval by the HRC's appointed oversight body.

Applicants who do not receive an award may appeal the decision by filing a protest (described below). Applicants who receive a grant will be contacted to begin the grant negotiation process.

## 7.2 Reference Checks

Reference checks, including, but not limited to, those provided in Attachment I, may be used to determine the applicability of Applicant experience to the services HRC is requesting. Reference checks will help HRC assess the Applicant's: quality of services and staffing provided to prior clients; adherence to schedules and budgets; problem-solving, project management and communication abilities; performance on deliverables and outcomes; and effectiveness in meeting or exceeding project objectives. If reference checks deem that information included in the proposal is untruthful, HRC will reject the proposal.

## 7.3 Release and Waiver Agreement

To effectuate the candid completion of the reference check above, Applicant is required to sign RFP Attachment I, Section F, Release of Liability.

# 8 Negotiation Process

Following the conclusion of the protest process (described below), HRC will contact awardee(s) to begin scope and budget negotiations. During the negotiation period, HRC will provide additional details to include an offer of funding, the expected start date of the grant, a proposed scope of work and budget, and disclose any fund source-specific criteria that the grantee will need to adhere to. HRC will also request necessary compliance documentation that is required for all City grants.

## 9 Compliance Requirements

The selected Foundation Partner must adhere fully to all applicable City and County of San Francisco contracting policies, administrative codes, and regulations, including but not limited to:

- **Vendor Registration:** Must be a registered City vendor or become registered promptly upon award.
  - **Non-Discrimination:** Compliance with San Francisco Labor and Employment Code Article 131.2: Nondiscrimination in Contracts and Property Contracts, prohibiting discrimination in service provision, employment, and contracting.
- **Minimum Compensation and Benefits:** Adhere strictly to Minimum Compensation Ordinance (MCO) and Health Care Accountability Ordinance (HCAO), including maintaining appropriate records demonstrating compliance.
- **Transparency and Public Disclosure:** Adherence to the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance and California Public Records Act, ensuring availability of financial and operational records for public inspection upon request.
- **Insurance Requirements:** Maintain required insurance coverage with the City listed as additional insured as applicable and provide proof of insurance as stipulated by City Risk Management.
- **Audits and Records:** Maintain detailed records on financial transactions, program outcomes, sub-grantee selections, and disbursements, available for audits conducted by HRC or other authorized City agencies.
- **Subcontracting and Mini-RFP Process:** Operate a transparent, documented, competitive selection process for awarding mini-grants, demonstrating alignment with City procurement principles and practices.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Timely disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that could influence decision-making or grant administration.
- **Lobbying Restrictions:** Funds shall not be used for lobbying or any form of influencing government decisions.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Ensure compliance with ADA requirements and language access policies, providing programs and materials in multiple languages as appropriate.
- **Whistleblower and Compliance Reporting:** Establish procedures to encourage and protect the reporting of compliance or ethical concerns.

Compliance with these requirements will be regularly monitored and audited throughout the duration of the grant term. Non-compliance may result in suspension of payments, grant termination, or other actions as deemed necessary by HRC.

## 10 Other Terms and Conditions

The selection of any awardees for contract negotiations shall not imply acceptance by HRC of all terms of the proposal, which may be subject to further negotiation and approvals before HRC may be legally bound thereby.

If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated in a reasonable time with any prequalified Applicant, then HRC, in its sole discretion, may terminate negotiations and begin contract negotiations with any other remaining prequalified Applicants.

## 11 Protest Process

Failure of an Applicant to comply with the protest procedures set forth in this section will render a protest inadequate and non-responsive and will result in rejection of the protest.

### 11.1 Protest of RFP Terms

Should a prospective Applicant object on any ground to any provision or legal requirement set forth in the RFP (including all Appendices and all Addenda), including but not limited to protests based on allegations that: (i) the RFP is unlawful in whole or in part; (ii) one or more of the requirements of the RFP is onerous, unfair, or unclear; (iii) the structure of the RFP does not provide a correct or optimal process for the solicitation of proposals; (iv) the RFP contains one or more ambiguities, conflict, discrepancy or other error; or (v) the RFP unnecessarily precludes alternative solutions to the Services or project at issue, the prospective Applicant must provide timely written Notice of Protest as set forth below.

By 5:00 p.m. Pacific on the third (3rd) business day of the issuance of the RFP, any Applicant may submit a written Notice of Protest of the RFP Terms. The Notice of Protest shall state the basis for the protest, refer to the specific requirement or portion of the RFP at issue, and shall describe the modification to the RFP sought by the prospective Applicant. The Protest shall also include the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the person representing the prospective Applicant.

If required, HRC may extend the proposal submission deadline to allow sufficient time to review and investigate the protest and issue Addenda to incorporate any necessary changes to the RFP.

### 11.2 Protest of Non-Responsiveness Determination

If your proposal is deemed non-responsive, you will receive notice from HRC explaining the reason for removing it from consideration. By 5:00 p.m. Pacific on the fifth (5th) business day of HRC's issuance of a Notice of Non-Responsiveness, an Applicant may submit a written Notice of Protest of Non-Responsiveness. The Notice of Protest must include a written statement specifying in detail each and every one of the grounds asserted for the protest. The Notice of Protest must be signed by an individual authorized to represent the Applicant, and must cite the law, rule, local ordinance, procedure or RFP provision on which the protest is based. In addition, the Notice of Protest must specify facts and evidence sufficient for HRC to determine the validity of the protest.

### 11.3 Protest of Grant Award

By 5:00 p.m. Pacific on the fifth (5th) business day of HRC's issuance of a Notice of Intent to Award, an Applicant believes that HRC has incorrectly selected another Applicant for award may submit a written

Notice of Protest to Contract Award. The Notice of Protest must include a written statement specifying in detail each and every one of the grounds asserted for the protest. The Notice of Protest must be signed by an individual authorized to represent the Applicant, and must cite the law, rule, local ordinance, procedure or RFP provision on which the protest is based. In addition, the Notice of Protest must specify facts and evidence sufficient for HRC to determine the validity of the protest.

#### 11.4 Delivery of Protests

A Notice of Protest must be written. Protests made orally (e.g., by telephone) will not be considered. A Notice of Protest must be delivered by mail or email and received by the due dates stated above. A Notice of Protest shall be transmitted by a means that will objectively establish the date HRC received the Notice of Protest. If a Notice of Protest is mailed, the protestor bears the risk of non-delivery within the deadlines specified herein.

- Protests by email must be sent to [hrcgrants@sfgov.org](mailto:hrcgrants@sfgov.org). Letters transmitted electronically must be sent in PDF format.
- Protests by U.S. mail must be addressed to:

Human Rights Commission  
Attn: HRC Grants  
25 Van Ness, Room 800  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Following HRC's receipt of a timely protest, HRC may decide to schedule a meeting to review and attempt to resolve the Notice of Protest. The meeting will be scheduled within ten (10) calendar days of the receipt of the protest, in a format that follows public health and accessibility guidelines. If HRC determines a meeting is not necessary to address the protest, a protesting Applicant can anticipate a written response from HRC within 10 calendar days of submission of the Notice of Protest. **All protest determinations made by the HRC Executive Director are final.**

#### 12 Reservation of Right to Reject or Cancel

The issuance of this RFP does not constitute a guarantee by HRC that a contract will be awarded or executed by HRC. HRC expressly reserves the right to:

- Waive or correct any defect or informality in any proposal, or proposal procedure;
- Reject any and all proposals and cancel this RFP in whole or in part at any time prior to entering into a grant agreement, and republish the RFP;
- Prior to submission deadline for proposals, modify all or any portion of the selection procedures, including deadlines for accepting proposals, the specifications or requirements for any materials, equipment or services to be provided under this RFP, or the requirements for contents or format of the proposals.

#### 13 Social and Economic Policy Requirements

The San Francisco Municipal Code establishes a number of requirements for people seeking to do business with the City ("Social and Economic Policy Requirements"). The Social and Economic Policy

Requirements set forth below are not intended to be a complete list of all Social Policy Requirements applicable to this RFP and any contracts awarded from it.

### 13.1 Nondiscrimination Requirements

If selected from the Notice of Intent to Award and granted a resulting contract, Applicant may not, during the term of the contract, in any of its operations in San Francisco, on real property owned by San Francisco, or where work is being performed for the City elsewhere in the United States, discriminate in the provision of bereavement leave, family medical leave, health benefits, membership or membership discounts, moving expenses, pension and retirement benefits or travel benefits, as well as any benefits other than the benefits specified above, between employees with domestic partners and employees with spouses, and/or between the domestic partners and spouses of such employees, where the domestic partnership has been registered with a governmental entity pursuant to state or local law authorizing such registration, subject to the conditions set forth in San Francisco Labor and Employment Code Articles 131 and 132.

### 13.2 Minimum Compensation Ordinance

If selected from the Notice of Intent to Award and granted a resulting contract, Applicant may be required to comply with San Francisco Labor and Employment Code Articles 111. For more information, visit: <http://sfgov.org/olse/mco>.

### 13.3 Source Hiring Program

If selected from the Notice of Intent to Award and granted a resulting contract, Applicant may be required to comply with all of the applicable provisions of the First Source Hiring Program, Chapter 83 of the San Francisco Administrative Code. For more information, visit <https://HRC.org/first-source>.

### 13.4 Non-Profit Entities

If awarded a resulting contract under this RFP any nonprofit Applicant must be in good standing with the California Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts by the time of contract execution and must remain in good standing during the term of the agreement. Upon request, Applicants must provide documentation to the City demonstrating its good standing with applicable legal requirements. If an Applicant will use any nonprofit subcontractors to fulfil the agreement, Applicant will be responsible for ensuring they are also in compliance with all requirements of the Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts at the time of contract execution and for the duration of the agreement.

### 13.5 How to Register as a City Supplier

The following requirements pertain only to Applicants not currently registered with the City as a Supplier.

**Step 1:** Register as a BIDDER at City's Supplier Portal: <https://sfcitypartner.sfgov.org/pages/index.aspx>

**Step 2:** Follow instructions for converting your BIDDER ID to a SUPPLIER ID. This will require you to register with the City Tax Collector's Office and submit the online 12B Declaration for Article 131 (Equal Benefits Program) compliance through the Supplier portal. Once these forms have been completed, submitted, and processed, you will be notified via email with your organization's new Supplier ID. That email will also provide instructions for completing your Supplier registration.

- **City Business Tax Registration Inquiries:** For questions regarding business tax registration procedures and requirements, contact the Tax Collector's Office at (415) 554-4400 or, if calling from within the City and County of San Francisco, 311.
- **Equal Benefits Program Inquiries:** For questions concerning the San Francisco Labor and Employment Code Articles 131 and 132, go to: [www.sfgov.org/cmd](http://www.sfgov.org/cmd).

### 13.6 Proposal Errors and Omissions

Failure by HRC to object to an error, omission, or deviation in the proposal will in no way modify the RFP or excuse the Applicant from full compliance with the specifications of this RFP or any contract awarded pursuant to this RFP.

## 14 Financial Responsibility

HRC accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by an Applicant in responding to this RFP. Applicants acknowledge and agree that their submissions in response to this RFP will become the property of the City and may be used by the City in any way deemed appropriate.

## 15 No Waiver

No waiver by HRC of any provision of this RFP shall be implied from HRC's failure to recognize or take action on account of an Applicant's failure to comply with this RFP.

## 16 Other

HRC may make such an investigation, as it deems necessary, prior to the award of a contract, or at any time during the contract term, to determine the conditions under which the services are to be delivered, and the work is to be performed, as well as to determine the Applicant's capabilities and qualifications. Factors considered by HRC shall include, but not be limited to:

- Any condition set forth in this RFP.
- Adequacy of Applicant's resources needed to properly perform all services called for under this RFP, including but not limited to, place of business; and,
- Ability to deliver services in a timely manner.

Failure to timely execute a contract, or to furnish any and all insurance certificates and policy endorsements, surety bonds or other materials required in the contract, shall be deemed an abandonment of a contract offer. HRC, in its sole discretion, may select another Applicant and may proceed against the original selectee for damages.

HRC reserves the right to reject any proposal on which the information submitted by the Applicant fails to satisfy HRC and/or if Applicant is unable to supply the information and documentation required by this RFP within the period of time requested.

Any false statements made by an Applicant or any related communication may result in the disqualification of its proposal from receiving further evaluation and a contract award.

## 17 Disclaimer – Use of Generative AI Assistance

This RFP may include material generated with the assistance of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools. All AI-generated content has been thoroughly reviewed, verified, and refined by HRC staff to ensure it accurately reflects the intentions, priorities, and compliance requirements of the HRC. In preparing this document, we adhered to best practices, including:

- **Fact-checking:** All AI-generated content was carefully verified for accuracy.
  - **Disclosure:** The use of generative AI technology in developing this content has been fully disclosed.
  - **Data Sensitivity:** No sensitive or confidential information was entered into any public AI tools.
-