Wellbeing Microgrants

How would you use $500 to improve your community?

Have an idea that crosses generations or brings friends and neighbors together?

A simple project that needs a little boost to make your community stronger?

You could be awarded a $500 Wellbeing Microgrant to make it happen!

What is Wellbeing and Why Microgrants?

Wellbeing is commonly assumed to be happiness or wellness. However, in Santa Monica we created a definition of civic wellbeing to make sure that our city's government was focused on the aspects of life that contribute to community wellbeing: a sense of community, good health, learning opportunities for residents of all ages, a built and natural environment that supports residents' needs, and a City that offers economic opportunity to those building their lives in our City. Solid research and science has identified what leads to increased individual and community wellbeing, and in Santa Monica's Office of Civic Wellbeing, we are working to put this information at the center of government policy and practice.

And yet, we know that City government alone cannot address the community's wellbeing. We need to create ways for everyone, from individual residents to nonprofits and private businesses, to do what they can to move the needle on wellbeing, so that our City reflects the best of all of us. This is why we are piloting a new approach to engage and support Santa Monica residents through Wellbeing Microgrants. Using funds provided by the [Culture of Health Prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](), the City will award up to $500 to support individuals who want to implement ideas that focus on small scale action to improve community wellbeing.

Want to learn more? Visit smgov.net/wellbeing

About Wellbeing Microgrants

The Wellbeing Microgrant initiative will start with a pilot program targeted at ideas that strengthen community. Community is one of the six areas – which we call dimensions or

outcome areas – by which we measure our wellbeing progress. Based on key findings from the Wellbeing Index, we have identified four specific areas within the Community dimension that need improvement. They are:

- Trust
- Loneliness
- Inclusivity
- Social interaction

For the first pilot round of **Wellbeing Microgrants,** we'd like to identify and fund resident-led initiatives that can improve one or more of these areas. Grants are open to current Santa Monica residents. In particular, for this set of Wellbeing Microgrants, we are interested in Pico neighborhood-focused projects. We want to hear, and see, what you can do with up to $500 to make Santa Monica an even better place to live and thrive.

Some Inspiration

Here are some ways you can use the findings from the wellbeing research to spark ideas for projects you could get a microgrant for:

- We know that sense of community increases with age. Can you come up with a project that crosses generations?

- Data shows particularly low rates of trust within the community, especially in the 90404 ZIP code (central-eastern Santa Monica). What do you think would help neighbors trust each other and create stronger community bonds? How can you measure the increase in trust?

- At least two in every five Santa Monica residents told us they don't feel they belong in their neighborhood. What would create a better sense of belonging in your neighborhood?

- 13% of Santa Monicans socialize with friends or relatives less than once a month. What can you do to increase opportunities for friends and neighbors to get together?

To learn more about the findings from the Wellbeing Index visit smgov.net/wellbeing

What happens next?

Submit an application to receive a microgrant. You can find the application online at **https://wellbeing.smgov.net/microgrants**. You will need to provide an email address and create a simple login to access the online application. Hard copies will be available at Virginia Avenue Park. Applications are in English and Spanish. Online applications are preferred.

What We're Looking For
- An application must be filled out in full and submitted by the listed dates
- Lead organizer/grantee must be a current Santa Monica resident

- Project must take place within Santa Monica City limits, with priority given to the Pico neighborhood and its residents
- Must have one primary contact who is responsible for fiscal interactions, communication with the City, tracking of metrics and delivering of post-event report
- Must have at least one additional contact person
- At least one main contact person must be over 18 years old
- Project must be able to be executed with grant funds and community support and cannot rely on City staff or other City resources
- Project must be able to measurably impact a component within the Community dimension of the Wellbeing Index as briefly described above (more information at www.smgov.net/wellbeing)
- Grantee must commit to track City designated metrics and submit a post-event report, due within two weeks of project completion (to include: photos, video, data)
- Grantee must track and deliver a detailed budget of all Microgrant expenditures

The Guidelines
- Non-profits, businesses and other entities are not eligible (individuals only)
- All funds must be used for the community project and can not be used for organizational or personal fundraising or be put toward any specific business interest
- No more than one initial grant (up to $500) will be awarded to each project (microgrants funds cannot be pooled)
- Funds cannot be used for any political or religious activities nor can they be used for any political campaigns, rallies or fundraisers
- Projects must not alter or permanently affect any public or private space without expressed written consent
- Project applicant is responsible for compliance with all IRS regulations (if, for any reason, you receive over $600 from the City within one calendar year, you are responsible for completion of W9 to report funding)

Review Process
Application Screening - Applications will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the guidelines. The proposals that meet all the guidelines will proceed to the second phase of the review process.

Application Evaluation - Applications will be reviewed on the basis of the evaluation criteria (see below). The ratings of all reviewers will be aggregated. Favorably reviewed applications will be considered for funding.

Application Selection and Funding - Once final evaluation is completed, consideration will be given to reviewer feedback, available funds, and the intent to fund a diverse mix of ideas and projects.

Evaluation Criteria
Viability (20%) - How possible is the idea/project within the available funding and timeline?
Community Dimension Impact (20%) - Does this project address; Trust, Loneliness, Inclusivity and/or Social interactions?

Diversity and Inclusion (20%) - Does the project include a diverse group of stakeholders and participants across age, race and gender?

Continued Impact (20%) - How will the idea/project continue to impact the community after the microgrant period?

Areas of need (20%) - Does this project address an area of need as indicated by findings from the Wellbeing Index? We are targeting projects in the Pico neighborhood for our first round of Microgrants.

Awarding Funds

Microgrant funds will be provided by check to recipients within 2 weeks of grantees being chosen.

The Timeline:
- **June 11th - Application Launch**
- **June 26th - Help Session 4-7pm @ Pico Library**
- **June 30th - Pico Wellbeing Project Community Event + Microgrant help booth**
- **July 6th - Help Session 12-3pm @ Pico Library**
- **July 11th - Application Deadline @ 5pm**
- **July 20th - Judging Deadline**
- **July 24th - Grants Awarded**
- **TBD - Mandatory Grantee Orientation**

Additional Supporting Information

Governments around the world are starting to recognize that economic growth alone does not determine a community's success. True measures of progress take into account the wellbeing of people. Do they feel happy, healthy and connected to the community? Are they able to access lifelong learning? Clean air and water? Feel safe and secure? Able to support and provide for themselves and their families?

Santa Monica was awarded an innovation grant from [Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge](#) to create a local wellbeing index that aims to more thoroughly and accurately define and measure our community's strengths and needs and to answer the simple question: how are people doing? By creating a local Wellbeing Index, we have begun to better understand the gaps between the intentions of our policies and their actual impact. It puts people at the center of our decision-making process.   Local government plays a critical role in the causes and conditions that support or detract from wellbeing. And yet government can not improve wellbeing alone. Local institutions, civic and spiritual organizations and community networks all have key roles to play in creating a thriving community. And certainly, individuals working together have ideas, solutions and strengths that must be supported and engaged to ensure that people and neighborhoods thrive. This is the focus of the Wellbeing Microgrants.

Focus Area - Community
Indicators - Strong local networks, levels of civic engagement, and a sense of community identity.
Measures - Trust, Loneliness, Age inclusivity, Social interaction
Associated findings:
- Zip code 90404 has the lowest score on many of the community items, such as trusting people in neighborhood, borrowing from neighbors
- 30% of residents disagree or strongly disagree with the idea that their neighbors can be trusted
- 56% of residents said that there are people in their neighborhood they could count on, compared to 80% in a national survey
- 90404 has the highest rate of residents who feel lonely most or all of the time (16% vs. citywide average of 10%)
- 19% of residents 18 to 24 – that is one in five young people – reported feeling lonely most or all of the time
- Younger residents score particularly poorly on the Community dimension
- Residents under 35 are much less likely to report feeling a sense of community
- 13% of Santa Monicans see their friends or relatives socially less than once a month
- 48% of residents said they regularly stopped and talked to neighbors compared to 65% in a UK survey
- 90404 has the lowest number of residents who feel a sense of belonging in their neighborhood, at rates 15-20% lower than other Santa Monica zip codes.