



Office of Civic Wellbeing

Microgrants

Spring 2019 | Economic Opportunity & Equity

Wellbeing Microgrants are a new approach to engage and support Santa Monica residents looking to make a positive change in their community. Designed to empower residents, the City provides up to \$500 for ideas that are focused on small scale action to improve community wellbeing. This initiative is a key component of the first phase of the [Pico Wellbeing Project](#).

Why Microgrants

City government alone cannot address community 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 taking 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 awards up to \$500 to support individuals who want to implement ideas that focus on small scale action to improve community wellbeing.



[MORE ABOUT WELLBEING](#)

Economic Opportunity & Equity

The City's Wellbeing Index revealed that many of residents are facing economic challenges. 1 in 4 residents is living paycheck to paycheck or struggling to get by financially, facing worries about paying their rent or mortgage. 49% say their job is very stressful, and 60% don't think there is enough opportunity here for their children to be able to afford to live here when they are adults.

While many of these issues require big solutions, microgrants focused on Economic Opportunity can help in small ways that have a big impact - they pay for skills training to increase options for better employment, kickstart a new business, or provide the basics needed to create a co-op with community members that provides the services you need at no cost at all.

Project Inspiration and Ideas

Please feel free to use this list for inspiration or apply with an original idea of your own! Links are provided throughout for resources that may inspire you. *Please Note: The Project Inspiration and Ideas presented below will not receive priority or favor in the microgrant application process, they are merely being shared as possible inspiration and to help spur ideas. All ideas are welcome.*

SANTA MONICA RESIDENT-GENERATED IDEAS

Through the [Pico Wellbeing Project](#), residents have shared dozens of creative and rich ideas for how to increase economic opportunity in the Pico neighborhood. For example, residents identified “trainings on financial management, literacy, and health” and “savings to reduce debt (for youth, too)” as needs in the community. How could \$500 support the community in one of these areas?

PRODUCT CREATION AND START-UPS

Could \$500 help you meet your goals of starting a business or social enterprise? Apply for a microgrant to help get your business off the ground.

In the [Art in Storefronts](#) program in San Francisco, artists pair with small businesses to beautify storefronts and showcase their work.

CO-OPS

Co-ops (Cooperatives) are a great model for building community wealth and support structures. Do you have an idea to form a co-op to meet your needs?

[Babysitting co-ops](#) can be a useful model to support busy parents.

VENDING

Do you want to vend your product or food? Are you close to starting your vending business but just need a small boost to get things moving?

[Sidewalk Vending](#) policy changes are coming to Santa Monica. This could be a great opportunity to get started.

SKILL-BUILDING AND TRAINING

Are you interested in sharing your skills with others? Do you want to support professional, creative, or skill-based growth among your neighbors? Or, is there a training that would help you get your professional skills to the next level in your own career?

Stories shared through Minnesota's [MicroGrants program](#) include examples of training or skill-building that got grantees to the next level economically. Check them out and see what works for you!

Application

Timeline

April

1st

Applications Open

6th

Help Session Virginia Avenue Park, 10am-2pm at the Financial Independence Workshop

26th

Help Session PICO BRANCH LIBRARY, 10am-2pm at the Literacy Festival

May

1st

Help Session PICO BRANCH LIBRARY, 4-7pm

3rd

Application

Deadline MIDNIGHT

Help Session PICO BRANCH LIBRARY, 4-7pm

17th

Review and Selection

28th

Grants Awarded

June

3rd - 7th

Grantee Orientations

TBD

Community Reception with the Mayor

15th

Projects Begin

What we're looking for

- Project must be able to measurably impact a component within the Economic Opportunity dimension of the Wellbeing Index (more information at www.smgov.net/wellbeing)
- An application must be complete and submitted by the deadline
- The applicant must be a current Santa Monica resident
- Project must take place within Santa Monica City limits
- Must have at least one additional contact person who is over 18 years old
- Project must be able to be executed with grant funds and community support and should not rely on City staff or other City resources
- Grantee must commit to:
 - Track City-designated metrics
 - Submit a post-event report, due within two weeks of project completion (to include: photos, video, data)
 - Track and deliver a detailed budget of all Microgrant expenditures

Guidelines

- Non-profits, businesses and other entities are not eligible (individuals only)
- All funds granted must be used solely for the stated project or business as determined in the applicant's original submission and refined in the orientation process.
- 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)
- City employees (whether full time, part time, or as needed) and members of any City board, commission, or task force, are not eligible.

Review

Application Screening

Applications will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the Guidelines. Applications that meet all Guidelines will proceed to the second phase of review.

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?

Economic Opportunity Dimension Impact (20%)

Does this project address Economic Opportunity?

Diversity and Inclusion (20%)

Does the project include a diverse group of stakeholders and participants across age, race and gender?

Community Impact (20%)

Does this project bring together residents in the Santa Monica community? For our second round of Microgrants, we hope to support projects that benefit the community by sharing learning, tools and strategies from individual successes.

Continued Impact (20%)

How will the idea/project continue to make an impact after the Microgrant period?

Wellbeing Microgrants FAQs

What is a Wellbeing Microgrant?

A microgrant is a small sum of money, in this case \$500, given out to an individual for the purpose of supporting a community project.

Who is eligible for the microgrants?

Any resident currently living in Santa Monica.

Is the second round of microgrants open for projects that take place anywhere in the City of Santa Monica?

Yes. While the Wellbeing Team is continuing to work through the Pico Wellbeing Project on economic opportunity projects in Pico Neighborhood, microgrant projects impacting anywhere in the City of Santa Monica are eligible for the second round.

I am a student with a great idea. Can I apply for a microgrant?

Yes, we would love to have students participate! If you are under 18 then you need to have someone over 18 also included as a contact on your application.

How many microgrants will be given out?

In the pilot round, we awarded 8 microgrants. This is our second round of microgrants, and the first time we've focused on Economic Opportunity, so we are learning right along with you and this may change based on how many applications we receive.

How will you pick who gets awarded a microgrant?

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of city staff. Check out the sections on Review Process and Evaluation Criteria in the application to see exactly how this process will work.

How do I know if my idea is appropriate for a microgrant?

You can come to a help session and discuss it with one of our team members. You can also reach out to WBmicrogrants@smgov.net to answer any questions.

How can I apply?

You can apply by filling out an application on our website

<https://wellbeing.smgov.net/microgrants> or filling out a paper application available at Virginia Avenue Park.

How can I apply if I do not have access to a computer?

You can pick up a hard copy of the application at Virginia Avenue Park. If you need help on your application (hard copy or digital), attend one of our help sessions.

How can I apply if English is not my first language?

The online application is in both English and Spanish. Hard copies of the application in Spanish are also available at Virginia Avenue Park.

How will I find out if I am chosen to receive a microgrant?

You will receive an email or phone call directly letting you know if you received a microgrant.

How will I receive the money?

You will need to attend our mandatory grantee orientation to receive your microgrant funds.

Where are the microgrant funds coming from?

The funds for the second round of microgrants are from the Culture of Health Prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Why are you using the platform CityGrows and why do I need to make an account for my online application?

We are using CityGrows because it is a new and innovative platform that helps local governments save time, increase communication with constituents, and improve transparency and public access

to information. Also, CityGrows won our first round of Hack the Beach (The City of Santa Monica's Tech & Civic Innovation Competition) and are a success story of what the public and private sector can do together. Your account will be linked to your email address and a password. This will let you return and access your application to check on your status or update your responses prior to the application deadline.

Will there be another chance to apply for a microgrant?

Yes! With this second round, we are continuing to test out another way that microgrants can support community led projects and learning the best ways to use them. We hope to continue the program into the future. We are on track to support a round of microgrants every nine to twelve months.

Additional Info

Please remember that this is our first time running this program with an economic opportunity focus, our second time ever, and we are learning right along with you. If you have any feedback or something doesn't work as expected let us know! Your feedback will help us improve for next time. Please send any questions, comments or feedback to WBmicrogrants@smgov.net