



Watsonville Rotary Foundation

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2025-26 Community Grant Guidelines for Flexible Funding to Eligible Nonprofit Organizations Impacting Youth

WELCOME GRANT SEEKERS

The Watsonville Rotary Club Foundation is pleased to announce the release of its 2025-26 Grant Guidelines. The application, review and award process will take place during FY 2025-26 in support of programs that will be carried out during Fiscal Year 2026-27. Applicants interested in requesting support are advised to carefully review these guidelines before submitting a proposal.

We welcome questions from applicants prior to submitting an application. Please feel free to contact Kathleen King, Grants Review Committee (GRC) Chair at kkingponzio@gmail.com or (831) 234-0062.

OUR APPROACH TO GRANTMAKING

1. We continue to provide, what is for us, larger grants of up to \$5,000. Our goal is to determine if investing our grant funds in a more focused manner yields a more impactful result for our youth.
2. While maintaining our central commitment to funding programs that support vulnerable children and youth in our community, applicants must be able to demonstrate that their organization or specifically-funded programs are generating a **substantial and lasting impact** on the youth they serve.
3. Only applicants whose overall annual budgets are **\$2.5 million or less** are eligible to apply for a grant in any amount up to \$5,000.
4. Applicants will choose to focus their proposal on one of the **Areas of Interest for Funding** described in the Guidelines below.
5. The Foundation continues its commitment to allowing a more **Flexible Spending** approach for applicants. At the discretion of the nonprofit organization, applicants will choose (on their application) to earmark the grant funds they request for either **programmatic needs** or to support **core operating needs**.

As always, the Grants Review Committee (GRC) will use objective ranking tools to evaluate each proposal on a competitive basis. The proposals that most closely align with the goals and Areas of Interest included in these Guidelines will be recommended for funding.

FUNDING LIMITS: The Foundation's budget for grantmaking this year is \$20,000. Due to funding limitations, Watsonville Rotary Foundation will not be able to fund all requests submitted in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP).

AREAS OF INTEREST FOR FUNDING

1. **Safety Net & Crisis Resolution Services:** These are programs that help families and children meet basic human needs for safety, food, shelter, clothing and childcare.
2. **Healthy Lifestyle, Learning and Living:** These are programs that give youth access to activities and training that support youth with positive solutions to social problems, increase access to mental health services for youth and their families and increase access to education, job skills training or enrichment opportunities.
3. **Health and Youth Development:** These are programs that encourage the practice of making safe and healthy lifestyle choices, teach life skills, conflict resolution, teamwork and ethical behavior.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Organizations that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- The applicant organization must be a nonprofit 501(c) (3), tax-exempt organization or a school-based program in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, or have a 501(c) (3), tax-exempt organization as a fiscal sponsor.
- The applicant organization must provide or plan to provide programs/services benefitting the youth of Watsonville (95076), including Pajaro, La Selva, Corralitos & Royal Oaks, as well as Freedom (95019) and Aromas (95004) in one of Watsonville Rotary's Areas of Interest for Funding as described in these guidelines (above). The applicant organization does not need to be located in the Pajaro Valley, but the applicant organization must demonstrate that it provides or plans to provide services that substantially benefit Pajaro Valley youth.
- The applicant organization must have an annual operating budget not to exceed \$2.5 million.
- The applicant organization must have a nondiscrimination policy in place.
- The applicant organization must have the demonstrated capacity to carry out the program or core-operating work funded by the grant and to maintain fiscal accountability.

EXCLUSIONS/TYPES OF REQUESTS THAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING

In general, Watsonville Rotary does not give grants to:

- For profit organizations
- Projects that do not substantially benefit residents of the Pajaro Valley
- Projects and proposals unrelated to Rotary's defined Areas of Interest for Funding
- Individuals
- Religious organizations for religious purposes
- Endowments, building campaigns, annual fund appeals, fundraising events or celebrations
- Commercial ventures
- Political Campaigns

FUNDS AVAILABLE AND DURATION

Watsonville Rotary Foundation grants will be awarded in June 2026 to fund projects that will take place in FY 2026-27.

Watsonville Rotary Foundation will award **grants of up to \$5,000**. Due to limited resources, ***applicants can apply for only one grant per year.***

Those who are awarded funding in a given year will not be eligible to apply the following year. However, they may apply again in the second year.

The number of grants and the amounts awarded are tied directly to Watsonville Rotary's fundraising efforts on an annual basis and can vary from year to year. The Club's GRC will review grant proposals in the spring of each year through an objective process designed to identify proposals that most closely align with our Grant Guidelines.

GRC recommendations are then forwarded to the Rotary Board of Directors for review. Approved grant awards are distributed in June. **If your organization is approved for funding, we require that you demonstrate that you have recognized the Watsonville Rotary Club Foundation on your website, social media and/or advertising.**

GRANT TERM

The grant term will be one year (July 2026-June 2027).

TYPES OF SUPPORT

The Watsonville Rotary Foundation will consider proposals seeking either **program support** *or* **core operating support**.

GRANT CYCLE AND APPLICATION SCHEDULE

Grant Guidelines Released: October 25, 2025

Grant Application Due: January 31, 2026

Awards Announced: June 2026

HOW TO APPLY

First, please read these guidelines carefully before applying to determine if your organization meets the requirements for eligibility. Also, **please make sure you are using the most up-to-date version of Acrobat Reader**. Using the buttons below, applicant organizations should **download and save** the interactive PDF forms provided. ***Organizations seeking core operating support must submit their annual operating budget instead of the Budget Worksheet provided below.***

Your Grant Application Form, the appropriate Evaluation Form (Program or Core Operating), and the Budget Worksheet (or Annual Operating Budget for Core Operating grants) make up your grant proposal and are required for submission. The fourth (a PDF of these guidelines) is provided for your convenience.

- **Grant Application Form**
- **Program Evaluation Worksheet** *or* **Core Operating Evaluation Worksheet**
- **Budget Worksheet (or your annual budget if applying for core operating support)**
- Grant Guidelines (Optional download for your convenience)

Once downloaded, complete the required information and save your documents to your computer. When ready to submit, **email all three completed grant proposal forms (substituting your organization annual budget if applying for core operating funds) no later than 5 p.m. on Saturday, January 31, 2026** to the GRC Chair (email contact below). Applicants may choose to combine the three required documents in a single PDF using Acrobat Reader if desired.

Kathleen King, Chair

Grants Review Committee

Watsonville Rotary Club Foundation

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831-234-0062

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT

The GRC Chair will confirm receipt of your grant application materials by email ***within five business days of your submission***. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you do not receive confirmation, ***it is your responsibility*** to contact the Chair immediately at the email or phone number above.