Challenge Grant FAQ Sheet
Responses to questions from the May 30, 2019 webinar
Please contact info@baysfuture.org with additional questions

Request for Proposals

Q: Is the Challenge Grant opportunity limited to local government entities?
A: Yes. Challenge Grants are open to cities and counties in the lower five Bay Area counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara that are currently experiencing, or at risk of experiencing displacement or exclusion of low-income and people of color communities.

Q: Can a county apply and use the funds to collaborate with various small cities in the county that probably don't have the capacity to oversee a fellow for two years?
A: Yes. We are open to collaborations across jurisdictions.

Q: If we are not part of a strong mayor system, can we have support letters from additional council members instead of the mayor?
A: Yes. We are open to alternate indicators of support. The main goal is to get a sense of your jurisdiction’s political context and available support for the policies proposed.

Q: Can you speak more on the Policy Fund Breakthrough Grant, and how this will connect with the Challenge Grant?
A: The current Challenge Grants are intended to advance tenant protection and preservation policies. Breakthrough Grants will focus on affordable production policies and enhancing preservation policies. The timeline for Breakthrough Grants is still being determined.

Q: Are you looking for builders and developers?
A: The Challenge Grant is a competitive process for local jurisdictions. Interested developers and builders are more closely aligned with the goals of the Investment Fund. Policy Fund grant rounds are only applicable in the lower 5 counties of the Bay Area.
Q: Will the Challenge Grant be open to areas beyond the Lower 5 Bay Area counties?
A: While we are aware that there is interest in expanding the program beyond the initial 5 county area, we are making no commitments to do so at this time.

Community Partnership

Q: Is it a requirement to have a local non-profit be a part of the RFP submission or just an entry of the plan for possible partnership?
A: It is a requirement of the applicant jurisdictions to identify a strong community organization to serve as lead partner in community engagement and share a strong community partnership plan. Additionally, jurisdictions will need to include a letter from their community organization or organizations acknowledging that the community partnership plan, including budget, was crafted with their input. More details can be found on page 8-9 of the RFP.

Q: Would the partner community organizations need to officially sign the RFP application?
A: No. The jurisdiction will however need to submit a letter of support from the lead partner organization. More details on page 10 of the RFP.

Q: How will the community groups who are partnering with jurisdictions be provided funding?
A: The lead community group affiliated with the chosen jurisdictions will receive funding directly from the San Francisco Foundation.

Evaluation

Q: Can you speak more to how proposals will be evaluated?
A: Submitted proposals will go through 3 rounds of review by Partnership stakeholders and Advisory Board members, including representatives from local government, community and advocacy groups, academia and philanthropy.

Q: Are you trying to do awards across different geographies/each county?
A: Yes. The Policy Fund is interested in investing in a cohort that encompasses different counties and geographies, including jurisdictions of different sizes.
Q: Is there an expectation of Directors to be a part of RFP interviews? Higher level City Managers or lower level managers?

A: It is the expectation that all city employees, directors and managers, as well as engaged electeds named in the submitted proposal be present during site interviews. The goal is to ensure that there is a strong team committed to adopting and implementing the proposed policies, including supporting the fellow in their role.

**Challenge Grant Award**

Q: How many cities do you believe will be selected?

A: The Challenge Grant will select up to 10 jurisdictions for the award.

Q: Can you explain the peer cohort concept in a little more detail?

A: Collectively the chosen jurisdictions will be considered a peer cohort and will come together over the 2-year term of the fellowship to share critical analysis and strategy recommendations, best practices, access to relevant education and advance regional strategy. The regional cohort will include the chosen fellows, their local jurisdiction teams including electeds, and community partners.

Q: Do cities receive funding or fellows?

A: Chosen jurisdictions receive fellows and no direct funding as part of the award. Challenge Grant awards are listed below.

- An early- to mid-career fellow to increase the city’s capacity to pass meaningful protection and preservation policies as well as begin implementation
- Direct funding to community partners for their partnership in co-designing and implementing a meaningful community engagement strategy.
- Inclusion in a regional peer cohort that will meet regularly throughout the grant period to exchange ideas and problem-solve in real time
- Access to a pool of funds committed to tailored technical assistance from expert consultants

Q: Can you talk more about who the fellows would be and how that would work?

A: Fellows are a key component of the Challenge Grant and integral to supporting chosen jurisdictions in adopting and implementing proposed policies, as well as facilitating the partnership with community organizations for robust community engagement.
The San Francisco Foundation is partnering with a fellowship provider to recruit, hire and manage the Challenge Grant fellows. We will work in close partnership with this firm, as yet TBD, to retain and support a strong fellows cohort.

Q: Will awardees have a chance to participate in the selection or placement of the fellows?
A: While the process for placing fellows has yet to be determined, we anticipate that chosen jurisdictions will have the opportunity to be involved in the selection process.

Technical Assistance

Q: Is there a cap for technical assistance funding, and what are its eligible uses?
A: Currently, jurisdictions will have access to a pooled fund for technical assistance. We are still actively fundraising for this initiative and do not have an amount to share at this time. We are open to a range of eligible uses and imagine that there might be shared needs for technical assistance solutions across jurisdictions. We will rely on the fellows to identify TA needs and coordinate with the fellowship firm and the foundation to access the pooled fund.

Webinar

Q: Will we be able to print the PowerPoint later for reference? If not, will the webinar recording be available to watch again later?
A: You can access the PPT via this link. You can download the webinar recording via this link.

Other Questions

Q: Are all of the jurisdiction in opportunity zones?
A: There are portions of the eligible 5 county Bay Area that are located within Opportunity Zones. Please see here for a link to the Opportunity Zones map.

Q: How will the Challenge Grant team be available for answering questions and providing guidance throughout the proposal process, whether or not a jurisdiction applies for and receives the capacity building funding?
A: The Challenge Grant team is just an email away at info@baysfuture.org. We are a growing team, so please be patient.