PUBLIC REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND APPLICANT GUIDE

HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROCESS

HSRAP FY 2027–2029

Apply for HSRAP Funding

City of Palo Alto • Office of Human Services

Accessible document format
This guide is structured without tables and uses heading styles, labeled content, and logical reading order to support accessibility in Word and when converted to a properly tagged PDF.

Apply for HSRAP Funding

The City of Palo Alto invites qualified nonprofit organizations to apply for Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) funding for FY 2027–2029. HSRAP supports programs that respond to demonstrated community needs, deliver measurable benefit to Palo Alto residents, and advance public value.

Applications must be submitted via OpenForms, or via email to HSgrants@paloalto.gov, by the published deadline. Late submissions may not be accepted.

At a Glance

Funding term: FY 2027–2029; anticipated agreement period: July 1, 2027–June 30, 2029.

Application opens: November 6, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. Pacific Time.

Application deadline: January 8, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

Applicant questions due: January 1, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

Information session(s): November 11, 2026, from 2:30–3:30 p.m., and November 19, 2026, from 8:00–9:00 a.m.

Please contact HSgrants@paloalto.gov to request meeting access information.

Apply online: https://www.paloalto.gov/Departments/City-Manager/City-Policy-Initiatives/Human-Services/HSRAP

Please scroll down to the "Apply Now" section and select the application link to access and complete the online HSRAP grant application.

Program contact: HSgrants@paloalto.gov

Funding request limits: No minimum or maximum request amount.

Funding Opportunities

HSRAP offers two funding opportunities. Only one application is needed. The City will determine whether a proposal is better suited to one funding opportunity or the other during eligibility or technical review.

Priority Needs Grants

Who it is for: Nonprofit programs that address one or more City-approved human-services Priority of Needs.

What applicants should demonstrate: A clear connection to a City-approved Priority of Need, accessible service delivery, and measurable results.

Community-wide Grants

Who it is for: Nonprofit programs that address a broader Palo Alto community-wide need outside the formal Priority of Needs.

What applicants should demonstrate: A documented local need, public value, a meaningful direct or indirect benefit to Palo Alto residents, readiness to deliver, and measurable results.

City-Approved Priority of Needs

Priority Needs Grant proposals may address one or more of the following areas:

- Homelessness services

- Housing support services
- Services for individuals who are disabled
- Services for older adults and their caregivers
- Services for youth and their caregivers
- Food and nutrition services
- Physical and behavioral health services

Funding Availability

The City anticipates considering HSRAP funding through the annual budget process, including Priority Needs Grant funding and up to $428,000 annually for the Community-wide Grant expansion. Funding is competitive and subject to annual appropriation, City Council approval, and execution of an agreement with the City. Prior receipt of City funding does not guarantee an award.

The City may recommend funding across the two opportunities based on the quality of eligible applications, documented community need, public value, and available appropriations.

Who May Apply

Applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be a qualified nonprofit organization or apply through an eligible fiscal sponsor, as permitted by City policy.
- Be able to enter into and comply with a City agreement.
- Propose activities that provide a meaningful and measurable benefit to Palo Alto residents.
- Demonstrate the organizational, staffing, financial, and programmatic capacity to complete the proposed work.
- Submit a complete application and required attachments through the online system by the published deadline.

The City may request clarification, verify eligibility, and determine whether an application is responsive to this RFP. The City may reject incomplete, late, ineligible, or nonresponsive applications.

Application Timeline

RFP released and application period opens: November 6, 2026

Applicant information session(s): November 11, 2026, from 2:30–3:30 p.m., and November 19, 2026, from 8:00–9:00 a.m.

Please contact HSgrants@paloalto.gov to request meeting access information.

Deadline to submit questions: January 1, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time

Application deadline: January 8, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time

Eligibility and technical review: January 2027

Reviewer evaluation: February 2027

Review Committee completes evaluations and staff prepares Human Relations Commission materials: March 2027

Human Relations Commission recommendation to Policy and Services Committee: April 2027

Finance Committee review, as applicable: May 2027

Policy and Services Committee review: May 2027

City Council award action: June 2027

Anticipated agreement start: July 1, 2027

How to Apply

Complete the online application and upload the required documents. Applicants should plan ahead to gather financial and governance documents before beginning the application.

Step 1. Review the RFP

Read this applicant guide, the FAQ, and all posted addenda before preparing your application.

Step 2. Prepare your narrative

Describe the local need, Palo Alto resident benefit, program model, access and outreach approach, organizational capacity, proposed outcomes, and budget.

Step 3. Complete the budget workbook

Use the City-provided HSRAP budget workbook. Your workbook must match the funding amount requested online.

Step 4. Upload required documents

Upload all required attachments in the requested file format.

Step 5. Submit before the deadline

Submit through the online system by January 8, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time. Retain your submission confirmation.

The Ideal Application Should Address

Palo Alto Need and Resident Benefit

Describe the local need or service gap; explain how the proposal benefits Palo Alto residents; estimate annual resident reach; and explain how residency and results will be tracked.

Program Design

Identify activities supported by City funds, the target population, eligibility or referral pathways, delivery locations, timeline, and partnerships.

Equity, Access, and Outreach

Describe language access, culturally responsive practices, physical and digital accessibility, reasonable accommodations, transportation or mobility considerations, and/or outreach to people who may face barriers to services.

Organizational Capacity

Explain your relevant experience, staffing plan, financial management practices, and steps to manage implementation risks.

Outcomes and Data

Identify goals, outputs, outcomes, annual targets, data sources, reporting frequency, and how you will use data for continuous improvement.

Budget and Other Funding

Explain how City funds will support the proposed work, identify other committed or pending funding, and ensure costs are reasonable and connected to planned services and outcomes.

Required Attachments

HSRAP program budget workbook: Required. Use the City-provided FY 2027–2029 workbook.

Proof of nonprofit status: Required. IRS determination letter or other City-acceptable documentation; include fiscal-sponsor documentation, if applicable.

Organization-wide operating budget: Required. Current budget showing expected revenues and expenses.

Financial documentation: Required. Most recent audit, financial review, Form 990, or City-approved alternative documentation.

Certifications and assurances: Required. Complete the electronic certification in the online system.

How Applications Will Be Evaluated

Eligible applications will be evaluated using the following 100-point framework:

Alignment with Priority of Need or demonstrated Community-wide Need: 20 points

Benefit to Palo Alto residents / resident reach: 15 points

Program design and scope of services: 15 points

Organizational experience and staffing capacity: 10 points

Equity, accessibility, and outreach: 10 points

Outcomes, evaluation plan, and performance metrics: 15 points

Budget reasonableness and cost effectiveness: 10 points

Leveraging and diversification of funding: 5 points

Total: 100 points

Scores support a consistent and documented review process. The City may also consider eligibility, completeness, available funding, duplication of services, geographic and population reach, programmatic fit, and other factors identified in this RFP and applicable City processes.

Award, Agreement, and Reporting

Recommended awards are subject to the City's review and approval process, including City Council approval. Selected organizations must execute a City agreement before receiving funds. The agreement will include an approved scope of services, budget, performance measures, reporting requirements, insurance and compliance requirements, and other City-standard terms.

Awardees will be required to document expenditures and program performance as required by the executed agreement. The City may conduct monitoring, request supporting documentation, and require corrective action when performance or compliance issues arise.

Questions and Addenda

Submit questions by January 1, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time to HSgrants@paloalto.gov.

The City will respond to questions via emails from HSgrants@paloalto.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can one organization submit multiple applications to apply for both funding opportunities?

No. Applicants will submit one application.

Is there a minimum or maximum request amount?

No. There is no minimum or maximum request amount. Requests should be reasonable, clearly justified, and supported by the applicant's budget and proposed scope of services.

Must a program serve only Palo Alto residents?

No. A program may serve people from multiple communities, but every application must demonstrate a meaningful and measurable benefit to Palo Alto residents. Applicants should estimate Palo Alto resident reach and explain how it will be tracked or reasonably estimated.

Are Community-wide Grants limited to vulnerable populations?

No. Community-wide Grants may address a broader demonstrated Palo Alto community-wide need outside the formal Priority of Needs. Applicants must still show public value, resident benefit, readiness, and measurable outcomes.

What does the City mean by accessibility?

Applicants should explain how participants can access services. This may include physical and digital accessibility, reasonable accommodations, language access, culturally responsive practices, alternative formats, transportation or mobility considerations, affordability, scheduling, or other relevant barriers.

Is funding guaranteed for organizations that currently receive City funding?

No. HSRAP is competitive. Prior City funding does not guarantee an award. All awards are subject to annual appropriation, City Council approval, and an executed City agreement.

What is the Emerging Needs Fund?

The Emerging Needs Fund is a separate City resource for one-time, emerging, or urgent human-services needs outside the regular HSRAP process. It is not part of this RFP unless expressly stated otherwise.

Where can I get help with the online application?

For questions about HSRAP eligibility, application requirements, required attachments, the budget workbook, or the submission process, email HSgrants@paloalto.gov. For technical difficulties with the online application system, contact HSgrants@paloalto.gov.

Applicant Checklist

☐ I reviewed the full HSRAP RFP, FAQ, and all posted addenda.
☐ I completed all required online application fields.
☐ I described the Palo Alto need, service gap, resident benefit, and public value of the proposed program.
☐ I described activities, target population, staffing, partnerships, accessibility, outreach, and implementation timeline.
☐ I included measurable goals, outputs, outcomes, annual targets, data sources, and reporting methods.
☐ I completed the City-provided HSRAP budget workbook and confirmed that it matches the online request.
☐ I uploaded required nonprofit, financial, operating-budget, and board documents.
☐ An authorized representative completed the required certifications and assurances.
☐ I submitted the application before January 8, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

City Reservation of Rights

The City reserves the right to amend, suspend, or cancel this RFP; reject any or all applications; waive minor irregularities; request clarification or additional information; negotiate terms with selected applicants; and make awards in the best interest of the City, subject to applicable law and City policy. Submission of an application does not create an obligation on the part of the City.