

## Overview

**Questions:** Applicants are encouraged to submit questions related to the RFP process, documents, or application. Questions can be submitted through email, [COREFunding@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:COREFunding@santacruzcounty.us) or by phone, Luna Harter (831) 454-4641. Please note Ms. Harter's sole responsibility is to record any questions or comments received via phone call and redirect them to the appropriate County or City staff to respond.

**Responses:** County and City staff will collate and post question and responses, rather than answering individually. The purpose is to ensure that consistent, transparent responses are provided to all applicants.

The "Questions and Responses" document will be posted to HSD Website at least three times in the application period. However, applicants may also check the website at any time for updates. Questions will be collated and posted along with responses at minimum on:

- **Thursday, December 9, 2021** (For questions submitted by Monday, December 6, 2021, 5 pm)
- **Thursday, January 6, 2022** (For questions submitted by Monday, January 3, 2022, 5 pm)
- **Thursday, January 20, 2022** (For questions submitted by Monday, January 17, 2022, 5 pm)
- **Thursday, February 17, 2022** (For questions submitted by Monday, February 14, 2022, 5 pm)

All questions submitted by the close of business the Monday prior to these dates will be included in posting. All responses are intended to be addressed in the final posting to allow enough time for application completion. **Please consider questions and submit no later than Monday, February 14, 2022.**

**This document, dated February 17, 2022, includes updates on initial and new questions submitted which are highlighted in yellow.**

### RFP Extension

The County and City recently received a number of requests from community providers to delay the Collective of Results and Evidence (CORE) Request for Proposal application deadline, given the impact of the COVID surge.

In response, the County, in consult with the City of Santa Cruz, will bring a request to the County Board of Supervisors on 1/25/22 recommending a delay of the application deadline to March 4th, 2022 (4 weeks after the current deadline). This delay will prompt an adjustment to other CORE RFP timelines including the Question and Response timeline. An amended RFP will be posted following the 1/25 Board Meeting and no later than February 2nd.

## Character Count Update

The County and City have made a revision to the application in the **What Are the Services?** Section to the Accomplishments (Small Tier) and Outcomes (Medium, Large, and Targeted Impact). It was intended that descriptions of Accomplishments and Outcomes be shorter and therefor the character limit has been changed from 3000 characters to **1000 characters** for questions in that section.

It was also intended that the name of the specific program or practice that will be implemented to meet the outcomes be longer and therefor the character limit has been increased from 40 characters to 300 characters.

## How is this Document Organized?

Questions and responses are grouped together based on themes. These themes include:

- A. Applicant Resources (e.g., questions regarding trainings or utilizing online application portal), Page 2
- B. Application (application and proposed budget), Page 6
  - i. General Questions on Applications
  - ii. Evidence Based Practices
  - iii. Equity
  - iv. Budget
  - v. People Served
  - vi. Achievements/Outcomes
- C. Scoring and Panels, Page 16
- D. Funding, Page 18
- E. Contracts and Reporting, Page 21
- F. Miscellaneous, Page 22

Questions and responses are numbered sequentially within each theme. The applicant who posed the question will not be identified.

## A. Applicant Resources

Questions related to using on-line application or forms and accessing support

1. **Question:** Can multiple people from the organization be logged in and working at the same time? Either in the same app or different ones under the agency's account...

**Response:** Only one person may be logged in and working on an application at a time.

2. **Question:** Is there a file size limit for the submission of documents?

**Response:** The file limit is 5,000 kilobytes per document.

3. **Question:** So, you cannot "save & logout" multiple applications without submitting them first?

**Response:** Applicants can only have one application open at a time. Applicants may submit their application and edit one or multiple applications up until February 4, 2022, 5:00 PM PST. Applications will not be reviewed until after the February 4, 2022, 5:00 PM PST.

4. **Question:** Is it one account per organization? If it is a larger organization, would it be one account per "program"?

**Response:** Agencies can choose to use one account or multiple accounts for the online application portal, Reviewr. It is at the applicant's discretion which option makes the most sense for their agency.

5. **Question:** How can an applicant preview the entirety of the application, including all questions and character counts?

**Response:** Applicants have two ways to view the entire application and character counts: Using the Optional Application Forms and the online application portal Reviewr. Applicants can find Optional Application Forms on the CORE HSD Webpage that include all the questions and respective character counts for each tier's application. Applicants can also view the application by accessing the application on the online application portal Reviewr, however applicants will need to fill out each section to see the following section. More information can be found in the RFP in section 5.1 Submission on page 10.

6. **Question:** Are there character count limits for each section?

**Response:** Character counts can be found on the online application portal, Reviewr, as well as on the Optional Application Forms found at the HSD CORE webpage. All applicants are encouraged to utilize the online application portal.

7. **Question:** I'm an Independent Consultant working on multiple applications for different nonprofits. Can I have multiple applications under my account, or should I ask each organization to set up an account and then share the login information with me?

**Response:** It is recommended, although not required, that each agency has its own account.

8. **Question:** If our agency has received funding from SCC Human Services in the past, will we need to set up a new account?

**Response:** All applicants will need to set-up an account in Reviewr.

9. **Question:** When would the consultants suggest we sign up for 1-on-1 session? (i.e., how far along in the app process would they prefer we be to maximize our time together?)

**Response:** Training is recommended but not required. The best timing for the training sessions will be different for each organization, depending on the specific questions and concepts they want help with. Applicants may sign up for a TA session at any time, but the CORE consultants recommend that applicants attend or watch at least one group training that covers key concepts and tools prior to attending the scheduled TA session. Applicants may sign up for a one-on-one Technical Assistance (TA) session (one per application) with one of the CORE consultants via this Google Sheet (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hNxe-i0lhJRDtZGegJrFf8VY4uCMb4MDUpq8xO5plhQ/edit#gid=581970427>). More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

10. **Question:** Who do we contact if we have a specific question regarding our request? More specifically to discuss if our program aligns with the CORE conditions.

**Response:** Applicants may submit questions related to the RFP process, documents, or application content via email [COREFunding@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:COREFunding@santacruzcounty.us) Alternatively, if applicants are unable to email, questions may be left on the voice mail at (831)-454 -4816. Emails or voice mails regarding questions on the RFP will not be returned and instead will be posted to the Human Services Website. More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.6 Questions and Responses on page 11. Additionally, applicants can make use of training and support provided by the CORE consultants. More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

11. **Question:** Are all trainings going to be recorded? Because some of the appear as "N/A" for the link

**Response:** Group trainings will be recorded and posted to the HSD CORE webpage. Group office hours may be posted to the HSD CORE webpage if all attending the office hour consents to the meeting being recorded. Individual office hours will not be recorded or posted. More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

12. **Question:** In line with the question regarding the scale of the RFP itself, will there be an opportunity to link applicants to each other in order to discuss potential collaborative applications?

**Response:** The funders will not be providing specific opportunities for applicants to discuss potential collaborative applications.

13. **Question:** If I am unable to attend the CORE Investment Applicant's Conference, will a recording be made available?

**Response:** Yes. The recording of the conference may be found on the HSD web page. The link is also listed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCxAZDBZ5X8> More information can be found in the RFP in section 5.4 Applicant's Conference on page 11.

14. **Question:** Is there a date when the videos will made available for these sessions: Developing a Theory of Change and Logic Model with an Equity Lens and Using CORE Tools to Develop Your Proposal?

**Response:** Developing a Theory of Change and Logic Model with an Equity Lens and Using CORE Tools to Develop your Proposal are now posted on the [HSD Website](#).

15. **Question:** If we wish to submit two applications, can we use the same user on the portal to enter two apps, or do we need to create two users?

**Response:** Agencies who will have two or more applications can choose to use one account or multiple accounts for the online application portal, Reviewr. If an agency chooses to use one account, the application will copy summary and contact responses from the first application into any additional applications but only one person may use the portal at a time. If an agency chooses to use multiple accounts, it will allow for multiple people to be working on different applications at the same time, but any inputted summary and contact responses will not be copied from one account to another. It is at the applicant's discretion which option makes the most sense for their agency. More information can be found in the Online Portal Technical Assistance Session on December 3rd at timestamp 40:30.

16. **Question:** When will the CORE Investment extension deadline be released?

**Response:** An addendum with the updated CORE RFP extension timeline is now posted and can be found on the HSD Webpage. [Santacruzhumanservices.org](http://Santacruzhumanservices.org)

## B. Application

Questions related to the application

### *i. General Questions on Applications*

1. **Question:** Is only one primary CORE condition allowed and how it will be addressed? What if the program is innovative and significantly addresses multiple conditions?

**Response:** As stated in Section 2.3 the CORE Conditions for Health and Wellbeing are interconnected. While applicants are asked to choose a primary CORE Condition and Impact Area, applicants may define how their proposals support or integrate into other conditions and impact areas wherever it is relevant and appropriate. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.2 Why do it? on page 14. The primary CORE Condition and Impact Area will not influence the way a proposal is scored.

2. **Question:** If your program addresses more than one core condition, can you select more than one or do you just have to direct program and proposal to one?

**Response:** As stated in Section 2.3 the CORE Conditions for Health and Wellbeing are interconnected. While applicants are asked to choose a primary CORE Condition and Impact Area, applicants may define how their proposals support or integrate into other conditions and impact areas wherever it is relevant and appropriate. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.2 Why do it? on page 14. The primary CORE Condition and Impact Area will not influence the way a proposal is scored.

3. **Question:** Being forced to choose a single area of impact puts programs Designed to service multiple CORE criteria, including multi-generational programs, at a disadvantage. Is there a mitigation for this design challenge?

**Response:** As stated in Section 2.3 the CORE Conditions for Health and Wellbeing are interconnected. While applicants are asked to choose a primary CORE Condition and Impact Area, applicants may define how their proposals support or integrate into other conditions and impact areas wherever it is relevant and appropriate. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.2 Why do it? on page 14. The primary CORE Condition and Impact Area will not influence the way a proposal is scored.

4. **Question:** Is it possible to use more than one “service category”?

**Response:** While applicants are asked to choose a primary service category in the Small, Medium, and Large tiers, applicants have the ability to describe their services within the narrative portion of the application. In the Targeted Impact tier, applicants may select multiple service categories. The service category will not influence the way a proposal is scored. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.1 Summary and Contact Information on page 14.

5. **Question:** In the Summary and Contact Information section, what does it mean when it says, "Head of Agency"? Is that the Executive Director or Board Chair?

**Response:** The Head of Agency field is used for contact information to contact the person who oversees the entire agency. This person may have a different title depending on the agency.

6. **Question:** Would adding additional staff be considered a new/different program or would it be considered the same? For example, if the program services are the same but in one application, you're applying for 1.0 FTE with x # served and in another you're applying for 2.0 FTE with Y # served?

**Response:** Agencies may not apply for the same program or project, defined in the same way, to more than one tier. Common features of a "program" may include: a common purpose or set of outcomes; separate budgets that are distinct from other programs and/or dedicated staff. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.4 Application Scope and section 3.5 Application Parameters on page 6.

7. **Question:** When impacting multiple demographics and strategies how will you like us to define it? Example Family Resource Centers have been shown to reduce CPS cases, family self-sufficiency and provide direct services support. All different aspects but the same general outcome. Improving family well-being.

**Response:** Proposals will be scored on the extent they demonstrate that the strategies and outcomes will influence the proposal's stated needs and/or inequities. More information on the Scoring Criteria, is found on pages 7-9. Applicants are encouraged to attend trainings for additional support, described on page 12. Additional response: Programs that influence many Conditions may consider pointing to the condition that most of the strategies impact and/or the deepest impact.

8. **Question:** Will organizations be required to define the way in which they integrate into the collective impact? How will collective impact be defined in terms of CORE funded, subject, age, demographic, or targeted population.

**Response:** CORE Investments itself is a collective impact approach, as described in the RFP, Section 2.2 Collective Impact. The County and City consider all the funding titled "CORE" to be a collective impact approach. This does not mean that any one agency or program is responsible for achieving social change and impact; rather, multiple agencies contribute in ways that are aligned (within CORE and with other funding streams) so that greater impact can be achieved. Applicants may define how their proposals support or integrate into a collective impact approach wherever it is relevant and appropriate. For the Targeted Impact proposals, please review the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9 and

the questions in the application for specific information requested about collective approaches.

9. **Question:** Can one organization apply for a medium-tier grant and be a part of a collaborative targeted impact grant?

**Response:** There is no limit to the number of applications per agency however agencies may not apply for the same program or project, defined in the same way, to more than one tier. Common features of a "program" may include: a common purpose or set of outcomes; separate budgets that are distinct from other programs within the agency and/or dedicated staff. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.4 Application Scope and section 3.5 Application Parameters on page 6.

10. **Question:** City vs. County participant numbers: Last time, we had to articulate how many people we were serving between the city and the county. Is that still a part of the application?

**Response:** Applicants will need to describe the population served by this proposal. Applicants will state how many people will be served in various areas within Santa Cruz County. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.3 Who are the participants? on page 16 and section 10 Example Questions on Population Served on page 25.

11. **Question:** How are city and county applications being differentiated and submitted? It seems like the targeted populations will have to be very different for each application, at least in regards to geographic location.

**Response:** There is one application regardless of the geographical area(s) that will be served. Applicants are asked to describe the population served by the proposal. Applicants are asked to state how many people will be served in various areas within Santa Cruz County (e.g., City of Santa Cruz). More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.3 Who are the participants? on page 16 and section 10 Example Questions on Population Served on page 25.

12. **Question:** Are there separate applications for both the County and the City? If not, how does one create a city-focused application?

**Response:** As stated in response #11, there is one application regardless of the geographical area(s) that will be served. Applicants are asked to describe the population served by this proposal. Applicants will state how many people will be served in various areas within Santa Cruz County (e.g., City of Santa Cruz). More information can be found in

the RFP under section 6.3.3 Who are the participants? on page 16 and section 10 Example Questions on Population Served on page 25.

13. **Question:** Can a collaboration include a CBO partnering with a County Dept.

**Response:** Agencies that are a non-profit 501(c)(3), federally recognized Tribal entities and public partners in the education arena are eligible to apply for funds. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.1 Eligibility on page 5. While County Departments who are not in the education arena are not eligible to receive CORE funding, proposals may reference any relevant collaborations.

14. **Question:** To clarify, the amount of the request (and associated tier) = both the city+county funds?

**Response:** The amount of the request is both the County and City funds combined. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.3 Amount Available on page 5.

15. **Question:** Is there a working definition of direct services?

**Response:** Direct services are activities or actions that directly benefit the target population. The intention of the RFP to support direct services includes the work required by an organization to effectively achieve the desired outcomes of the proposal, and the specific budget expenses needed to do so. Please see section 3.2, Tiers on page 5, Section 4 Scoring Criteria on page 7, and Example Budget on page 27.

16. **Question:** We are interested in applying for the CORE Investments funding but are a 501(c)6 non-profit organization. Are we eligible to apply independently here or do we need a 501(c)3 partner or fiduciary?

**Response:** 501(c)6 non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply independently and do need a 501(c)3 lead fiscal agency to apply. Agencies that are non-profit 501(c)(3), federally recognized Tribal entities and public partners in the education arena are eligible to apply, as noted on page 1. Nonprofits 501(c)(3) acting as fiscal sponsors are eligible to apply for the program(s) for which they provide fiscal oversight. Additionally, collaboratives with an identified 501(c)(3) lead fiscal agency may apply for funding. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.1 Eligibility on page 5.

17. **Question:** Our agency is applying for the Targeted Impact Tier grant on behalf of several groups. May of our partners involved in these groups are separately applying for small-large CORE grants. We just wanted to check in to make sure there wasn't any problem with that since we will be the main applicant?

**Response:** There is no limit to the number of applications per agency however agencies may not apply for the same program or project, defined in the same way, to more than

one tier. The amount each agency applies for as a single agency or as a portion of a collaborative proposal may be up to, but no more than, 25% of total funding available across all tiers. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.4 Application Scope and section 3.5 Application Parameters on page 6.

**18. Question:** Are school districts given the same consideration as community organizations/non-profits?

**Response:** Agencies that are non-profit 501(c)(3), federally recognized Tribal entities and public partners in the education arena are eligible to apply and will be evaluated using the relevant tier scoring criteria. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.1 Eligibility on page 5 and section 4. Scoring Criteria on page 7.

**19. Question:** Will all grant-related communications go to the Primary Contact email (rather than the email address used to login into the application portal)?

**Response:** After the application period has closed on March 4, 2022, all grant-related communications will go to the Primary Contact email.

**20. Question:** If there is a single RFP submission, in the middle tier, that is for multiple related programs can CORE redline any individual program contained within it? Or are all submissions considered whole and non-divisible? I ask because historically my organization has submitted a single application that covered two programs.

**Response:** Proposals are considered whole and non-divisible. It is the intent of the funders to fund awarded proposals within 10% of the requested amount. The scope of the proposal is ultimately up to the agency to describe how it will address a common purpose or set of outcomes. Some agencies with a specific area of focus may define "program" as all the services they provide. More information on this question please see Section 3.4 Application Scope on page 6.

## *ii. Evidence Based Practices*

**1. Question:** Who is measuring the effectiveness of any EBP, or are they all being considered high quality, regardless of the published results of the model?

**Response:** Proposals are scored based on their ability to describe information that suggests the proposal will influence the stated inequities. The placement on the Continuum of Results and Evidence is not scored and is for description and understanding of the evidence summarized. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.2.

What tells you it works? on page 16 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9. Applicants are encouraged to attend trainings for additional support. More information can be found in section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

2. **Question:** Will organizations be required to use an EBP again from select EBP libraries?

**Response:** Applicants are not required to use an EBP from select EBP libraries. Information on EBPs can be found in the RFP under sections 2.4.3 CORE Continuum and Promising Practices on page 4, section 6.3.2 What tells you it works? on page 16, and section 13 Continuum of Results and Evidence on page 29.

3. **Question:** Are programs utilizing EBP'S given more weight or looked upon more favorably scoring-wise? Or does the application simply require an overview an intention around practices used and why?

**Response:** The type of evidence is not scored and is for description and understanding of the evidence summarized. Proposals are scored based on their ability to describe information that suggests the proposal will influence the stated inequities. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.2. What tells you it works? on page 16 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9. Applicants are encouraged to attend trainings for additional support. More information can be found in section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

4. **Question:** Are there any resource links for evidence-based practice clearinghouse databases?

**Response:** Applicants can access an online tool via DataShare that includes a database of Promising Practices (<https://www.datasharescc.org/promiseppractice>). More information can be found in the RFP under section 2.4 Tool: CORE Results Menu on page 3. Additionally, applicants can make use of training and support. More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.7 CORE Framework Training and Support on page 12.

5. **Question:** How was the list of Promising Practices compiled?

**Response:** The searchable [Promising Practices database](#) on [DataShare Santa Cruz County](#) is maintained by the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) as part of their hosting and support for the DataShare platform (<https://www.datasharescc.org/promiseppractice>). It includes programs identified through HCI's research and criteria, as well as programs and initiatives submitted for inclusion by other HCI communities across the country, including Santa Cruz County. More information on the [ranking methodology](#) and on how to submit a promising practice for consideration can be found on the DataShare [Promising Practices](#) page.

6. **Question:** Have evidence-based programs been evaluated on their effectiveness in producing equity? Otherwise by having a focus on creating equity using programs that were proved effective at something else, may not improve equity.

**Response:** Some programs that fall on the Continuum of Results and Evidence have equity as an outcome and some do not. Applicants are asked to address to what extent the proposed services influence needs and inequities that have been identified. More information can be found in section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9 and 6.3 What Should be Done? on pages 15-17.

### *iii. Equity*

1. **Question:** Why are services targeting topics like gender identity, ageism, sexism, homophobia, etc. given a lower priority than racial equity?

**Response:** Equity issues exist amongst many groups, and all are critical to address. In the United States, centuries of systemic racism have made racial inequities the deepest, most pervasive disparities, which is why CORE Investments focuses explicitly (but not exclusively) on racial equity. Applicants for Small, Medium, and Large, are to identify the dimension of equity (race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that their proposal focuses on for descriptive purposes and is not scored. Targeted Impact applications are required to focus on racial equity and may also describe impact on other equity dimensions such as age, gender, sexual orientation (although not required). Additional equity dimensions in Targeted Impact proposals are for descriptive purposes and are not scored. (More information can be found in the RFP under section 2.1 Equity on page 2 and section 6.2 Why do it? on page 14.

2. **Question:** If we individually define what equity means in our proposal, how will decisions be made? Are there equity metrics/standards?

**Response:** Each proposal will be scored based on the general question: what extent will the proposed services influence the inequities that have been identified? Information on how this question is scored can be found in the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

3. **Question:** If a program has federally mandated target populations that include criteria beyond race, will it be penalized for following those guidelines instead of that is in CORE?

**Response:** Applicants for Small, Medium, and Large, are to identify the dimension of equity (race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that their proposal focuses on for descriptive purposes and is not scored. Targeted Impact applications are required to focus

on racial equity and may also describe impact on other equity dimensions such as age, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Additional equity dimensions in Targeted Impact proposals are for descriptive purposes and are not scored. More information can be found in the RFP under section 2.1 Equity on page 2 and section 6.2 Why do it? on page 14.

4. **Question:** If your priority is equity and you don't define equity you have a practical and logical problem if you want to achieve "collective impact"

**Response:** The following definition of equity can be found in the RFP on page 19: "Equity: Fairness or justice in the way people are treated, specifically: freedom from bias or favoritism. A program built on equity will address the needs of specific populations most likely to be affected by inequities by providing resources and opportunities such that they may thrive alongside other residents in the county." **While equity is defined the equity dimensions focused on are to be articulated by the applicant in Small, Medium and Large.** More information can be found in the RFP under section 2.1 Equity on page 2 and section 7 Glossary of Terms on page 19.

#### *iv. Budget*

1. **Question:** Should the administrative rate be applied only to the direct funding requested or to the entire funding request (including the administrative cost)?

**Response:** Administrative rates are applied to the cumulative total of the other line items rather than the entire funding request.

2. **Question:** Can applicants reserve a % of the budget for contingency funds to be used as needed during program delivery? If so, is there a recommended % or % limit?

**Response:** There is no specific line item for contingency funds. Budgets must include programs/projects summary costs of non-personnel, personnel, and administration. Budgets must include a description of these costs. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 6.5 How much money is needed on page 17 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

3. **Question:** Can we apply for different amounts in each year? For example - 25,000 year one, 50,000 year two, 75,000 for year three?

**Response:** Budgets are for 3 years, and amounts are to be equal in each year. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.5 How much money is needed? on page 17.

4. **Question:** Can a small portion of the CORE funds be used on purchases such as staff appreciation cards & tokens, simple training snacks for late afternoon/evening, and/or supplies and incentives for our professional days?

**Response:** Budgets must include programs/projects summary costs of non-personnel items and description of these costs. The RFP does not exclude any particular non-personnel cost. Applicants are encouraged to note the general nature and need of requests. Proposal's budgets for medium, large, and targeted impact will be scored based on whether requested staffing or other costs items are sufficient to meet program outcomes. If awarded, budget details will be discussed during contract negotiations. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 6.5 How much money is needed on page 17 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

5. **Question:** Is there consideration of the size of the agency budget in terms of the request for small, medium, large or are the tiers merely based on the amount of the request made?

**Response:** Tiers are based on grant amounts and are not based on the size of the agency. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.3 Amount Available on page 5.

6. **Question:** Costs go up every year, why plan for flat funding?

**Response:** Per the Board of Supervisors and City direction this is a three-year contract with equal funding over the 3 years.

7. **Question:** Can you apply for a different amount each year?

**Response:** Budgets are for 3 years, and amounts are to be equal in each year. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.5 How much money is needed? on page 17.

8. **Question:** Are there any restrictions on whether grant funds can be used for existing personal and/or for hiring new personnel for the grant program?

**Response:** The RFP does not exclude any particular personnel cost. Proposal's budgets for medium, large, and targeted impact will be scored based on whether requested staffing or other costs items are sufficient to meet program outcomes. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 6.5 How much money is needed on page 17 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

9. **Question:** Please advise if the following application items should be for annual or term of the grant? 3. Amount of Funding Requested: \$ & 7. Total Program/Project Budget: \$

**Response:** Amount of Funding Requested and Total Program/Project Budget are for the first funding year, meaning FY 2022/23. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.1 Summary and Contact Information on page 14.

10. **Question:** I am looking to possibly apply for funding to assist with operations, specifically in the areas of supportive services/staffing, and a resident coordinator position. Are these eligible expenses?

**Response:** The RFP does not exclude any particular personnel or non-personnel cost. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 6.5 How much money is needed on page 17 and section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

11. **Question:** Is the Budget Form provided on the website a tool that can be used as the actual budget form for the CORE application (to be able to work on while working on the application before officially submitting it), or is it necessary to submit the budget form accessed in the Reviewr portal (complete parts of the application before reaching the form)?

**Response:** The budget form that is on the HSD Webpage is the same downloadable budget form that applicants will find on the online application portal (Reviewr). The form on the HSD Webpage may be uploaded to the online application portal (Reviewr).

12. **Question:** On the budget form it lists ADMIN RATE; is this indirect rate?

**Response:** The administrative rate can also be described as an indirect rate. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.5 How much money is needed? on pages 17-18.

13. **Question:** Can you please explain the following items requested: Total Program/Project Budget and Total Agency Budget.

**Response:** Total Program/Project Budget is the amount of money needed for the entire program/project. This number would include money requested from CORE and other funding sources needed for this program/project. The total program budget is only different from the "Amount of Funding Requested" if applicants are requesting a contribution to a program with multiple fund sources. Total Agency Budget is the amount of money the agency plans on needing for all agency operations in FY 2022-2023. The Total Agency Budget may be the same amount as the "Total Program/Project Budget" if there is only one program in the agency.

#### *v. People Served*

1. **Question:** There are a couple of questions for data that we do not collect. For our services, this includes sexual orientation and Income data. I do not see an option to explain this or say that we do not collect this, and these are required fields. Can you please advise on how we should handle these questions?

**Response:** In the section "Who are the people served?", applicants are asked to share the following demographic information: age, ethnicity, gender, primary language, area, and household income. If an applicant does not collect data on one of these demographics, an applicant can write "not collected" in the text box provided.

2. **Question:** In our Targeted Impact Tier grant we have two targeted populations: the members of the coalitions and the communities those members serve. We will detail this in the application. For the participant demographic stats is it ok to share the data of the communities our members serve rather than the demographic stats of the members themselves?

**Response:** In the section "Who are the people served?", applicants are asked to estimate the unique number of participants of direct service programs (i.e., community members served) each fiscal year. Additionally, Targeted Impact proposals are to include outcome metrics among participants of programs (i.e., direct services) and include at least one outcome metric anticipated as a result of capacity building among agencies or organizations, communities, or systems. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.3 Who are the participants? on pages 16-17.

3. **Question:** In the subsection "Who are the people served," when we are asked to estimate unique participants each year, can we include people who were served the year before as well, or should we just count new participants each year? Our program is serving every student and teacher in participating schools. If we estimate one number for that population in 22-23 and project the number staying the same in 23-24, can we include the same number, or would that count as duplicating the same participants, meaning we should only estimate the number of new students participating for the first time?

**Response:** The unique number of participants served during a fiscal year can include participants that have been served in prior years. For example, if an applicant plans on having 100 unique participants in FY 22-23 and plans on having the same 100 unique participants in FY 23-24, an applicant would answer 100 for FY 22-23 and 100 for FY 23-24.

*vi. Outcomes/Achievements*

1. **Question:** In the previous grant cycle, the measures were split into two groups the "Quality of Service Measure"/ How well do we implement? and the "Outcome Measure"/ Are People better off? Are you looking for us to leave out any quality of service measures? Additionally, Are you looking for more client outcome measures or more output based outcome measures?

**Response:** Proposals are required to include outcomes that describe how the project or program will influence the needs and inequities identified in the proposal. Outcomes should answer the question "Is anybody better off?". Applicants can also reference the information and tools found on DataShare for Program Outcomes at

[datasharescc.org/tiles/index/display?id=210411274189905155](https://datasharescc.org/tiles/index/display?id=210411274189905155). In section "What are the Services?", applicants can provide information in the narrative response on outcomes and other measurements related to the services that are being provided. More information can be found in the RFP under section 6.3.1 What is the program or project on page 15.

2. **Question:** The Outcomes section was reduced from 3,000 characters to 1,000. What was the rationale for this change?

**Response:** The original intent of the question on Accomplishments and Outcomes was to capture a brief description of the target, for whom, and how it will be measured. In section "What are the Services?", applicants can provide more detailed information in the narrative question on how outcomes are related to the services that are being provided. For more information on this question please see Section 6.3 What Should be done? on page 15 of the RFP.

## C. Scoring and Panels

### Questions related to the Request for Proposal Scoring and Panels

1. **Question:** Does scoring favor collaborative applications over individual agency applications? Or are they weighted equally?

**Response:** In the Small, Medium, and Large there is no specific score directly related to a collaborative or single agency funding request. Targeted Impact applications may include either type of funding request, however they are required to articulate a collaborative approach which may include partners requesting funding as well as those who are not.

2. **Question:** Are prior grant awards affecting the possible outcomes for this application?

**Response:** Points are not awarded specifically for prior grant awards; however, applicants may reference prior grant awards as part of their response to questions about organizational capacity. For more details, please see the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

3. **Question:** Is there a scoring advantage for having bilingual staff?

**Response:** No additional points are awarded specifically for having bilingual staff. Applicants are encouraged to describe how equity is operationalized within agency processes in their application within section "Does the agency have the capacity?". More information can be found in the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

4. **Question:** Will panels be knowledgeable as to an applicant's prior award amount through CORE. And if not, those amounts are often delineated in agency financials.

**Response:** Prior award information will not be provided to panels outside of an applicant's proposal. However, applicants may reference prior grant awards as part of their response to questions about organizational capacity as well as within Financial Statements required for Large and Targeted Impact tiers. For more details, please see the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9.

5. **Question:** What is the process for deciding who will be a reviewer?

**Response:** Review Panel Participants (e.g Reviewers) will be recruited to create panels as described in the RFP. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 5.8 Panel Participants on page 12. An update will be given to both the Board of Supervisors and the City Council in March as stated in Section 5.10 Timeline in the RFP on page 13.

6. **Question:** Who chooses the reviewers?

**Response:** The City and County of Santa Cruz staff will make final decisions on panelist selection based on the desired panel composition as stated in the RFP. Please see Section 5.8 Panel Participants on page 12 for more information on the panel composition.

7. **Question:** What criteria will be used to pick reviewers?

**Response:** Review Panel Participants (e.g Reviewers) will be recruited to create panels as described in the RFP. More information can be found in the RFP under Section 5.8 Panel Participants on page 12. An update will be given to both the Board of Supervisors and the City Council in March as stated in Section 5.10 Timeline in the RFP on page 13.

8. **Question:** What specific training will reviewers receive?

**Response:** All panelists will receive training on the scoring criteria prior to reviewing proposals.

9. **Question:** If reviewers have any questions about any of the material in the application, what is the process for them to get clarifications?

**Response:** Panelists will not be able to ask any one agency for clarification on their application. Panelists will be provided support during the review process.

10. **Question:** Are the scores directly related to if a proposal is funded? How so?

**Response:** Applicant scores are related to the funding of a proposal. An update will be given to both the Board of Supervisors and the City Council in March as stated in Section 5.10 Timeline in the RFP on page 13.

11. **Question:** Do reviewers determine the specific funding for each applicant?

**Response:** Reviewers will not determine specific funding for each applicant. More information can be found in the RFP under section 5.9 on page 12 and under section 3.5 Application Parameters on page 6.

12. **Question:** After funding amounts are determined, what specific feedback will be given to the applicant? Scores? Narrative that informed the score level?

**Response:** After all CORE RFP contracts are executed, an application's final score and a summary of the feedback will be available.

13. **Question:** How and when would an applicant receive feedback about scores and the process that informed the funding decision?

**Response:** As stated in Question 12, after all CORE RFP contracts are executed, an application's final score and a summary of the feedback will be available.

14. **Question:** Is there an appeal process for applicants? What is the time frame for that process?

**Response:** Information regarding the protest and appeals process can be found in the RFP under section 15 Protest and Appeals Procedures on pages 34-35.

15. **Question:** Are the scores directly related to if a proposal is funded? How so?

**Response:** Applicant scores are related to the funding of a proposal. An update will be given to both the Board of Supervisors and the City Council in March as stated in Section 5.10 Timeline in the RFP on page 13.

16. **Question:** Is there any positive consideration given for collaboration between more than one group for a medium-sized grant?

**Response:** As stated in question 1, in the Small, Medium and Large tiers, there is no specific score directly related to a collaborative or single agency funding request. Applicants are to articulate the most effective approach to impact the identified community needs, either as a single agency or collaborative. More information can be found in the RFP under section 4. Scoring Criteria on page 7.

17. **Question:** Can you please provide more information about the review process? How many reviewers will read each application? Will reviewers read applications for which they are subject matter experts, or will assignments be more random? Anything else you can share about the review process?

**Response:** The panels will include individuals such as community leaders; staff of community agencies, local jurisdiction staff, local private funder staff; researchers; practitioners; individuals with lived experience; and public agency staff. The intent is to create panels that reflect the county/city in terms of equity dimensions, such as race/ethnicity, geography, age and/or experience serving certain groups. An update on the review process will be made to the Board of Supervisors on March 8th.

## D. Funding

### Questions related to CORE RFP funding

1. **Question:** In my read of the RFP, city funds will only be used for programs serving city residents. So how will county-wide projects be funded?

**Response:** The City of Santa Cruz funding will primarily be directed to serve City residents and not necessarily programs that primarily target City residents. County money may fund applications that serve people in all areas of the county including unincorporated county areas and municipalities such as Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley. Please see Section 3.2 Tiers and 3.3 Amount Available on page 5 of the RFP.

2. **Question:** Similarly, what % of County funds will be used for programs serving residents of the unincorporated areas?

**Response:** County money may fund applications that serve people in all areas of the county including unincorporated county areas and municipalities such as Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley. There is no specific percentage of county funds allocated for programs serving residents of the unincorporated areas.

3. **Question:** So the city of Santa Cruz will potentially support a program that focuses all their services in South County or in Watsonville?

**Response:** As stated in response 1, the City of Santa Cruz funding will primarily be directed to serve City residents and not necessarily programs that primarily target City residents. Please see Section 3.2 Tiers and 3.3 Amount Available on page 5 of the RFP.

4. **Question:** Does County funding only apply to unincorporated county areas, or does it also include the municipalities (Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, Scotts Valley) as well?

**Response:** As stated in response 1 & 2, County money may fund applications that serve people in all areas of the county including unincorporated county areas and municipalities such as Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley.

5. **Question:** Will CDBG and CBDO funding be considered as CORE funds this year for city of Santa Cruz?

**Response:** Applications for CDBG (which can include a CBDO application as part of the CDBG application) are separate from CORE funds and have a separate award process.

6. **Question:** Will the funding period be July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2025?

**Response:** The funding period is July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2025.

7. **Question:** If the project requires the hiring of a staff member or finding and securing a new location, but the funding, if approved, may not be received until August, and the hiring or location finding is not able to happen until after that, would the project receive a lesser amount? What if no appropriate staff or location for part of the project were found for 6 months?

**Response:** Details on contracting and related oversight will be described to awarded programs. If a program/project cannot meet contracted agreements, negotiation would occur between the funders and the contracted agency about any needed changes.

8. **Question:** Will awards be partially funded if the committee sees fit? Even if it moves an organization down a tier? Or will the committee be faced with the decision to either accept the proposal at the amount requested or deny the application outright?

**Response:** It is the intent of the funders to fund awarded proposals within 10% of the requested amount. Proposals will not be scored at a lower or different tier than submitted by applicant.

9. **Question:** If a program is not recommended for full funding will it be considered for funding at lower tiers if beyond the 15% amount that was defined.

**Response:** It is the intent of the funders to fund awarded proposals within 10% of the requested amount. Proposals will not be scored at a lower or different tier than submitted by applicant.

10. **Question:** Will the funding awards need to reapply in each of following two years?

**Response:** Funded awardees will not need to reapply in year two or three. This is a three-year funding cycle. Amounts requested will be granted at the same amount each year over three years as City and County's funds permit. More information can be found in the RFP on page 1 within Summary and under section 6.5 How much money is needed? on page 17.

11. **Question:** Is there a possibility of a grant being awarded, but at a smaller amount than requested in an application? Or, if the full amount can't be funded will that application automatically be declined?

**Response:** If proposals are awarded, City and County intend to fund proposals and specifically plan to not reduce budgets more than 10% from the original requested amount. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.5 Application Parameters on page 6.

12. **Question:** How often are these grants available to be applied for? In other words, if an organization does not win a grant this time will there be another opportunity next year?

**Response:** This is a three-year grant cycle. The next RFP is anticipated to reopen in 2024. More information can be found in the RFP under section 3.3 Amount Available on page 5.

13. **Question:** Will applications be selected on a "yes" or "no" basis, or will the decision-making body partially award applications?

**Response:** It is the intent of the funders to fund awarded proposals within 10% of the requested amount.

14. **Question:** If we apply in the middle tier, is there any way our application would be kicked down to the small tier?

**Response:** Proposals will not be scored at a lower or different tier than submitted by applicant.

## E. Contracts and Reporting

Questions related to contracts coming from the CORE RFP and reporting.

1. **Question:** What will reporting requirements be?

**Response:** Reporting requirements vary by tier, but all programs are required to collect information about the program/project. More information can be found in the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9 and in the applications. In addition, reporting requirements will be part of the contracting process once proposals have been selected for funding.

2. **Question:** What are the reporting requirements for the grantees?

**Response:** Reporting requirements vary by tier, but all programs are required to collect information about the program/project. More information can be found in the RFP under section 4 Scoring Criteria on pages 7-9 and in Section 6 Application Instructions on pages 14-18. In addition, reporting requirements will be part of the contracting process once proposals have been selected for funding.

3. **Question:** Why is this designed to have contracts be retroactive? Why not plan ahead so that contracts can be signed July 1? This is a burden for organizations who don't have assets sitting around and will harm consumers by services being delayed.

**Response:** Contracts will be developed based on the Board of Supervisors and City Approved timeline found on page 13 of the RFP. As part of the City and County contracting process our deadlines require that we not move forward without the Board of Supervisor's approval. Due to the timeline of when the County and City budget is approved, contracts cannot be negotiated until after approval.

4. **Question:** If a funded project reported that they were not able to come close to their stated objectives and outcomes, what might be the process that would then occur? Might the project get a fix-it-or-lose-it notice? Might the program lose all of the funding immediately? Might it not change their future years of funding?

**Response:** Details on contracting and related oversight will be described to awarded programs. If a program/project cannot meet contracted agreements, negotiation would occur between the funders and the contracted agency about any needed changes.

## F. Miscellaneous

Questions that do not fit into other categories.

1. **Question:** Are there other counties/communities in California that have this type of CORE Investment funding opportunity?

**Response:** Currently, there are no other counties/communities in California that use the CORE Framework, which was developed locally.

2. **Question:** Is there a process flowchart for the RFP Grant Application Process?

**Response:** There is not a flowchart currently, however you may reference the RFP timeline in section 5.10 on page 13 of the RFP. If a flowchart is developed it will be posted to the CORE Investments RFP website.