



## READY2OPEN COMMUNITY & VETERANS HALLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

On October 20, 2020, the Merced County Board of Supervisors established a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funded Community Support Program (Ready2Open Community and Veterans Halls Assistance Program). This program was created to provide qualifying organizations, who have experienced a loss of revenue due to COVID-19, with cash reimbursement for certain eligible COVID-19 related expenses, or certain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies. The following FAQ regarding this program and the grant application process is intended only as a guide for general and easy reference.

### Q1. How do I apply for this grant?

Please submit your complete application online at [www.reopenmercedcounty.com](http://www.reopenmercedcounty.com). Grants will be awarded on a **first-come, first-served basis**, for qualified applicants. Incomplete applications will not be processed until all required supporting documents are submitted.

### Q2. What is a community or veterans hall?

- For eligibility purposes of this grant, a community hall is defined as a building whose **primary purpose** is for community activities and congregation, open to the public, and operated by a non-profit group or a non-governmental organization responsible for operating a Merced County owned community or veterans hall.
- Community activities and congregation include recreational, social, charitable, educational, entertainment and cultural functions.
- For eligibility purposes of this grant, a veterans hall is defined as a building within the community whose purpose is to serve veterans and their families by providing a place for congregation, social engagement and access to services.

### Q3. Who is eligible to apply for these grants?

1. Applicants shall:
  - Be a non-profit organization physically located, operating, and headquartered in Merced County, or a non-governmental organization responsible for operating a Merced County owned community or veterans hall, and
  - Have a demonstrated loss of revenue due to COVID-19, and
  - Own, and/or operate a community or veterans hall, which is/has been available for community facility rental.
2. Applicants must demonstrate that their organization was operating on or prior to March 19, 2020.
3. Applicants must be in good standing with Merced County and the city in which their organization is located.



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4. Applications for organizations who have not received an SBA Payment Protection Program (PPP) Loan, an SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), or other COVID-19 related grants or loans (i.e. Ready2Open) will be prioritized.
5. Organizations will be required to sign a contract to receive grant funds.
6. Applicants must submit the following documents to determine good standing with the IRS and the California FTB:
  - IRS Determination Letter
  - Tax Year 2019 Form 990
  - Not be a California FTB revoked exempt organization:
    - i. <https://www.ftb.ca.gov/file/business/types/charities-nonprofits/revoked-entity-list.html>
  - Not be on the IRS Revocation List:
    - i. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search>
7. Non-governmental organizations responsible for operating a Merced County owned community or veterans hall must submit proof of operation in the form of:
  - An active agreement with the County; and
  - Proof of payment for the facility including utility bills during the eligibility period.

### **Q4. Are there non-profits that are not eligible to apply?**

Yes, 501c4 and 501c6 organizations are not eligible.

### **Q5. Are religious organizations/churches eligible to apply?**

Yes, religious organizations/churches are eligible to apply if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

### **Q6. What are the COVID-19 related expenses eligible for reimbursement?**

The following COVID-19 related expenses are eligible for reimbursement through the Ready2Open Community and Veterans Halls Assistance Program if a loss of revenue was incurred between March 19, 2020 and the date of the application. The expenses must have been realized by the organization during the same time frame. The grant applicant must include documentation of the expenses.

- Mortgage/Rent/Lease costs: Unfunded expenditures for mortgage/rent/lease costs realized during the required closure of the community or veterans hall.
- Costs related to the upkeep of the facility, while unable to rent it out. Examples of such costs include utilities, pest control, repairs and maintenance.



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- Inventory or supplies required to safely reopen the facility including personal protective equipment, unfunded expenditures for the costs related to the reconfiguring of work and public spaces to accommodate social distancing, disinfectants, sanitizers, and expenditures to adapt spaces for outdoor services/dining.

### **Q7. Does the eligible organization have to have paid employees?**

No, we understand that many eligible organizations rely solely on volunteers.

### **Q8. Are there limits on the size of the grant I can request?**

Yes, the grant fund maximum per organization is \$10,000. The maximum award is not to exceed your organization's net loss from March 19, 2020 to the date of your application.

### **Q9. I operate an organization in Merced County and an organization outside of Merced County – can I still apply?**

Yes, but only for the organization within Merced County. Please also confirm that the organization meets the remaining eligibility requirements for application.

### **Q10. I have received financial assistance from other organizations, will that impact my eligibility?**

Possibly, depending upon the type and source of previous funding. The application requests this information so that the County can make the appropriate determination. Organizations who have not received a SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), or other COVID-19 related grants or loans will be prioritized. The Reopen Merced County Fund grant will not impact the priority of the application.

### **Q11. What does it mean to be in “good standing” with the County?**

As a starting place, organizations physically located and/or conducting business in Merced County must have an active business license either with Merced County (for the unincorporated areas) or with one of its incorporated cities (Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos or Merced). In this regard, please take note that an organization can still be in good standing without a business license if that organization is exempted or excluded from that jurisdiction's business license ordinances. For example, in unincorporated Merced County, many agriculture-oriented businesses are exempt and do not require a business license. Those businesses would still be in good standing for the purposes of making an application. Should you have questions about business licenses, please contact the County's Department of Community & Economic



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Development at (209) 385-7686 for issues within unincorporated Merced County. For business license questions within one of the cities, please contact their offices directly.

Other examples of being in good standing include the following:

1. The applicant organization must not be in breach of contract or agreement with the County or one of its incorporated cities;
2. The applicant organization must not have unpaid or delinquent property taxes. However, those with existing payment plans already in place at the time of application, may still apply; and
3. The applicant organization must be fully compliant with all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

We have developed this program to make it as simple and easy for applicants to apply. We simply want to ensure that all of our applicants are treated fairly and equitably, so that we can help them during these most challenging times.

### **Q12. Can I mail my application?**

No. Because applicants are being reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, we are only accepting electronically submitted applications.

### **Q13. Can I use the grant funds to pay for expenses incurred prior to March 19, 2020?**

No, the funds from this program may only be used for expenses incurred and revenues lost due to COVID-19 that occur between March 19, 2020 and the date of the grant application.

### **Q14. What kind of documentation is needed to substantiate the expenses and loss of revenue claimed in your application?**

*If you are seeking reimbursement for one or more of the following expense categories please provide the relevant additional documents. **Please redact any personally identifying information pertaining to your employees such as their Social Security Numbers.***

#### **Loss of Revenue**

- 2019 and 2020 financial statements showing reduced revenues from March 2020 to current.



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### **Costs related to the upkeep of the facility while unable to rent out**

- Paid invoices/receipts, bank and/or credit card statements with corresponding receipts, or check stubs for expenditures related to the upkeep of the facility, such as utilities, pest control, repairs and maintenance.

### **Mortgage/Rent/Lease**

- Bank statements or check stubs showing rent/lease payments made since affected date
- Copy of signed lease/mortgage

### **Inventory or supplies required to safely reopen the organization**

- Invoices, receipts, bank statements, credit card statements, or check stubs for expenditures related to personal protective equipment, purchases to accommodate workspaces for social distancing, disinfectants, sanitizers, etc. and expenditures to adapt spaces for outdoor services/dining. All receipts must include the business' information.

### **Q15. How can I show proof of non-profit status?**

You will need to provide one of the following:

- State of California Statement of Information
- IRS Determination Letter

### **Q16. If my organization has multiple locations can I apply for more than one grant?**

No, each organization may only apply for one grant.

### **Q17. Who can apply on behalf of an organization?**

Staff with signatory authority can apply on behalf of the organization. Only one application per organization is permitted.

### **Q18. Am I eligible for grant funding if I received assistance through the Payroll Protection Plan or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan?**

Yes. If you have received any assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program or an Economic Injury Disaster Loan or other COVID-19 related grants or loans, your application will be reviewed after those applicants who did not receive assistance. The Worknet Reopen Merced County Fund grant will not impact the priority of the application.



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**Q19. If I start the application and have to stop, will it save my place or will I need to start over?**

You will need to start the application over. We have worked hard to ensure that the application can be completed in a single session. We encourage you to have all of the necessary documents available when you begin the application. If you are on your mobile device, take photos of your required documents before you start.

**Q20. How long will it take to fill out the application?**

If you have all of your documents it should take 20 minutes or less.

**Q21. Will I get a confirmation that my application was received?**

Yes, you will receive a confirmation email once the application is submitted.

**Q22. What can I expect after I apply?**

Once we receive your application, it will be reviewed and applicants will be notified if a grant will be awarded. Notifications will occur after the application closing period.

If you are granted an award, a contract will be emailed to you for digital signature. Once signed off by county personnel, all parties will receive via email a finalized signed copy of the contract.

**Q23. How can I apply if I don't have access to a computer?**

If you do not have access to a computer, the application is very mobile-friendly, we suggest using your Smartphone or Tablet to fill out the application. If you prefer to use a computer, you may contact our office to schedule a time to use one of the computers in our Worknet resource rooms. Please contact Ranjeev Dosanjh at 209.724.2083 or via email at [Ranjeev.dosanjh@countyofmerced.com](mailto:Ranjeev.dosanjh@countyofmerced.com) to schedule an appointment.

**Q24. If I have questions about the program or my organization's application, who can I call?**

Please contact Ranjeev Dosanjh at 209.724.2083 or via email at [Ranjeev.dosanjh@countyofmerced.com](mailto:Ranjeev.dosanjh@countyofmerced.com).