



## Member FAQs About Impact100 Grants 2023

### **How do I know where my money is being allocated and whether or not I approve?**

Impact100 is a consensus-driven funder, and we take our stewardship of each member's \$1,000 grants donation very seriously. Our Grant Review Committees (GRCs) and Financial Review Committees (FRCs) carefully evaluate grant applications, and each year we adjust and improve our selection process to ensure best practices.

Moreover, you have a VOTE! Each spring, our grant finalists present their case to the full membership, and you select your top candidates online soon after. A few weeks later, we announce the recipients at our Awards Celebration.

Stay informed throughout the grants year by attending events, reading the monthly newsletter, and exploring the website. Impact100's Spotlight Series, for example, offers issue-oriented presentations by community leaders followed by lively audience discussion. Our annual Meet the Finalists event, Awards Celebration, and Grant Recipients Update Meeting offer opportunities to meet our nonprofit partners and learn about their work firsthand. Be sure to watch for those invitations and plan to join us.

### **How can I get more involved in the grants process?**

To really understand where your money goes and why, consider signing up for a Grant Review Committee (GRC) or Financial Review Committee (FRC). That gives you the opportunity to serve Impact100's core mission, get to know our community nonprofits, learn how the grants process works, and collaborate with similarly committed members. We value diverse life experiences and professional backgrounds for this work.

Serving is a significant commitment. Before you volunteer, be sure to visit our information page [here](#). for details about responsibilities and timing. And keep in mind that committee size is limited, so you must pay your membership and register by **Thursday, December 1, 2022**, to confirm your place. If you need assistance or have questions, contact GRC Registrar Marcy Winget at [marcy@impact100sonoma.org](mailto:marcy@impact100sonoma.org).

## How do we prioritize and evaluate grant applications?

Impact100 Sonoma is a rare kind of funder. We support a relatively small group of nonprofits, most of whom we know, and restrict grant funds to serving Sonoma Valley. Over time, we've found that, rather than ask applicants to conform their requests to categories we define, it's more effective to ask them **what they need** to address a problem, remove a roadblock, or sustain operations.

Accordingly, we encourage our Grant Review Committees (GRCs) to carefully consider and value what would make the greatest long-term impact for the grant applicant. It might not be something emotionally charged, but rather something mundane or practical that requires a second look to fully understand.

We also evaluate applications through a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lens. Impact100 Sonoma is committed to helping dismantle systemic racism and injustice in our community. And so we seek to elevate and engage marginalized voices whenever possible. Read our DEI policy [here](#).

## Why did we adopt a new grants-management software program?

Impact100's grant review process is surprisingly complex. We moved our Grant Review Committee (GRC) and Financial Review Committee (FRC) registration online in 2018, and our application submissions online in 2020.

For 2023, our nonprofit partners urged us to adopt a more complete grants-management software program to bring us into line with other local funders. After careful consideration, we selected Grant Lifecycle Manager (GLM) by Foundant Technologies, the choice of multiple community foundations and giving circles. The platform supports all stages of the process: application submissions, committee evaluations, nonprofit communications, and more.

The software cost is not covered by member grant donations. It is an ongoing expense funded by [Member Plus](#) contributions and other sources. Rest assured, it is money well spent to ensure that we simplify the application process for nonprofits, streamline our work for committees and partners, capture institutional history for succeeding Impact100 leaders, and provide the flexibility to manage any additional grant programs we might pursue.

If you serve on a GRC or FRC in 2023, you'll learn to use our new platform, and we think you'll be impressed. For more information, including a demo, visit [grantmakers.foundant.com](https://grantmakers.foundant.com).

## **Why have we suspended the \$100,000 grant and extended the Impetus Grant model of making multiple, smaller grants?**

It's important that we listen to our nonprofit partners and respond as best we can within our membership model. Last year our ad hoc committee surveyed valley nonprofits and found that the Impetus Grants we initiated during the pandemic best suited their needs. The \$25,000 maximum is an ideal amount for them to apply for and spend effectively, especially over a two-year period. For 2023, we've modified some of the parameters slightly so that the Impetus program can continue long-term. As needs change, adding back a larger grant is something we might consider in the future.

## **How do Impetus Grants differ from the Community Grants that we gave out pre-pandemic?**

Impact100 Sonoma first awarded Community Grants in 2011, our second grants year, with a \$15,000 limit. We raised the limit to \$20,000 in 2017. Impetus Grants, initiated in 2021 during the pandemic, have a \$25,000 limit, an amount our nonprofit partners like, especially when they have two years to spend it. But there are other differences.

Unlike Community Grants, Impetus Grants aren't tied to a specific program or project. Instead they enable nonprofits to allocate funds to activities related to their core mission as they see fit. Such independent discretion is highly valued in the grants world and a key application incentive. The Impetus model enables us to build our grant-making capacity, embrace smaller, younger nonprofits, and more readily meet our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion criteria. It offers the consistency and continuity that are hallmarks of trust-based philanthropy. And it carries a distinctive, meaningful name that avoids potential confusion with Community Grants offered by the Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley.

## **Why do we typically require grant recipients to wait a year before reapplying?**

Our grant term is two years. In the past, we asked Community Grant recipients to wait for one year before reapplying to reinforce that fact and to bring lesser-known nonprofits to the forefront. During the pandemic, when we conceived the Impetus Grant model, however, we felt it was unfair to ask grant recipients to wait for a year in the midst of so much need and uncertainty. But now that we've adopted the Impetus model going forward, we're reverting to the one-year waiting period. Even so, those waiting are welcome to apply in partnership with another, eligible organization as the lead.

Our hope is that alternating years for grant recipients will help disrupt familiar patterns, encourage us to give worthy newcomers a closer look, and diversify our recipient base.

**Why is this year's waiting period limited to organizations who received grants two years in a row?**

Nine organizations received Impetus Grants in **both** 2021 and 2022, and so we've asked them to wait this time around to give others an opportunity. Organizations that received Impetus Grants in 2022 **only**, though, remain eligible to apply in 2023 and, if they receive a second grant, will be required to wait in 2024. After that, all recipients will be synced up with the every-other-year application calendar.

If you're interested in getting more involved in the grants process or have further questions, please contact Grants Oversight Co-Chairs Dana Simpson-Stokes at [dana@impact100sonoma.org](mailto:dana@impact100sonoma.org) or Kathy Bloch at [kathy@impact100sonoma.org](mailto:kathy@impact100sonoma.org). We want to hear from you.