

## **MontcoStrong 2021 Non-Profit Resiliency Grant Program**

### Montgomery County Commerce Department

#### Frequently Asked Questions – June 2021

**Q.** What is the MontcoStrong 2021 Non-Profit Resiliency Program? What is the goal of the program?

A. This program is a Montgomery County initiative established by the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners and the Montgomery County Commerce Department in partnership with the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County. The goal of the program is to provide eligible non-profit entities with financial support so they are resilient as employers and stakeholders in our communities due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic as well as to ensure these organizations are able to be active participants in the restoration of the wellbeing & livelihood of our residents, businesses, and communities

**Q.** How much funding is being made available for grants under this program?

A. Total available funding is \$5,000,000. For comparison, during 2020 the non-profit grant program awarded just under \$4,000,000 for a total of 165 grants.

**Q.** How is this different than the non-profit grant program from 2020?

A. There are several differences from the last MontcoStrong grant program for non-profits. The most notably are the types of organizations that are eligible, the eligible use of funds, and amount of grant dollars an organization can apply for (this requires a formulaic calculation as described in the guidelines). Organizations interested in applying should thoroughly review the guidelines before doing so.

**Q.** Our organization utilizes a fiscal sponsor; should we apply or should the fiscal sponsor apply on our behalf?

A. In the case that your organization uses a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor should apply on behalf of your organization. The grant contract, grant check, the proper use of grant funds, and the grant reporting will all be the responsibility of the fiscal sponsor.

**Q.** When does the County expect grant awards to be approved?

A. Grant awards will likely be approved between late August to early September, 2021.

**Q.** If I am not one of the first applications submitted, does that mean I won't receive grant funding through this program? How long with applications be accepted for?

A. The intent and design of the program is not a first come, first served program. Applications will be accepted from **Noon on Monday, July 19, 2021** until **Noon on Tuesday, August 10, 2021**. Completed applications will be reviewed and considerations for grant awards will be based on satisfaction of eligibility criteria and demonstrated need in the grant application. Particular consideration will be given to eligible applicants who are directly supporting COVID-19 response efforts; serving vulnerable populations; providing direct support to residents who are food, home, or safety insecure; and organizations that are engaged in economic, community, and/or workforce development initiatives. Overall evaluation of need and grant award decision criteria will include:

- Complete and accurate application.
- Identify a demonstrable need due to COVID-19 disruptions and the recovery process to come.
- Verifiable explanation of activities being undertaken to support residents, business, and/or communities of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- Achieves program goal(s) based on the pandemic's impact on vulnerable populations and our communities while also helping to meet the expected needs of restoration of the livelihood of county residents and communities.

**Q.** What am I allowed to use grant funds for? What can I not use grant funds for?

A. The purpose of this program is to provide operational support for eligible entities as opposed to support for new initiatives. Eligible uses of grant funds are as follows:

- Accounts payable including utilities, vendors, suppliers, and other eligible non-payroll expenses paid or to be paid between January 1st, 2021 to October 31st, 2021. This includes payments to insurance providers such as health insurance for employees.
- Rent/mortgage payments on the entity's primary offices/facilities in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania paid or to be paid between January 1st, 2021 to October 31st, 2021.
- PPE or other justifiable equipment necessary to operate safely due to the COVID-19 global pandemic or as part of the recovery & renewal period purchased or to be purchased between January 1st, 2021 to October 31st, 2021.
- Pay for employees in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania paid or to be paid between January 1st, 2021 to October 31st, 2021.

Grant funds cannot be used for the following costs:

- The payment of any obligations to the federal, state, and/or local governments.
- To finance an organization, project, activity, and/or location primarily located outside the geographic boundaries of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- The repayment of any debts to private creditors or lenders (ex. bank loans or lines of credit).
- The payment of bonuses as part of compensation or to pay compensation for individuals who do not otherwise receive compensation (examples – board members, volunteers, unpaid interns).
- Any political and/or lobbying activity.
- Direct payments to individual program recipients and/or donations to other entities.
- Any COVID-19 related expenses already paid for with other relief measures such as state grants or loans, US SBA Paycheck Protection Loans, local or regional grant and/or loan programs.
- Any activities not otherwise specified as allowable costs per the program guidelines and grant agreement.

**Q. What are the eligibility criteria?**

**A. Eligible applicants for program must meet the following criteria:**

- Eligible applicants must be a –
  - o 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) entity with a stated mission and engaged in work focused on one or more of the following –
    - Food, Health, and/or Housing Insecurity Services
    - Childcare/Educational Services
    - Mental Health and Wellness Services
    - Elder and/or Vulnerable Population Services
    - Environmental Stewardship
    - Arts & Cultural Enrichment
    - Community, Economic, and/or Workforce Development Services and Support
  - o 501(c)(6) entity identifying as a Chamber of Commerce
  - o 501(c)(19) entity providing support to veterans in Montgomery County
- Meet at least one of the following –
  - o Have at least one physical location where services are provided from in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and where services are available to Montgomery County residents/communities/businesses; and/or
  - o The organization's scope of service is comprised of approximately 50% Montgomery County, Pennsylvania residents/communities/businesses. Scope of service may be the percentage of individuals served and/or the geographic service area of the organization; and/or,
  - o The organization's scope of service includes Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and at least 50% of its current employees are residents of Montgomery County as of the date of application.
- Have been in operation for a period of time such that the organization filed at 2019 Form 990, is still in operation as of the date of application, and intends to be in operation for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of application.
- Employed and paying no more than 100 full and part-time employees total as of June 1, 2021.
- Entity must be acting in accordance with its by-laws, mission, and with all legal requirements as a non-profit entity per the Internal Revenue Service.

**Additional eligibility criteria and information:**

- Subcontractors and/or 1099 employees should not be included in the employee count.
- Nonprofits that are in active default (not on a payment plan) with taxes or fees owed to local, county, state, and/or the federal government may not apply.
- Religious institutions that do not have a program focus of at least 25% of total revenues supporting food security, housing security, childcare, or rapid reemployment services may not apply.
- Nonprofits engaged in any activity that is illegal under Federal, state, or local law may not apply.

**Q. Is the number of employees specific to the organization's Montgomery County location or its global employment?**

**A. The employment total (full-time and part-time) for this program is for its employee county in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.**

**Q.** If we do not receive our grant check until October, how are we supposed to spend all of the money by the end of the allowable expense period?

A. Eligible costs may include allowable expenses that have been paid prior to the receipt of grant funds. For example, if your organization paid its rent every month during the eligible expense period ( January 1st, 2021 to October 31st, 2021), you can report those rent payments as the use of funds for this grant (essentially, the organization is being reimbursed for the prior expenses in this case). As another example, if your organization purchased equipment to facilitate remote working during the allowable expense period, this is a type of expense you can submit. We recommend doing this when possible so that you can complete your grant reporting as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**Q.** I am having trouble accessing the online application form?

A. We are encouraging everyone to be patient in submitting their applications. The online application portal will be available at [www.montcopa.org/MSNP2021](http://www.montcopa.org/MSNP2021). Please note applications will not be formally accepted for review before **Noon on Monday, July 19, 2021**. **The online application form will not be available until the application window opens**. We expect that when the program opens the system will be inundated with application submissions. You may need to clear your web browser's cache if you continue to have trouble reloading the application form. Also, please make sure you complete all required sections of the online application form and upload all the required documents.

You can review all of the application questions and requirements in the Appendix of the Program Guidelines; the Program Guidelines are available at [www.montcopa.org/MSNP2021](http://www.montcopa.org/MSNP2021).

**Q.** How will the grant applications be reviewed and how will grant award amounts be determined?

A. A multi-disciplinary team will review all grant applications and each team member will make a recommendation based upon the criteria including:

- Complete and accurate application.
- Identify a demonstrable need due to COVID-19 disruptions and the recovery process to come.
- Verifiable explanation of activities being undertaken to support residents and/or communities of Montgomery County Pennsylvania.
- Achieves program goal(s) based on the pandemic's impact on vulnerable populations and our communities while also helping to meet the expected needs of restoration of the livelihood of county residents and communities.

We strongly encourage applicants to provide information on how they will use any awarded grant dollars and to include dollar amounts in that discussion. If your organization does not have the capacity to spend the maximum grant amount, please indicate so. The review team will factor these details into recommendations for grant awards (relative to the availability of program funds and the other eligibility and review criteria as indicated in the program guidelines and this FAQ document). All grant award decisions are final and cannot be appealed. Feedback on grant applications will not be provided per the program guidelines.

**Q.** Does applying for this grant impact my organization's eligibility for federal and/or state COVID-10 business funding and/or programs?

A. Our understanding, per the U.S. SBA by way of PA DCED, regarding federal programs is that the guidance is to ensure that businesses do not "double-dip" in using federal programs. This became an issue for organizations that applied for both the SBA's EIDL program and the PPP program.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the applicant and/or grantee to take every step to ensure they are following the rules, regulations, and contracting stipulations of all grant and loan programs, regardless of source of funds. Furthermore, grantees for any program, be it from County, State, and/or Federal government, must ensure they are properly reporting and following all rules and regulations lawfully. Unlawful use of funds or untruthful reporting may result in prosecution, fines, and further sanctions.

**Q.** Our organization is a 501 (c)(3), but we are exempt from filing an IRS Form 990 (example – an eligible religious institution) – can we upload other documentation instead?

A. Yes, you can. You should upload financial statement that indicate the organization's annual revenue. You should also explain this in the narrative application question describing your organization.

**Q.** How were the program's guidelines, eligibility, and other criteria determined?

A. Program design was based in large part on the following three elements:

- The experiences of the MontcoStrong grant programs in 2020.
- COVID-19 related grant programs for non-profit entities other Pennsylvania Counties.
- Input from third-party consultants providing Montgomery County guidance on the allowable use of recovery funds.

**Q.** How will I know if I my organization is awarded a grant?

A. Grant awardees will be informed by the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County (MCRDA) via email. In order for funds to be disbursed, the grant contract must be signed and returned following all instructions.

**Q.** If my organization is awarded a grant, how soon will funds be disbursed?

A. Grant funds will be disbursed in the form of a check within approximately 10-15 business days upon return of a signed and executed grant contract.

**Q.** The organization expended all of the awarded grant funds. When should I submit my final grant report?

A. Final grant reports, as detailed in the grant contract, should be submitted as soon as all funds have been expended and all required documentation is ready. Grantees are encouraged to submit their final report as soon as they are able to do so.

**Q.** I have a question that I cannot find the answer to in the Program Guidelines or in this FAQ; what can I do to submit questions?

**A.** Questions should be submitted through the Commerce Department's Assistance Request Form found at [www.montcopa.org/Commerce](http://www.montcopa.org/Commerce). Questions on the status of a grant application or regarding grant award decisions will not be answered.

**Q.** If my organization is not awarded a grant, what are some other options for my business to get help due to the COVID-19 global pandemic?

**A.** Montgomery County maintains and regularly updates a list of business information and resources on the County's COVID-19 data hub ([www.montcopa.org/COVID-19](http://www.montcopa.org/COVID-19)) and on the Montgomery County Commerce Department's homepage ([www.montcopa.org/Commerce](http://www.montcopa.org/Commerce)).