

Disability **Communications** Fund *Access for All*

Letter of Intent (LOI) Guidelines **Release: 5/31/2017**

Disability Communications Fund (DCF) is pleased to accept Letters of Intent (LOI) for its 2018 Grant Program. Disability Communications Fund grants are generally awarded on an annual basis, with funding anticipated to start in January 2018 for this cycle.

DCF uses a two-stage application process, beginning with a **Letter of Intent (LOI)**. A limited number of applicants will then be invited to submit a **Full Application**. The entire LOI/Application review process takes approximately four (4) months.

Please contact Silke Brendel-Evan (DCF Associate Program Officer) with any questions about the 2018 grant program or process. Silke Brendel-Evan can be reached directly at (800) 240-6182 or grants@dcfund.us.

Mission

Disability Communications Fund (DCF) is the grantmaking operation within the California Communications Access Foundation (CCAF).

The mission of Disability Communications Fund (DCF) is to serve as an educator, convener and resource that works collaboratively to ensure communications access to people with disabilities in California.

Disability Communications Fund (DCF) supports programs and technology that benefit the communication needs of Californians with disabilities. 2018 represents the 8th year of its grant program; approximately \$1 million has been awarded annually.

APPLICANT AND GRANT GUIDELINES

A. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- Eligible to apply for DCF funding are:
 - tax-exempt, nonprofit organizations as defined under Section 501(c)3 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code;
 - programs that use a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status; and
 - educational institutions.

- The applicant must be a community-based organization which has a physical location in California (not an on-line entity) and provide services which benefit people with disabilities in California.

B. GRANT REQUEST PURPOSES

- In 2017, DCF identified three (3) ongoing Funding Priorities. For a project to be considered it must address one of the following areas:
 - 1) **Training the Next Generation of AT and AAC Experts:** Projects that build an organization’s capacity to better serve the communication needs of their clients through the training of professionals.
 - 2) **Facilitating Research and Innovation:** Collection of data on a service or target population for the purpose of documenting best practices or a gap analysis; or development and testing of new technologies and services which benefit individuals with disabilities that impact their ability to communicate.
 - 3) **Building Network and Replicating Successful Models:** Fostering collaboration and exchange among stakeholders serving the communication needs of Californians with disabilities.

For a detailed description of these focus areas and examples of successful projects please visit the [DCF What We Fund page](#).

- Please keep in mind that DCF is not making grants to:
 - a) Individuals
 - b) Projects providing equipment and services that are covered by other publicly funded programs.
 - c) Projects providing communications equipment and services for employees of the applicant. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is the employer's responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations for their employees.

C. GRANT LENGTH & ELIGIBILITY TO RE-APPLY

- DCF awards a) one-year grants and b) multiyear support.
 - a) One-year Grants
 - Current DCF grantees may re-apply, however, there is no guarantee that continued funding will be granted.
 - Organizations may receive up to three one-year grants in a row, after which time they will be required to take a one-year break from submitting a new Letter of Intent (LOI).
 - b) Multiyear Support
 - Funding for two- and three-year projects is now available.
 - Only current and past grantees are eligible to apply.
 - Only requests under DCF’s Funding Priority #2 “Research and Innovation”, and #3 “Networks and Replication” are considered for multiyear support
 - Generally, organizations may receive a maximum of three years of grants in a row, as described above. HOWEVER, DCF is considering the 2018 grant cycle a transition year, and is making an exception to the three-year funding limit for current 2017 grantees only. A 2017 grantee may receive up to 4 years of continuous funding under this exception. Examples:

- If 2017 was the applicant's first year of funding, it can apply for a one-, two- or three-year project.
- If 2017 was the applicant's second year of funding, it can apply for a one- or two-year project.

D. AWARD AMOUNTS & MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- Approximately \$1 million will be available for competitive grants in 2018.
 - a) One-year Grants
 - Grant amounts will range from \$10,000 to \$100,000.
 - A minimum of a 20% match of the total project cost is required.
 - b) Multiyear Support
 - Up to 40% of DCF's annual grantmaking is reserved for multi-year funding.
 - Two-year projects may receive up to \$150,000.
 - Three-year projects may receive up to \$200,000.
 - Depending on the nature of the request and the availability of funds, DCF may only partially approve a request.
 - With the intention of encouraging grantees to find other sustainable funding sources over time, the match requirement increases annually for multiyear projects:
 - 30% match of the total project cost in year two
 - 40% match of the total project cost in year three
- In addition to project-related operating costs, DCF allows applicants to include up to 10% of their request to be used for general operating costs in their budget. Additional general operating costs that exceed the 10% limit may be used to satisfy the match.

E. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- If a grant is awarded, the grantee shall be required to submit a Progress Report at the mid-point of the project, unless the project requirements have been specified differently. Multiyear projects or projects that are requesting an extension of the performance period may be asked to submit additional Progress Reports.
- A full Final Report, detailing the results of the project and including a complete accounting and documentation of expenditures, will be due 30 days after the completion of the project.
- Outside of the formal reporting, DCF staff will engage with grantees through scheduled check-in calls (all grantees) and site visits (approx. 1/3 of the grantees)
- During the course of the project or upon completion of the project, the Grantee may be asked to provide additional feedback or information in form of surveys (e.g. interest in grantee cohort activities, the Grantee's experience with the application and funding process, or long term impact of the program after the end of DCF funding).

F. 2018 DCF GRANT SCHEDULE

- [Applicant webinar](#): Monday, June 19, 2017, at 1:30pm
- Deadline for LOI submission: Wednesday, August 9, 2017, at 5pm
- Announcement of LOI decisions: Thursday, September 7, 2017
- Applicant webinar: Monday, September 11, 2017, at 1:30pm
- Deadline for submission of full grant application (by invitation only): Friday, October 6, 2017, at 5pm
- Announcement of grant awards: December 2017
- Projects expected to begin January 1, 2018.

- Grant Distribution:
 - a) One-year Grants
 - Grant awards will be distributed in two installments.
 - 50% will be distributed when grant agreements are signed, and
 - 50% will be distributed after the mid-year progress project report has been accepted.
 - b) Multiyear Support
 - Grant awards will be distributed in annual installments.
 - Size of installment depends on the multiyear project budget submitted with the application.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be completed by interested organizations through [DCF's online grant management system](#).
 - a. Organizations that have previously applied through DCF's online system can use their existing login to access the 2018 LOI questions.
 - b. All other organizations need to first register in the system and then begin completing the LOI questions.

Detailed instructions are provided on the [DCF Apply page](#) and in the online system, including a downloadable FAQ document.

The deadline for final LOIs submitted on DCF's online grant system for the 2018 grant cycle is Wednesday, August 9, 2017, at 5pm.

2. The DCF Grants Team reviews & scores the LOIs under the following criteria:
 - a. PROJECT purpose, goals & potential impact
 - b. Project BENEFICIARIES
 - c. Experience, Capacity & Stature of the ORGANIZATION
3. All LOI applicants will be notified by Thursday, September 7 of their status following the LOI review period. If DCF wishes to invite a full grant application from the organization, instructions on accessing the grant application on DCF's online grant management system will be sent at that time.
4. Summary of LOI Requirements:
 - Brief narrative of the proposed project, including needs assessment & draft project goals.
 - Brief overview of the organization, its programs and services.
 - Demographic information about the population served by the organization and the project.
 - Information about Board, staff, and volunteers.
 - Financial information for the organization's most recently completed Fiscal Year.
 - Draft project budget.

FULL APPLICATION – PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

For those organizations whose LOI are approved, a full grant application must be submitted through DCF's online grant management system. Detailed instructions will be made available to organizations that have been informed that their LOI was approved. Applications will be due on Friday, October 6, 2017, at 5pm.

Summary of Full Application Requirements (partial list):

- General Organization Information
- Information on Organization Capacity
- Information on Organization Leadership
- Information on Organization Financial Stability
- Project Planning (Grant Results Worksheet)
- Project Budgeting (detailed Project Budget)
- Details on Target Beneficiaries of the Project
- Information on Project Impact
- Information on Project Staffing
- Information on Project Collaboration Partners (if applicable)

Agreements of Grant Award

- Contractual Agreement: All grant recipients are required to enter into a contractual agreement with DCF.
- Restricted Grant Purpose: The Grant is to be used solely to accomplish the Project's purpose as outlined in the Grant Results Worksheet, and in accordance with the Project Budget, as provided by the applicant in the application and approved by DCF.