

Elaine Jones Safety Net Fund - FAQ for Nonprofit Applicants

Important: Please Review Before Applying

The Elaine Jones Safety Net Fund was created by Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) with support from Napa Valley Vintners to address sudden and urgent funding losses in Napa County's core nonprofit safety net sector. The one-year funds are intended for a specific group of nonprofits in Napa County that meet strict eligibility guidelines. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, **you will not be considered for funding.**

AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY? (CHECKLIST)

- ☐ We are a 501(c)(3) public charity.
- ☐ We primarily serve Napa County (at least 51% of our programs and operating budget for the past 5 years, whether fiscally-sponsored or as a standalone nonprofit).
- ☐ We work directly in the *safety net* sector – providing essential services like food, housing, healthcare, childcare, legal support, or mental health support.
- ☐ Our annual Napa County operating budget is between **\$500,000 and \$10,000,000.**
- ☐ We have experienced and can demonstrate a **decrease in funding and/or increase in client demand** for our Napa County programs during fiscal years ending 2025 and/or 2026.

While we understand that many nonprofits are facing hardship, funding decreases, and uncertainty, this Fund is devoted solely and explicitly to Napa County nonprofits that provide basic need programs to Napa County residents. **If you cannot check all of the boxes above, you are not eligible to apply.** Thank you for your understanding. If you would like to be considered for other types of funding from Napa Valley Community Foundation, please visit our [website](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What types of funding are available?

- **General Operating Support Grants:** Up to \$100,000 for one year.
- **Capacity Building Grants:** One-time grants up to \$50,000.
- **Bridge Loans:** 0% interest loans up to \$100,000 for delayed government funding.

Eligible organizations may apply for both:

- A general operating support grant *or* a bridge loan,
- and:*
- A capacity building grant.

The maximum total you can request across all grants is \$150,000. You may also choose to apply for **just a capacity building grant**. Nonprofits applying for just capacity building grants still must meet all of the safety net criteria.

2. What services qualify as “safety net” work?

Programs that meet essential human needs like:

- Childcare assistance
- Economic stability
- Disability assistance
- Food security
- Healthcare access
- Legal support
- Mental health support
- Rental and housing assistance
- Support for survivors of abuse

3. What is a capacity building grant?

Capacity building funding helps strengthen internal operations through:

- Strategic planning
- Fundraising and communications planning
- Board governance improvements
- Financial, HR, or IT systems upgrades
- Leadership recruitment (e.g., ED, CFO hiring)

Investments typically involve hiring outside consultants or purchasing systems/software. The intent of the capacity grants are to strengthen an organization’s operations. If multiple awardees select the same area of capacity building, NVCF may decide to select a consultant and provide cohort-based assistance, if appropriate.

4. Who is not eligible to apply?

- Individuals
- Organizations that are not 501(c) public charities
- Public, private and nonprofit K-12 schools, preschools, and colleges/universities and related programs, only childcare assistance is eligible
- Nonprofits whose safety net services are less than 50% of their work
- Nonprofits that have not worked significantly in Napa County for at least five years
- Research, fundraising or regranteeing organizations, including scholarships
- Capital campaigns and endowments
- Government or faith-based organizations

5. How do I know if my funding loss and/or increased demand makes me eligible?

Because the nonprofit funding landscape is filled with uncertainty and is a changing situation, we have not arbitrarily created hard and fast rules on percentages of loss or amount of client need increases. The Request for Proposals that will be released on May 5, 2025, will have narrative questions to answer, as well as required budget documents that demonstrate the information you provide. NVCF will prioritize funding according to greatest need once all applications have been received.

6. How do I apply?

Your organization must submit a grant proposal narrative and all supporting documents **via our online portal** at <https://nvcfelainejones.awardspring.com> no later than **June 20, 2025**. Please refer to the **application guidelines** in the Request for Proposals ([available on our website](#)) for complete details.

Important notes about AwardSpring:

- AwardSpring will only collect **basic organizational information and screening questions** directly in the portal.
- You must prepare your **narrative answers** in a **separate** Word or PDF document following the instructions in the RFP.
- There are **no individual narrative question fields in the portal** — you will upload your completed narrative as an attachment.
- You can begin working on your narrative at any time, even before creating your account in AwardSpring.

If you are applying for:

- **General Support Grant OR Bridge Loan only:** complete narrative questions 1-10 and STOP at the end of the first section. [Download an editable Word template here.](#)
- **General Support or Bridge Loan AND Capacity Building:** Submit one **combined document** answering the questions for both. [Download the Word template here.](#)
- **Capacity Building only:** Submit **one document** answering only the Capacity Building questions. [Download the Word template here.](#)

Steps in the AwardSpring Application Process

Step 1: Complete sections of the General Application

- Fill in your Organization Information and RFP screening questions.

- The "Submit Application" button will turn **yellow** when all required fields are filled in. If the button is **gray**, then that means you have not answered all of the required fields.
- Click the "Submit Application" button when you are finished.

Step 2: Complete the "Follow-Ups" for the RFP

- Return to your Dashboard, where you will see a Follow-Up for the RFP you are eligible for.
- Upload your narrative document, financials, board list, and other required attachments.
- Once all documents are uploaded, the "Submit Application" button will turn yellow.

There are no word or page limits, but please be as concise and detail-oriented, as possible, and brevity is appreciated!

7. Is there an optional information session?

Yes. Join us via Zoom on **Thursday, May 15 at 1:00 p.m.** Request a link by emailing julia@napavalleycf.org before **Friday, May 9.**

8. When will we hear back?

Following receipt of your proposal, the Foundation may request additional information in writing and/or a site visit or phone interview with representatives of your organization. We may also contact your partner agencies to learn more about collaborations. **The Foundation will notify organizations of its funding decisions no later than August 15, 2025.**

9. Are there reporting requirements?

Yes. Grantees must submit a final report by **April 30, 2026**, detailing how funds were used and summarizing program outcomes. A grant report template will be provided.

10. Who can I contact with questions?

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