

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

Letter of Intent (LOI) Guidelines **Released: 9/22/2014**

The Disability Communications Fund (DCF) is pleased to accept Letters of Intent (LOI) for consideration for support through its 2015 Grant Program. Disability Communications grants are awarded on an annual basis, with funding starting in late-January 2015 in this upcoming grant cycle.

The grant cycle includes a **Letter of Intent (LOI)**. A limited number of applicants will be invited to submit a **Full Application**. The entire LOI/Application and review process takes approximately four (4) months.

Please contact Silke Brendel-Evan at Disability Communications Fund (DCF) with any questions about the 2015 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.

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 technology and programs that serve the communication needs of Californians with disabilities. 2015 represents the 5th year of its grant program; approximately \$1 million has been awarded annually.

APPLICANT AND GRANT GUIDELINES

A. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- The applicant must be a community-based nonprofit organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. "Community-based" is defined as an organization which has a physical location in California (not an on-line entity) and provides direct services primarily to people with disabilities and/or within the community in which the organization is located.

B. GRANT REQUEST PURPOSES

- Grants are designed to further projects and programs which improve existing services or technology, or develop new services or technology, related to communications access for people and communities in California. The following priorities have been identified for 2015:
 - **Start-Up Funding:** New projects primarily designed to support services which improve or enhance the overall and general ability and effectiveness of people with disabilities and/or seniors to communicate, using spoken, written, or signed communication.
 - **Scaling Support:** Programs already in place which provide communication-related services or use technology to address communications needs, but which need support in order to expand. Equipment can be included in this priority. Supportive services may be included to enable and optimize the use of communications-enhancing equipment.
 - **Increase Access:** Projects that enable or increase access to services currently offered by community based organizations. The activities here develop, improve or apply communications-related technology to address the needs of people with disabilities attempting to receive services offered by community based organizations. This would include technology related to the communications aspect of receiving services in person or over the telephone.
 - **New Technology:** The development of new technologies to improve communication which may need additional support to be disseminated into the community.
- DCF will consider both project-specific requests and project staffing. There will be a 20% matching requirement towards the total grant project. General operating costs, such as buildings, rents, utilities, grant writing, and other indirect costs are not eligible for funding, but these costs may be used to satisfy the match.

C. GRANT REQUEST AND AWARD AMOUNTS

- Grants will range in amounts from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Approximately \$1 million will be available for competitive grants in 2015.

D. GRANT LENGTH/ELIGIBILITY TO RE-APPLY

- DCF awards one-year grants.
- 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).

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. 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.
- During the course of the project or upon completion of the project, the Grantee may be asked to complete a Grants Process Evaluation to provide feedback on the Grantee's experience with the application and funding process.

F. 2015 DCF GRANT SCHEDULE

- Deadline for LOI submission: October 20, 2014
- Announcement of LOI approvals: November 7, 2014
- Deadline for submission of full grant application: December 5, 2014
- Announcement of grant awards: January 15, 2015
- Grant Distribution: Grant awards will be distributed in three installments.
 - 50% will be distributed when grant agreements are signed,
 - 35% will be distributed after a mid-point report has been accepted, and
 - 15% will be distributed after the final project report has been accepted.

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, powered by Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager. Organizations will register in the system and then begin completing the LOI form. Instructions are provided on the [DCF homepage](#) and in the online system, including a downloadable FAQ document.
2. The LOI can be worked on in stages without submitting a final version immediately. The LOI process contains check/drop-down boxes, short answers, brief narrative sections, and the capability for attaching documents.

The deadline for final LOIs submitted on DCF's online grant system for the 2015 grant cycle is Monday, October 20, 2014

3. All LOI applicants will be notified by November 7, 2014 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 form on DCF's online grant management system will be sent at that time.

Summary of LOI Requirements:

- Brief narrative of the proposed project, service, or technology for the requested funding, including general project goals and number of consumers to be served by the project.
- Brief overview of the organization, its programs and services.
- Draft project budget.
- Demographic information about the population served by the organization.
- Total budget for the organization's most recently completed Fiscal Year.
- Statistical information about Board, staff, and volunteers.

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.

Summary of Application Requirements (partial list):

1. History and background of organization.
2. A full description of and a rationale for the proposed project.
3. The impact of the project on the lifestyle and/or independence of the consumers served.
4. A list of the current board of directors and their (professional) affiliations.
5. A list of key staff of the project and their qualifications.
6. Goals and measurable outcomes of the proposed project.
7. A timeline for the project which identifies project milestones.
8. A final budget and a budget narrative of the project.
9. A financial statement that demonstrates the financial viability of the organization (audited financial statements, if available), covering a current 12-month period.
10. Two letters of endorsement.
11. Name and contact information of two (2) other funders who are currently funding (or have funded in the past) significant work of your organization.

Other Agreements of Grant Awards

- **Contractual Agreement:** All grant recipients are required to enter into a contractual agreement with DCF.
- **Grantees' Meeting:** All Grantees will be invited to attend a Grantees' meeting in Oakland, California to present their projects to the DCF Board of Directors and other Grantees in a joint meeting. Costs to attend the meeting will be paid for by DCF.
- **Right to Audit, Make Site Visits & Demand Return of Grant Funds:** DCF reserves the right to audit any and all grant projects for a period of two years after project completion. DCF shall have the option, but not the obligation, to visit the project location(s) on notice given to the grantees ten (10) business days in advance. DCF reserves the right to cease further grant disbursements if it is discovered that grant funds are not used for the awarded project or program or are otherwise used in violation of the grant contract between DCF and the Grantee, and the right to demand the return of any such misused grant funds.