

Program Areas & Grant Listings

The Arts

To enable Bay Area residents to realize the full potential of the arts to build cross-cultural understanding and enrich individual lives.



Jewish Life

To foster a vibrant, inclusive Jewish community in the Bay Area, one that offers opportunities for engagement in Jewish life and that encourages participation in the broader pluralistic society.



Education

To actively engage youth, parents, and the broader community in improving the quality of public education.



Economic Security

To help low-income working adults and families achieve upward mobility and economic security.



Other Grantmaking Interests

In addition to its four program areas, the Fund is also engaged in Legacy and Mission-related Special Grantmaking.

General Guidelines for All Program Areas

Relationship to the Fund's Priorities and Mission

We seek to work with organizations whose missions and/or projects are clearly aligned with the Fund's grantmaking priorities. The Fund's overall priorities are drawn directly from the lives of Walter and Elise Haas (see [About the Fund: Legacy](#)):

- The importance of individuals taking responsibility for society as a whole;
- The value of active community involvement and leadership; and
- The critical role of a healthy and stable nonprofit infrastructure—the organizations that provide the resources, support, and vehicles for engagement.

Our [mission](#) highlights the importance of being connected to, and responsible for, one's community yet we recognize the profound disconnect experienced by individuals, families, and even whole communities. Involvement in one's community provides the basis for identifying and working towards shared goals, and is a requirement for a just and democratic society. However, significant barriers and inequities must be remedied.

Two Interrelated and Mutually Supportive Goals

The Fund's intent is to support program designs that, while addressing specific issues and arenas, also build mutually responsible and productive relationships. We believe that as individuals, families, and communities build these meaningful relationships, they will be better equipped to meet the challenges of everyday life, and as a result, our individual and collective quality of life will be enhanced.

Perspective on Grantmaking

The Fund's Grantmaking reflects a strong set of [values](#). We are particularly interested in:

- Fresh approaches to addressing the Fund's defined program areas;
- Programs that cut across the Fund's defined program areas;
- Organizations that demonstrate excellent leadership, including an actively engaged, contributing board of directors;
- Projects and organizations with multiple sources of support and clear plans for sustaining their work;
- Organizations that can demonstrate a depth of community involvement in their services and activities;
- Organizations that work well with other organizations and institutions; and

- Organizations and programs that consistently gather feedback from constituents, evaluate their work, and incorporate findings in order to strengthen their programs.

The following sections describe the Fund's four main program areas and identify the key themes and strategies within each.

The parameters for a fifth program area, Other Grantmaking Interests—including Legacy and Mission-related Special Grantmaking—also are also outlined, though applications in this area are currently accepted only when invited by the Fund (with one exception--see [Other Grantmaking Interests guidelines](#)).

Grant Programs: The Arts

The purpose of the Arts grantmaking area is to enable Bay Area residents to realize the full potential of the arts to build cross-cultural understanding and enrich individual lives. The program's goals focus on Arts Education, Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Commons, and The Creative Work Fund.

Goal: **Arts Education: To increase creative opportunities for children and youth who otherwise have limited access to studying the arts or to interact with working artists, including:**

- Programs in public schools, led by professional artists and arts educators and addressing state and district arts education standards.
- After-school programs serving immigrant and low-income populations or bringing together young people from a range of backgrounds.
- Programs employing exemplary youth development and youth leadership principles.
- Projects strengthening systems through which arts education programs are delivered to children and youth.
- Programs through which artists share their skills, knowledge, and leadership with children and youth.

Goal: **Preservation of Cultural Heritage: To support preservation of cultural heritage, particularly among recent immigrants. This may include:**

- Programs fostering the preservation and generational transfer of cultural traditions.
- Programs helping to strengthen social networks among recent immigrants through creation and presentation of art.
- Programs increasing public awareness and appreciation of artistic practices of immigrant communities.
- Programs through which artists share their skills, knowledge, and leadership within their culturally distinct communities.

Goal: **Cultural Commons: Fostering shared understanding and a stronger sense of community through participation in the arts.**

- Programs fostering cross-cultural understanding and inclusiveness through innovative forms of presentation, education, and communication.
- Programs that bring together a true cross-section of local residents for shared arts experiences.
- Programs through which artists share their skills, knowledge, and leadership across barriers of age, culture, race, and language.

Goal: **The Creative Work Fund: Fostering partnerships between artists and nonprofit organizations to create new work and engage the public in new ways.**

The Creative Work Fund, a program of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, is supported by grants from the Columbia Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation. For a detailed program description and application information, please see its Web site at creativeworkfund.org.

Grant Programs : Economic Security

The purpose of the Economic Security grantmaking area is to help low-income working adults and families achieve upward mobility and economic security . The program's goals focus on increasing incomes and assets, achieving economic benefits for low-income people from neighborhood economic development activities, and building social and professional networks.

Goal: **Incomes: To help low-income adults and families meaningfully increase their incomes and strengthen their social and professional networks.**

- Programs that provide targeted training to move low-skilled workers along identified career paths in a specific industry sector or set of occupations, resulting in family-sustaining incomes. Programs must be developed in partnership with business and should encourage business practices that support the advancement of entry-level workers.
- Programs to improve access to services and subsidies that increase the incomes or reduce the expenses of low-wage workers.
- Programs that expand personal and professional networks through mentoring, internships, coaching, or other methods.
- Programs that develop leadership skills, encourage mutual support, and cultivate a sense of social responsibility among participants.
- Research and policy work to evaluate and support these kinds of activities.

Goal: **Assets: To help low-wealth adults and families gain the financial assets and create the social networks that support long-term economic security.**

- Programs that teach financial planning and increase access to financial institutions and products.
- Programs that promote individual savings and investment.
- Programs that assist entrepreneurs to establish and grow micro-businesses.
- Programs that expand personal and professional networks through mentoring, coaching, or other methods.
- Programs that develop leadership skills, encourage mutual support, and cultivate a sense of social responsibility among participants.
- Research and policy work to evaluate and support these kinds of activities.

Goal: **Economic Development: To ensure that economic development activities in and near low-income neighborhoods result in income and asset gains for low-income residents and small business owners.**

- Programs that develop leadership skills and an understanding of economic development processes among affected residents and business owners.
- Programs that engage local businesses and residents in the design of economic development projects to ensure that appropriate community benefits are achieved, particularly employment, ownership, and business opportunities.
- Community development projects that are creating income, assets and/or ownership opportunities for low-income residents and business owners.
- Research and policy work to evaluate and support these kinds of activities.

Grant Programs: Education

The goal of the education program area is to actively engage youth, parents, and the broader community in improving the quality of public education. Four grantmaking strategies support this goal:

Goal: Youth Leadership: To encourage youth leadership on educational issues, this strategy will advance a variety of high-quality youth development programs—based within or outside of schools—that specifically address quality issues in education. These may include:

- Programs that support students developing their own voices and abilities to act directly on their own behalf, and on the behalf of other students.
- Programs that broaden youth opportunities to develop meaningful connections with young people and adults outside of their own communities.

Goal: Parent Organizing: To support parent organizing activities that seek to improve educational quality. Parent activities may be led by organizations external to the school system or they may be initiated within the public schools, including:

- Programs and projects that actively engage parents in improving the quality of education. Such efforts should foster meaningful relationships among parents, teachers, and/or other community members.
- Activities and organizations that creatively engage non-English-speaking and otherwise isolated parents.

Goal: Community Partnerships: To develop effective community partnerships in support of education, this strategy seeks to mobilize the broader community—area businesses, congregations, community organizations, and/or neighborhood residents in support of public schools. Such efforts may originate within the school district or be fostered by outside entities and might include:

- Efforts to establish new partnerships on behalf of education.
- Programs that leverage volunteer, material, and financial resources.
- Other activities that reflect a shared, broad-based commitment to improving public school quality.

Goal: School Partnerships with the Community: To assist teachers, principals, and schools to be more strategic in utilizing parent, student, and community support. Priority will be given to programs reflecting collaboration between school districts or school sites and community-based organizations. These may include:

- Programs that increase the receptiveness of schools to constructive external involvement and support, and increase the effectiveness of such support.
- Projects to facilitate conversations among school staff and community members to identify shared interests and mitigate concerns, provide training in cross-cultural communication, or changes to the physical school environment that make campuses more welcoming.

Grant Programs: Jewish Life

The purpose of the Jewish Life program is to foster a vibrant, inclusive Jewish community in the Bay Area, one that offers opportunities for engagement in Jewish life and that encourages participation in the broader pluralistic society. This purpose will be achieved through the following funding goals and strategies:

Goal: **Promoting Diversity:** To promote a Jewish community accepting of its diversity and better able to harness the strength that results from a diverse population.

- To support efforts to create an inviting and inclusive environment for interfaith families seeking a place within the Jewish community.
- To support programs that recognize, embrace and serve the diversity of religious perspectives, gender, sexual orientation, race, and class within the Jewish community.
- To support organizations that provide opportunities for dialogue and discussion among disparate segments of the Jewish community about areas of connections and difference.

Goal: **Creative Expression:** To foster creative expression of the American Jewish experience as a distinct community within a multi-cultural and open society.

- To support arts organizations that give voice to, comment upon, and foster understanding of the Jewish experience in a pluralistic society.
- To support organizations that are developing new ideas and non-traditional opportunities for engaging with Jewish ideas, texts, or values.

Goal: **Building Partnerships:** To foster rich partnerships and build secure bridges between the Jewish community and other communities.

- To support Jewish-based organizations that engage broad participation by Jews and non-Jews in working toward social and economic justice for all Americans.
- To encourage the collaboration of the Jewish community with other faith traditions to promote shared values and commitment to service for the greater good.
- To foster Jewish participation in supporting the aspirations and needs of recent immigrants.
- To combat prejudice against and promote acceptance of the Jewish community and other vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and communication.

Goal: **New Leadership:** To cultivate, recognize and reward Jewish leadership that is best able to accept, understand, and shape change.

- To provide opportunities for leadership development within Jewish organizations that fit within our strategic vision.
- To strengthen key organizations so that they can respond to change.

Grant Programs: Other Grantmaking Interests

In addition to its four program areas (Arts, Economic Security, Jewish Life, and Education), the Fund is also engaged in **Legacy** and **Mission-related Special Grantmaking**. Legacy grantmaking encompasses several programs, each of which has a direct relationship to the Fund's founders, Walter and Elise Haas. Mission-related Special Grantmaking provides the Fund flexibility to respond to emerging and changing community needs, and to address key areas of interest that cut across or otherwise support the Fund's overall mission and categorical programs. **Please note that, with one exception (San Francisco Parks), unsolicited letters of inquiry and proposals are not accepted in this program area.**

Legacy Grantmaking:

- *San Francisco Parks*: A small percentage of the Fund's grantmaking budget will be allocated to exceptional community engagement initiatives that support and improve San Francisco's parks and open space because of Walter and Elise Haas's strong interest in this area (letters of inquiry are accepted);
- *Annual Grants*: A limited number of grants will be provided to organizations supported by Walter and/or Elise Haas during their lifetimes;
- *Jewish Community Federation*: In recognition of Walter Haas's leadership of, and commitment to, the Federation as an umbrella source of support for the Jewish community, the Fund makes a significant contribution to the Federation's annual campaign. This leadership gift complements the Fund's own Jewish Life program.
- *Descendent Grants*: In recognition of Walter and Elise Haas's belief in engaging future generations in philanthropy, a small percentage of the Fund's grantmaking is reserved for descendent-initiated grants.
- *End-of-year Grants*: Carrying on a family tradition, the Fund makes a number of small grants to organizations that serve very low-income families and individuals; most of these grants are designed to address some of the special needs that arise during the holiday season.

Mission-Related Special Grantmaking:

In keeping with our mission and values, the Fund will continue to be an active participant in both our geographic community, and in the philanthropic and nonprofit communities. Most of our active engagement will fall within one or more of the Fund's primary program areas. We recognize, though, that there may be a relatively small number of special projects—consistent with the Fund's mission, values, and overall strategy—in which we will choose to participate. Such projects, for example, might involve advancing the effectiveness and accountability of philanthropy, or be in response to extraordinary opportunities or crises facing critical community institutions and organizations.

Mission-related Special Grants are initiated by Staff and Board; letters of inquiry and proposals are not accepted.