



County of Marin Community Service Fund Program Application Form

Application Date March 31, 2020

Fiscal Year July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Organization Information

Full Legal Name: LITA (Love is the Answer)

Organization URL: www.litamarin.org

Mission/purpose of your organization:

LITA's mission is to improve the quality of life for persons living in skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities, and retirement residences throughout Marin. Since 1975, LITA has provided friendship and community connection to those older adults. Our 100+ volunteers visit with residential care facility residents who otherwise would have no regular visitors. Many volunteers also bring pets to spread warmth throughout the facility. Our school program connects 8 elementary school classes for monthly activities with residents throughout the school year, and our music program brings amateur musicians to facilities for playing and interacting with residents.

While loneliness and social isolation are not the primary causes of health issues in older people, a growing number of studies show they do contribute significantly to a decline in cognition and well-being. LITA's purpose, to reduce loneliness and isolation for older adults, is needed more now than ever.

Grant Request Information

Program/Project Name: Homebound Buddies Pilot Program with Whistlestop

Summary of how County funds would be used for project:

The grant will cover a portion of expenses for a 6-month pilot program in partnership with Whistlestop to have volunteers make weekly visits to some of their homebound clients in the Nourish program.

Amount Requested Dollar: The grant will cover a portion of expenses for a 6-month pilot program in partners

Total Project Cost: \$8,659.00

Description of the proposed project/program, including the proposed project's goal(s), and the nature of the costs in specific terms, i.e. materials, labor costs, etc. Specifics of how the requested County funds will be used.

LITA has been making personal friendship matches for over 45 years. For even longer, Whistlestop has been promoting the wellbeing and independence of older adults. Our two organizations are combining our strengths with the goal of determining if having a volunteer friend visit once a week might positively impact the wellness of homebound, isolated, older adults.

Homebound Buddies is a 6-month pilot program during which LITA will recruit and train 10-15 volunteers on best practices in visiting and befriending 10-15 homebound clients of Whistlestop Nourish, a program that provides home-delivered meals to individuals living with chronic or life-threatening illnesses.

Whistlestop will identify for LITA their Nourish clients who are particularly isolated and lonely. Trained LITA volunteers will then visit the residents each week for about an hour. At the start of the visits, LITA will use a well-being survey that includes items from the UCLA Loneliness and Geriatric Depression scales. After three months, and again at six months, the residents will retake the same questionnaire in order to help Whistlestop and LITA document any changes in the residents' physical, emotional or mental wellbeing. An epidemiologist from UCSF, who is donating his time, has designed the survey and will analyze the results to help the organizations document changes in the well-being of the residents. These results can in turn be used to demonstrate the efficacy of the pilot and support other funding proposals to continue the program.

The project costs are primarily in staff time to recruit, train and support the volunteers and to create the supporting materials, which neither organization has, for a new program. There are also some costs for staff travel to match the residents and volunteers as well as produce the reference materials for the volunteers and run background checks on the volunteers.

List of all community interests that will be affected by the proposed project/program and the public benefit to be derived from it:

Erika Vaughn, Whistlestop’s Manager Nutrition Services, knows that “Homebound Buddies will provide vulnerable older adults in Marin County who are living with chronic or life-threatening illnesses with weekly opportunities for social interaction with friendly volunteers. The program will serve as an important message that the people in our community care about one another and are taking time to express understanding and compassion for those who are ill and often live alone. “

A large portion of homebound county residents see no one on a weekly basis. The program will aim to reduce the health risks of such social isolation which include higher mortality rates, high blood pressure, depression, and Alzheimer’s Disease. According to data from Marin County’s Aging and Adult Services Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Older Adult Needs Assessment 15% of the County’s older adults eat alone all of the time (considered a marker of possible social isolation) and women are three times as likely to eat alone all of the time than men.

Thus not only will this program bring friendship and connection to those community members and the volunteers, there may also be ancillary benefits to the local healthcare community. The risk of social isolation is growing exponentially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which makes funding for programs such as this one even more urgent. Homebound Buddies will be assessed after its initial six-month pilot period to determine effectiveness and implement any changes warranted.

The total amount received for the past three fiscal years:

Year	Amount	Project
2018 - 2019		
2017 - 2018	\$2,000.00	Bridging Thru Music
2016 - 2017		

List of County funding received for this project or others.

FY 2019-2020 Measure A County Parks: Building Community for the Isolated: Neighbors, Friends and Seniors in the Parks - \$5,125

Project/program can be completed if amount received is less than requested amount of Community Service funds.

Applicants are encouraged to leverage funding from other non-County sources, and priority will be given to requests that represent no more than 50% of total project cost. To demonstrate all sources of project funding, including other County sources, please provide a project/program budget below. Please fill in as applicable, and round to the nearest dollar.

Project Funding Sources	Funding Agency	Funding Requested	Received	Notes
County CSF		\$3,500	\$0	<i>If we receive less we will try to get more ind don</i>
Federal Grant				
State Grant				
Individual Contributions		\$3,659	\$2,000	<i>It is an uncertain donor environment with Covid19</i>
Other Local Agencies				
In kind services		\$1,500	\$1,500	<i>UCSF Epidemiologist to design & analyze surveys</i>
Other				
Total Sources		\$8,659	\$3,500	
Project Expenses		Budgeted	Spent to Date	Notes
Personnel Costs		\$8,109	\$0	<i>Could reduce # of pilot partcpts to cut budget</i>
Services and Supplies		\$550		
Capital				
Other				
Total Expenses		\$8,659	\$0	