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[Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority](#)

## **2020 Urban Grant Program**

Deadline: [7/1/2020](#)

**Bay Area Older Adults, Inc.**

# **Bay Area Older Adults' Back to Nature Program**

Jump to: [Project Description](#) [Documents Upload](#)

**\$ 18,550.00** [Requested](#)

[Submitted: 6/29/2020 6:16:05 PM \(Pacific\)](#)

### **Project Contact**

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### **Additional Contacts**

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[EIN](#) [80-0286918](#)

## **Project Description** [top](#)

### **Applicant Type**

#### **1. What type of organization is this?**

- Public Agency
- School or School District
- 501(c)3 Nonprofit
- Eligible organization acting as Fiscal Sponsor for another organization

#### **2. Does the application include a fiscal sponsor?**

*If the project includes a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor must be the applicant.*

- YES
- NO

### **Overview**

**3. Which type of grant are you requesting?**

- Small (\$10,000 - \$39,999)
- Large (\$40,000 - \$250,000)

**4. Grant category (check all that apply)**

- Environmental Stewardship and Restoration
- Parks, Trails, and Public Access
- Environmental Education
- Urban Agriculture / Food Systems

**5. Type of project (check all that apply)**

- Capital improvement (Large projects only)
- Planning
- Program

**6. Project Location: Address / Neighborhood**

*What is the physical location of the project? If there is no physical location, please enter "N/A." If the project will be in multiple locations, please list all. Note: project location(s) must be within the Authority's jurisdiction.*

This program takes senior citizens on educational walks in the closed Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) properties below over a one-year time period.

OSA properties: Blair Ranch, Coyote Ridge, North Coyote Valley, Diablo Foothills, Little Uvas Creek and Palassou Ridge

**7. Project Location: Open Space Authority District (check all that apply)**

*A detailed map of the Authority Districts can be found under the Library tab, or online at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/public-information/board-of-directors.html>.*

- Authority District 1
- Authority District 2
- Authority District 3
- Authority District 4
- Authority District 5
- Authority District 6
- Authority District 7

**8. Who does the project serve? Please indicate which Open Space Authority Districts are served (check all that apply)**

*A detailed map of the Authority Districts can be found under the Library tab, or online at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/public-information/board-of-directors.html>.*

- Authority District 1
- Authority District 2
- Authority District 3
- Authority District 4
- Authority District 5
- Authority District 6
- Authority District 7



## 9. Project Abstract

*(Brief, 3-4 sentences)*

Senior citizens are even more socially isolated and less likely than before to access our local parks due to the fear of COVID-19. Bay Area Older Adults' Back to Nature Program takes a small group of seniors out to our precious green spaces that are not open to the general public. After they have spent months sheltering at home, this program will reinvigorate seniors through socialization, physical activity and multisensory engagement with nature to nurture them back to good health.

## Project Planning (20 points)

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### 10. Describe the proposed project.

In our county, 50% of older adults live in poverty and are likely to be sedentary and 68% are obese, increasing their risk of diabetes, heart disease and colon cancer. Due to the high level of poverty, obesity and sedentary lifestyle, 92% of older adults have at least one chronic health condition and 77% have two or more. This leads a lower quality of life and institutionalization for seniors and to higher community healthcare costs. We can turn this around with a program that offers positive, safe, outdoor physical activity and socialization.

Bay Area Older Adults (BAO) attracts twice as many seniors who live alone than the county's general senior population (40% vs 20%). Social isolation among older adults is a major national issue because of its adverse impact on health and well-being. There is strong scientific evidence indicating social isolation causes a 50% increase in mortality rates of older adults. One important goal of BAO's Back to Nature Program is to build and nourish each senior's social network to support them through medical crises and loss of loved ones.

Senior citizens are the most vulnerable population to COVID-19 infection and death. They have been isolating at home more than any other age group. They have not been visiting our parks because they feel unsafe due to the huge increase in park usage and park overcrowding which prevents them from keeping a safe distance from others. The safest way to do this is by organizing the walks at parks that are closed to the public so the seniors will be able to physically distance and will not be in contact with other people who do not wear face masks on the trails.

To further protect seniors during the COVID-19 crisis, we will restrict the number of participants to nine and will implement a detailed COVID-19 Safety Plan (see attached). Each half-day program is tailored to the needs of the population we serve. BAO customizes the walks in terms of distance, pace and terrain, and there is one CPR, first-aid trained staff for every three seniors for safety. During the walk, participants enjoy a multisensory experience delivered by expert guides that will teach the group about birds, watersheds, trees, plants, insects and more. Another goal is to increase awareness of their natural environment, so they understand the importance of conserving our urban green spaces and advocating for environmental protection projects. At the end of the walk is a nutritious picnic lunch that promotes socialization. The Measure Q funding will help support 10 programs over a one-year period.

### 11. Describe key project deliverables and estimated completion dates.

3/13/20 – 6/9/20: Scoped out Diablo Foothills, Palassou Ridge, Little Uvas Creek, North Coyote Valley, Upper Uvas Creek, Croy Redwoods to assess which trails are suitable for seniors

9/24/2020 – 10/8/2021: BAO will obtain required permits and permissions, organize special hike guides and develop program evaluation surveys

12/5/2020 – 10/8/2021: BAO will promote and register seniors for walks; BAO personnel and volunteers will pre-hike all planned trails, create original educational material and arrange transportation and food

2/10/2021 – 12/15/2021: At the end of each walk, ensure participants complete survey, collect and aggregate data for tracking goals and grant reporting requirements

**12. Does this project require permission, permits, or other approvals? If so, please describe the status of these.**

Our expectation is that once COVID-19 Shelter in Place Order allows groups of 12 or more people from different households to gather for outdoor recreational activities subject to safety limitations, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) will allow our group access to their closed preserves. We will secure permits from OSA's Annelise Dok as soon as possible. We will coordinate logistics such as gate lock combinations and porta potties with Teri Rogoway and Gavin Comstock as needed. Please refer to our attached COVID-19 Safety Plan. Please note that if the COVID-19 Shelter in Place order prevents us from implementing the in-person outdoor program, we already have a plan to implement multisensory virtual programs until the order is lifted.

**13. What is the lifetime of this project? If applicable, describe plans for operating and maintaining the project in the future.**

N/A

**14. Describe the project's readiness for implementation.**

BAO has been offering hiking programs customized for seniors since 2012. Thus far, we have taken more than 4500 seniors who have walked more than 13,600 miles in more than 30 parks throughout Santa Clara County. BAO has a well-developed program, process and strong working relationship with Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority. BAO's experienced staff and volunteers manage the events and are CPR and first aid trained. BAO has well-established print and online advertising channels that reach more than 90,000 older adults and their caregivers each month. BAO has successfully developed curriculum about the wildlife, watersheds, cultural history and other aspects of the natural environment and offers a multisensory educational experience. We have already scoped out the preserves and specific trails to ensure they are accessible to older adults. We have already developed our COVID-19 Safety Plan (attached). Assuming COVID-19 Shelter in Place order has been modified to allow small groups of people from different households to walk together outdoors and/or OSA gives us the permission to access their closed properties, BAO will be ready to start the first program on October 28, 2020. Please note that if the COVID-19 Shelter in Place order prevents us from implementing the in-person outdoor program, we already have a plan to implement multisensory virtual programs until the order is lifted.

**Project Budget (15 points)**

**15. Budget Summary - Grant Request**

*This is a budget summary only; a detailed Project Budget must be submitted using the Documents Upload tab. Please enter dollar amount. Note: after the application is submitted, the software will automatically add a TOTAL.*

\$16,000	Grant request: Personnel
0	Grant request: Contracted Services
0	Grant request: Supplies / Materials
\$2,550	Grant request: Other Direct Costs
0	Grant request: Indirect Costs
18,550.00	<b>TOTAL</b>

**16. Budget Summary - Matching Funds**

*This is a budget summary only; a detailed Project Budget must be submitted using the Documents Upload tab. Please enter dollar amount. Note: after the application is submitted, the software will automatically add a TOTAL.*

\$28,018.41	Total Matching Funds
28,018.41	<b>TOTAL</b>

## 17. Budget Narrative

*Provide a brief budget narrative to explain the expenses listed in each of the budget categories (e.g. Personnel).*

Personnel includes FTE costs for staff and volunteers and benefits as described in detail in the Project Budget. FTE costs are for overall administrative and program oversight (Executive Director); program coordination and execution with partners & volunteers, curriculum development, safety plan implementation, project evaluation, contract compliance and project-related accounting (COO, Program Coordinator); development of multisensory education and hike guide (Expert Hike Guide). Benefits include payroll taxes, health insurance and workers compensation for the percentage of hours allocated to the grant. Supplies and materials include those required to maintain client safety and health such as reusable face masks and hand sanitizer. Other direct costs include lunch and bottled water, van rental, van insurance, van gas and mileage driven by volunteers and BAO staff by car. Indirect costs are not being charged to the grant.

## Project Goals (15 points)

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### 18. Describe the specific problems, issues, or unserved needs the project will address.

The Target Population and their Pressing Socioeconomic Problems: More than 21% of the population (387,500) is currently age 60+ in Santa Clara County of which 77% have more than one chronic disease and 50% live in poverty. More than 40% of the seniors served by Bay Area Older Adults (BAO) live alone and are socially isolated. Since March 2020, seniors have been isolating at home more than any other age group which has compounded the already existing problem. All of the aforementioned socioeconomic factors lead to depression.

The Cost of the Problem: Social isolation among older adults is one of the major national issues because of its adverse impact on health. Strong scientific evidence indicates social isolation causes a 50% increase in premature death as well as a high incidence of depression, increased dementia, risk for re-hospitalization and falls. The average annual direct cost of depression for a single patient is more than \$12,200. These health problems and costs are preventable.

BAO's Solution: Scientific studies indicate social support is one of the most important contributors to a higher quality of life, health and wellness for older adults and prevents them from being institutionalized. Safe, social walking in nature programs like BAO's Back to Nature Program can improve seniors' social well-being and physical and mental health. The safest way to get seniors back out to our green spaces is to avoid the overcrowded parks filled with others not wearing face masks, and take them to parks closed to the public. To further protect seniors from COVID-19 infection, BAO will restrict the number of participants to nine and will implement a detailed COVID-19 Safety Plan (see attached). Each half-day program is tailored to the physical needs of the older adults. BAO customizes the walks in terms of distance, pace and terrain, and there is one CPR, first-aid trained staff for every three seniors for safety. At the end of the walk is a picnic lunch during which participants can socialize and expand their social safety net. Furthermore, since some of the closed preserves are far from residential areas, transportation from one or two accessible central locations will be provided. For examples of how BAO's walking program addresses the needs of seniors, please refer to the attached letter of support from Marie Manning and document called BAO BTN Stories Quotes & Photos.

### 19. How does this project serve the community?

*These metrics are required for all projects. Project-specific metrics can be added under Question 20 below. Note: after the application is submitted, the software will automatically add a TOTAL that will not be used.*

90	Number of people served
0	Number of youth served (under 18 years)
10	Number of programs provided
100.00	<b>TOTAL</b>

**20. In what other ways does the project serve the community? Please list the project-specific goals (both social and environmental).**

*Please list any additional goals and how they will be measured (e.g. surveys, field measurements, attendance sheets, etc.).*

The project serves the community by improving the health and quality of life of older adults, reducing our county's healthcare costs and enabling seniors safe access to our parks. By developing their connection to local parks and nature and raising their awareness of environmental issues, habitats and wildlife, this project is grooming environmental stewards and advocates who can pass this knowledge to the youth and adults they interact with at home and in the community.

This is a list of quantitative and qualitative project specific goals:

- Seniors tracked with attendance sheets. The goal is 90 participants.
- Goal is 270 miles walked by all participants (cumulative).
- The total number of events is 10.
- Percentage of participants reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the program will be tracked by survey. The goal is at least 90%.
- Percentage of participants who have increased their knowledge of nature and/or climate resilience will be tracked via quiz questions. The goal is at least 75% of questions will be answered correctly.
- Qualitative feedback describing how the program has affected individuals personally will be received via email. The goal is to have at least three testimonials.
- Photos will be taken at each event with the goal to create and post 10 photo albums on the BAO website.

**Impact (15 points)**

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**21. Describe the lasting impact of the project.**

The project has a lasting impact on the health of humans for current and future generations. Most immediately, the program will improve participants' quality of life, reduce their risk of developing and manage chronic diseases such as depression and reduce our county's healthcare costs. For example, the average annual direct cost of depression to our community as a whole is more than \$12,200 per patient. Secondly, by developing seniors' connection to local open spaces and nature and learning the importance of protecting land from industrial and residential development, this project is grooming older adults to become environmental stewards and advocates. Specifically, they will learn that preserving the land is important for wildlife especially threatened and endangered species; for agriculture and our food supply; for protecting our water supply by ensuring groundwater recharge; and for nature-based recreational use and education. They will pass this knowledge to the youth and adults they interact with at home and in the community. In this way, multiple generations will learn why land conservation is so important and not to waste our natural resources.

**Community Engagement / Stakeholder Support (10 points)**

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**22. Describe the community support and/or community engagement process.**

*Please submit letters using the Documents Upload tab.*

Regarding community engagement, BAO will work with many community organizations to promote the program. We have a well-established method for outreach to more than 90,000 older adults and their caregivers each month which has proven track record of success. The growth of our hiking program from serving fewer than 100 older adults in late 2012 to having now served more than 4500 seniors is a testament to our methods of community engagement. We work with local city and county officials, other nonprofit organizations and local businesses to advertise the programs online, in print and in person.

Please refer to letters of community support from Marie Manning (HHP participant), Heidi McFarland (Full-time Faculty, West Valley College Park Management Program) and Tracey Gott (Community Services Manager, City of Sunnyvale). Please refer to attached BAO BTN Stories Quotes & Photos for more examples.

## Leadership & Innovation (10 points)

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### 23. Describe how this project employs innovative approaches or encourages collaboration and partnerships.

*If there are project partners, please upload partner letters on the Documents Upload tab.*

BAO's innovative program focuses on the three critical determinants of good health - socialization, outdoors physical activity tailored to their abilities, and nutritious food. Evidence shows "green exercise" leads to a higher degree of positive short and long-term health outcomes than exercising indoors. In contrast, physical activity programs at senior and community centers and other recreational facilities are all indoors.

The multisensory educational approach is also innovative. For example, participants hear the sounds of the local birds and creeks as well as smell and touch native plants.

The approach is an innovative way of improving seniors' health. Traditional healthcare uses testing to detect or monitor problems and recommends behavioral changes counting on individuals to have the discipline to follow through. BAO's Back to Nature Program helps participants make behavioral changes in a supportive group setting that has a relatively low upfront cost, enabling them to stay living independently and improving their quality of life in a joyful rather than prescriptive way.

Regarding collaboration, to be successful, BAO must collaborate with many local city and county officials, libraries, community and senior centers, retiree and other nonprofit organizations and local businesses such as newspapers to advertise the program in-person, online and in print. Because of these partnerships, we reach more than 90,000 older adults and their caregivers each month.

## Organizational Capacity (15 points)

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### 24. Briefly describe the organization and its ability to successfully implement this project. This might include successful past projects, key staff qualifications, financial resources, etc.

*If the applicant is a Fiscal Sponsor, please describe both the Fiscal Sponsor and the sponsored organization.*

Past Success: BAO was established in 2009 and serves more than 46,000 older adults and their caregivers each year through a diverse set of educational and physical activity programs. BAO has successfully developed and delivered its flagship Healthy Hikes Program (HHP) since late 2012, taking more than 4500 seniors to more than 30 parks. Over the years, HHP has been supported by funds from private foundations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private donations. Past funded walking programs surpassed goals set for both service levels and outcomes performance on our two Santa Clara County, two Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and one City of San Jose grant (refer to Tracey Gott's letter). For Santa Clara County, we surveyed 133 seniors and 90% said that the program was a catalyst for increasing their physical activity and social connections, and everyone agreed that the hikes increased their knowledge of local parks. For a history of BAO's accomplishments, recommendations by leaders in the community and media coverage, please visit <https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/press> and for a 2015 article about the HHP, please see [https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/content/2-2015\\_SJMercuryNewsBAOHikes.pdf](https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/content/2-2015_SJMercuryNewsBAOHikes.pdf)

Key Staff Qualifications: Nusrat Khaleeli, COO, has a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from The Johns Hopkins University and J.D. from Santa Clara University. She has 16 years of experience managing for-profit and non-profit programs. She has been responsible for all of BAO's program coordination, execution, evaluation, compliance and accounting for eight years. Anne Ferguson, Executive Director and Founder, has a Ph.D. in Genetic Engineering from UC Santa Diego, completed her American Cancer Society postdoctoral fellowship at The Johns Hopkins Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center and has an M.B.A. specializing in Finance and Entrepreneurship from San Jose State University. She has 19 years of experience managing non-profit and for-profit programs. She has been responsible for managing BAO for the past 12 years.

All of our HHP guides are CPR and first aid trained. Three of them have more than eight years of experience leading or supporting safe hikes. Michael Hundt, who will be co-leading the walks, is a certified California

Naturalist who has been leading walks for Open Space Authority and Henry Coe State Park for nine years.

### **BONUS POINTS: Underserved Communities (10 points)**

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**25. Describe how the project addresses open space needs for sensitive populations such as residents of park-poor neighborhoods, underserved or disadvantaged communities, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, or is located within a Deep Engagement Community (DEC).**

*This question is optional; please answer if applicable, otherwise enter "N/A." A map of the DECs can be found by clicking on "Apply" at <https://www.openspaceauthority.org/urban>.*

Our best estimate is that 57% of the older adults who will be served by this grant live in either Deep Engagement Communities (DEC) 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 or park-poor neighborhoods. One hundred percent of the participants will be seniors. As mentioned previously, 77% of older adults have more than one chronic illness and 50% live in poverty. More than 40% of the seniors served by Bay Area Older Adults (BAO) live alone and are socially isolated.

### **BONUS POINTS: Community Building (10 points)**

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**26. Describe how this project actively encourages community building by engaging or accommodating local residents in novel and creative ways.**

*This question is optional; please answer if applicable, otherwise enter "N/A."*

BAO's vision is to create sustainable communities of older adults who participate in healthy activities together, socialize and support each other. One goal of this project is to build a supportive community of seniors based on their positive experience with nature and each other. Some quotes from participants (below) emphasize this point:

"BAO has added a dimension to my life that I was lacking. Belonging to BAO has had the effect of feeling like there was a place I could go where "everybody knew my name," like a family. It has become a vital part of the community of people I've come to know. It fills my calendar...my mind...and my heart."

"BAO programs are important to me because they keep me hiking outdoors and socially engaged. As I have gotten older, motivating myself to get out socially is more difficult but BAO makes this easy."

"I moved here 4 years ago while in my 70s and felt isolated until I joined BAO. It gave me a feeling of community and belonging."

Also, our scientific research study with Dr. Patricia Shane, a public health expert (Ph.D. Public Health, UC Berkeley) demonstrated that within six months of joining BAO's program, a majority of program participants reported that the program expanded their social safety net by making up to three lasting social connections they call a friendship and that the social engagement and social activities offered by BAO is either extremely important or important to them.

### **BONUS POINTS: Climate Resilience (5 points)**

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**27. How does this project enhance and/or raise awareness about climate resilience?**

*This question is optional; please answer if applicable, otherwise enter "N/A."*

At each walk, in addition to multisensory education about the wildlife, waterways and history of the parks, we will cover a climate resilience case study from the U.S. government (<https://toolkit.climate.gov/case-studies>) so they understand the different ways our natural environment and communities are impacted by climate change and how we/they can prevent its negative outcomes.

**Documents Upload** [top](#)

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**Documents Requested \***

**Required?Attached Documents \***

<a href="#">Financial Statement</a>	✓ <a href="#">Latest Complete FY Form 990</a>
<a href="#">Project Budget</a> <a href="#">download template</a>	✓ <a href="#">BAO Project Budget for Small Grant</a>
<a href="#">Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement</a> <a href="#">download template</a>	
<a href="#">Site Control Documentation</a> <a href="#">download template</a>	
<a href="#">CEQA Compliance Certification Form</a> <a href="#">download template</a>	
<a href="#">Letters of Support</a>	<a href="#">Letter of Support from Heidi McFarland</a> <a href="#">Letter of Support from Marie Manning</a> <a href="#">Letter of Support from Tracey Gott</a>
<a href="#">Project Partner Letters</a>	<a href="#">Partner Letter from Riley Pendergraft</a>
<a href="#">Maps and Site Plans</a>	
<a href="#">Photographs</a>	<a href="#">BAO Stories Quotes &amp; Photos</a>
<a href="#">Other</a>	<a href="#">BAO COVID-19 Safety Plan</a> <a href="#">BAO Board Resolution</a>

*\* ZoomGrants™ is not responsible for the content of uploaded documents.*

Application ID: 216712

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