



COMPETITIVE GRANTMAKING GUIDELINES

COMPETITIVE GRANTMAKING FOCUS

To drive positive community change through smart, effective grantmaking, we continue to refine our focus and set priorities for the grants we make from our Community Funds. These priorities have evolved over time and now reflect four Results most important to our community's well-being:

1. Children are successful along the education pipeline (cycle 1)
2. People can lead healthy lives (cycle 1)
3. Communities are sustainable, livable and vibrant (cycle 2)
4. Individuals and families are economically secure (cycle 2)

Each Result includes targeted Strategies and proposal deadlines depending on the grant cycle for that Result. Deadlines are noted and updated on our website.

CYCLE 1

Qualifying nonprofit organizations interested in competing for a grant must submit a Brief Proposal online to be considered (see Grant Request Process below for important dates and how to access online application system). Selected Brief Proposals will be invited to move forward in the process.

Brief Proposals submitted in Cycle 1 must address one of the two Results below and focus on one of the associated Strategies:

RESULT 1: *Children are successful along the educational pipeline*

Applications relevant to this Result should focus on one of these two Strategies:

- *Increase high quality early learning opportunities from birth through fifth grade*
- *Increase career and college readiness*

RESULT 2: *People can lead healthy lives*

Applications relevant to this Result should focus on one of these two Strategies:

- *Improve nutrition/healthy food access and increase physical activity*
 - *Improve access to care for vulnerable populations*
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CYCLE 2

Qualifying nonprofit organizations interested in competing for a grant must submit a Brief Proposal online to be considered (see Grant Request Process below for important dates and how to access online application system).

Selected Brief Proposals will be invited to move forward in the process.

Brief Proposals submitted in Cycle 2 must address one of the two Results below and focus on one of the associated Strategies:

RESULT 3: *Communities are sustainable, livable and vibrant*

Applications relevant to this Result should focus on one of these four Strategies:

- *Expand and improve public green space*
- *Improve the natural environment*
- *Further develop vibrant city center for Birmingham*
- *Expand access to arts and cultural opportunities*

RESULT 4: *Individuals and families are economically secure*

Applications relevant to this Result should focus on one of these three Strategies:

- *Improve housing stability*
- *Increase public policy changes that positively impact low-income individuals and families*
- *Increase direct services that positively impact low-income individuals and families*

Grant Request Process:

- Review Questions to Ask Before You Apply and our Limitations and Restrictions (both included in this document)
- First step for eligible applicants is to complete online Agency Profile and Brief Proposal form*
- Check our website for current Brief Proposal deadlines
- Brief Proposal responses will be reviewed and selected applicants will be invited to submit Full Proposals
- Full Proposal instructions and due dates will be provided to invited Brief Proposal applicants
- Site Visits will be conducted after Full Proposal deadline. Site Visit teams are composed of Grant Review and Evaluations Committee members and community volunteers. Specific GREC or site visit team member names are not released to applicants.

* Enter the web address below into your browser to access our online application system:
<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=cfqb>

NOTE: Once you use the link above once, it will convert to an encrypted link. You should bookmark it (or save to 'favorites') on your computer for quick access later. The first time you access the system you will establish your agency account or profile. While you can complete your agency profile anytime, you will only see the Brief Proposal forms during the time period in which it is accepting proposals. *Note: Previous applicants can login to their existing profile.*

Please be advised that we can only accept proposals via the online system; there is no paper option.

GRANT TERMS AND AMOUNTS

Grant Terms: Grants may involve a funding commitment of one to three years depending on the scope and purpose of the grant. Applicants will request a grant term and amount at the Brief Proposal stage; CFGB may adjust the term and amount for applicants advancing to the Full Proposal stage.

Typically, multi-year commitments:

- 1) involve a very active relationship between CFGB and the grantee throughout the duration of the grant
- 2) are made to applicants with a proven track record in delivering programs and services that are clearly relevant to a specific Result Strategy
- 3) require on-schedule reports to maintain the agreement and avoid interruption/cancellation of scheduled grant installments (see Award and Reporting Requirements)

One-year grantees are also expected to work closely with CFGB and report on schedule, but the multi-year grant requires a more sustained commitment. In all cases, applicant organizations should have a proven track record in delivering programs relevant to one or more of CFGB's Result Strategies or should be well-positioned to do so based on the experience and qualifications of key personnel.

Amount to Request: As a general rule, we prefer requests that do not exceed 25% of the budget for the program/project/activity the proposal is seeking support for. This will signal to our committee and board that this proposal has a diversified base of support and some measure of community buy-in.

NOTE: Emerging organizations with documented revenue of less than \$25,000 are limited to requesting a Seed Grant of no more than \$5,000.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Successful applications, in general:

- present a **thoughtful and reasonable project budget** that is of a scale appropriate for the organization, and seeks to partner with CFGB at a reasonable level
- exhibit a good **diversification of funding sources** and seek to match or leverage additional dollars from other sources
- have a **clear sustainability plan**

- include **all financial information requested**
- clearly **address the result strategy**

Collaborations: CFGB encourages collaboration, but we expect collaborative requests to not just be a ‘collective ask’ but a true collaboration, characterized by cost efficiencies and the opportunity to accomplish something none of the partnering agencies could accomplish independently.

Note: Groups considering a collaborative request to CFGB are encouraged to discuss this with Gus Heard-Hughes, Vice President, Programs, prior to submitting a proposal (gheard-hughes@cfbham.org or 205-327-3817).

Evaluation Strategy: CFGB expects a thoughtful strategy to gauge the effectiveness of our investment on both types of grants.

Note: CFGB will work with successful grantees on the final set of indicators that will be tracked during the grant term to evaluate effectiveness of the program/project/activity.

Capital Construction: CFGB will consider support for capital construction projects with an imminent start date and deemed clearly relevant to one of CFGB’s Targeted Result Strategies.

General Operating Support: CFGB does not make grants for general or ongoing operating support. Successful proposals present an opportunity for strategic investment such as building organizational capacity, expanding a successful program, establishing a new program, and launching a policy/systems change project.

Indirect Costs: In order to maximize our charitable donor funds, CFGB does not accept project budgets that include unspecified indirect costs, including flat indirect cost rates. CFGB will consider reasonable administrative expenses provided these expenses are deemed necessary for project success, are presented as specific line items in the project budget, and are justified in a budget narrative.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU APPLY

If your organization has never submitted a proposal for a grant from The Community Foundation, consider the following questions before you apply:

1. Does your nonprofit organization serve the needs of people in Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount or Walker counties?

If you answered **NO**, check the Foundation Center website at <http://foundationcenter.org> and use its Foundation Finder tool to get basic information about other funders (including other community foundations in Alabama) that may be able to consider your request. Grants from our Community Funds can only be made within the greater Birmingham area.

2. Does your nonprofit organization have its 501(c)3 designation from the Internal Revenue Service?

If you answered NO, please do not apply until you have received your official notification of this charitable status. For more information about applying for this status, contact the Alabama Association of Nonprofits, which provides information and training nonprofits.

Note: Churches that meet the requirements of IRC section 501(c)(3) are automatically considered tax exempt and are not required to apply for and obtain recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS. Further, governmental entities are generally eligible to receive a distribution of funds from CFGB, but proof of the applying organization's status as a government entity should be provided.

3. Has your organization recently received a competitively awarded grant from CFGB?

Organizations that have previously received a competitively awarded grant from CFGB are generally expected to complete that grant (all funds expended and all required reporting complete) before they compete for additional funding. This is not an absolute policy; if your organization has an active grant and you feel you have a strong proposal, your organization may submit in any open grant cycle. Keep in mind that active grant status and frequency of funding are factors CFGB considers. Proposals that address a different Result Strategy than your current grant and/or represent a collaborative request will be given stronger consideration.

4. Does my organization need to have a financial audit to be eligible?

For all grants other than Seed Grants, we will require applicants to have a recent financial audit.

Note: Some exceptions may be made based on the term and amount of the grant and the size of the organization; contact Gus Heard-Hughes, Vice President of Programs at 205-327-3817 or gheard-hughes@cfbham.org to discuss

LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS

Geographic area: CFGB considers grant applications only from qualifying nonprofit organizations that provide services in the Greater Birmingham area (Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount and Walker counties).

IRS charitable status: A nonprofit organization must have already been awarded tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or been described as an eligible beneficiary under the IRS Code (e.g. church or governmental entity) prior to applying to CFGB.

School systems: Requests from public school systems must come from the superintendent's office.

Multi-department/branch grantees: Large organizations with many branches or departments (e.g. colleges, universities, YMCA, public libraries) must submit requests from the president's office or the development office.

Multiple submissions:

While organizations may submit more than one grant proposal during a single grant cycle, it is not encouraged. Organizations wishing to submit more than one proposal in a cycle should contact Gus Heard-Hughes, Vice President, Programs at 205-327-3817 or gheard-hughes@cfbham.org in advance of the brief proposal deadline.

Resubmitted proposals: If a proposal submitted to CFGB does not receive funding, it should not be resubmitted to CFGB unless there have been significant changes in either the organization or the proposal.

No grants are made to or for:

- Individuals
- Religious organizations for religious purposes
- National fundraising drives
- Sponsorship of fundraising events
- Political organizations or candidates for public office
- Scholarship or endowment funds
- Debt reduction
- Scholarship or campership programs
- Replacement of government funding cuts
- Organizations that require the services of fiscal agent in order to receive funds
- General operating support (see *Funding Considerations* above)
- Unspecified indirect costs (see *Funding Considerations* above)

Award and Reporting Requirements:

Each successful applicant will be required to sign a funding agreement with the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham before receiving a grant payment.

All grantees are required to work with CFGB staff on a mutually agreed upon evaluation process. In addition, Strategic Partner grantees will be required to meet regularly with CFGB staff to allow for a closer analysis of progress and impact. All grantees must submit a six-month baseline report (reporting baseline data for each indicator in the evaluation plan) and annual progress reports for the duration of the grant.

QUESTIONS?

Please direct any additional questions you may have about the CFGB competitive grantmaking process to Katie Dean, Program Assistant, at kdean@cfbham.org or 205-327-3803. For questions regarding collaboration and multiple submissions, contact Gus Heard-Hughes, Vice President, Programs, at 205-327-3817 or at gheard-hughes@cfbham.org.