

CYCLE 2 • FALL 2026

Competitive Grantmaking Guidelines

The Community Foundation has two grantmaking cycles each year. During each cycle we accept applications in all five of our Priority Areas:

- Thriving Communities
- Economic Opportunity for All
- Equity and Inclusion
- Overcoming Persistent Poverty
- Regional Cooperation

2026 Grants Timeline

Cycle 1 (Spring): Applications closed January 30, 2026. This cycle is now complete.

Cycle 2 (Fall): The Brief Proposal application opens July 27, 2026. The deadline for submitting applications is August 14, 2026, at 11:59 pm. This cycle follows a two-stage process (brief proposal and full proposal stages). For applicants advancing to the full proposal stage, site visits will begin in October, and final decisions will be released in December.

- **July 27** — Brief proposal opens
- **August 14** — Brief proposal deadline, 11:59 pm
- **Late September** — Full proposal invitations
- **October 9** — Full proposal deadline
- **October 12–30** — Site visits
- **December** — Final decisions

Applications must be submitted electronically on the CFGB grant website:

Application Portal: grantinterface.com/Process/Apply?urlkey=cfgb

General Log-In: grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=cfgb

Grant Guidelines

Applicant Restrictions

1. Applicants must be currently designated a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization by the IRS, OR be a 501(c)(3) exempt religious institution, OR be a government entity. Private non-operating foundations are not eligible. Applicants may use a fiscal sponsor only if there is a meaningful mission fit and an existing, working relationship between the two organizations. Please review our fiscal sponsorship guidelines before applying.
2. Applicants must serve Blount, Jefferson, Shelby, and/or St. Clair counties in Alabama.
3. 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.
4. Organizations that received a competitive grant from the Community Foundation in the last grant cycle, or that have an open grant, are not eligible to apply.

Proposal Restrictions

Funding Purpose. If eligible, applicants may request a grant in one of the following three categories:

1. **Strategic Purpose:** These grants can help establish a new program, improve or expand an existing program, increase organizational capacity, meet a new capital need (building, equipment, etc.), restructure due to government funding cuts, and/or launch a policy/systems change effort. Requests should not exceed 25% of the proposed project budget.
2. **General Operating for Emerging Organizations:** Organizations with documented revenue under \$25,000 (based on previous fiscal year) may request a general operating support grant in this category. General operating support is defined as funding to maintain current programs and/or operations.
3. **General Operating Support:** Organizations with documented revenue between \$25,000–\$100,000 (based on previous fiscal year) may request a general operating support grant in this category.

The two general operating categories are the same in substance; they simply give emerging organizations two opportunities to receive general operating support funding as they grow. Eligible organizations (under \$25,000 revenue) may receive General Operating for Emerging Organizations funding one time only. Eligible organizations (\$25,000–\$100,000 revenue) may receive General Operating Support funding one time only. Any grants awarded from 2023 on are counted toward these limits.

Grant Terms

Strategic grants may be requested over a one-, two-, or three-year period based on the scale and schedule of the proposal. General operating grants are limited to one-year terms.

Grant Amounts

- There is no maximum request amount, but in recent years awarded grants have ranged from \$5,000 to \$75,000. The applicant's request and project budget should be reasonable in relation to the applicant's prior revenue, budget, and activities.
- For Strategic Purpose grants, requests should not exceed 25% of the budget for the proposed project. Potential or secured support for the remaining 75% of the budget should be identified.
- Organizations requesting a grant of \$75,000 or greater MUST have an annual or semi-annual independent audit.

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
- Endowment funds
- Debt reduction, with limited exceptions for capital projects
- Academic scholarships
- Regranting to other organizations
- General operating support (funding to maintain current programs or operations) — with the exception of small organizations with under \$100K revenue (see categories above)
- Unspecified indirect costs (may request a portion of funds to support administrative or other indirect costs, but must be presented as specific line items vs. an indirect cost rate/percentage)