evanston!communityfoundation

2020 RESPONSIVE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

OUR MISSION

Helping Evanston thrive now and forever as a vibrant, inclusive, and just community, the Evanston Community Foundation builds, connects, and distributes resources and knowledge through local organizations for the common good.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Evanston Community Foundation makes investments in organizations and projects that advance the following strategic goals:
- An Evanston that is inclusive and equitable for all
- An empowered and engaged community that collaborates across sectors to define problems and work on solutions
- A thriving nonprofit sector

QUALIFICATIONS

- Any group or organization providing services to Evanston residents may apply for a grant. All proposals must address issues, concerns, or opportunities in the Evanston community.
- Applicants must either be 501(c)(3) organizations, schools, government entities, or they must have a fiscal sponsor that qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the IRS.
- Current and former grantees and/or previous applicants to any ECF grants program are eligible and encouraged to apply.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate inclusive practices leading to diversity of their boards, staff, and constituents.
- Applicants must seek diverse funding sources and have a plan to sustain their program beyond the term of the grant.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

- Grants are typically made for one year (July 1 to June 30). A limited number of two-year grants will be awarded for capacity building requests or programs that advance two or more of the above strategic goals.
- Request amount may be between $5,000 and $20,000 for one-year and between $10,000 and $40,000 for two-year grants. Last year, the average one-year grant was $15,000. Grant awards may partially or fully fund a proposal request.
- Requests that are not selected for two-year support will be automatically considered for one-year support for half the requested amount, unless otherwise indicated by the applicant.
- A grant supporting a project that was funded in the previous year may be made in a second or third consecutive year if there are notable enhancements to the project.
- We do not fund general operations, endowments, fundraising events or sponsorship of events, appeals for religious purposes (though faith-based organizations may apply for projects benefitting the general community), or individuals. We are unlikely to fund capital campaigns or one-time conferences, performances, or events.

FUNDING AREAS

We request proposals that address one or more of the Foundation's three external strategic goals, as listed above, representing any aspect of the Evanston community. We have particular interest in work that advances the long-term sustainability of organizations and community efforts.

TYPES OF GRANTS

Capacity building: Organizational initiatives that focus on building infrastructure to support an organization's long-term growth and development to better fulfill its mission (e.g. strategic plans, board development, software upgrades, racial equity audits, revenue-generating staff positions).

Program: Continuing improvements to proven programs or projects, new initiatives, pilot projects, bridge funding, and capstone funding to show long-term impact. We encourage collaboration.

HOW TO APPLY

- The first step is to submit a Letter of Inquiry by Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 11:59pm.
- Selected organizations will be invited by January 31 to submit a full application by February 18 at 11:59pm.
- Grantees will be chosen and informed by May 22.

All application materials must be submitted through GLM: https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ecf.
The questions posed in the Letter of Inquiry and Application are listed at www.evanstonforever.org/responsivegrants. If you need access to a computer or need assistance submitting online, please contact our office at (847) 492-0990.

Letter of Inquiry
- due January 14th, 11:59pm

Response/Invitation for Full Proposal
- January 31

Full Proposal
- due February 18, 11:59pm

Committee Review
- March - April
- Potential follow-up questions

Grantees Chosen/Informed
- Late May
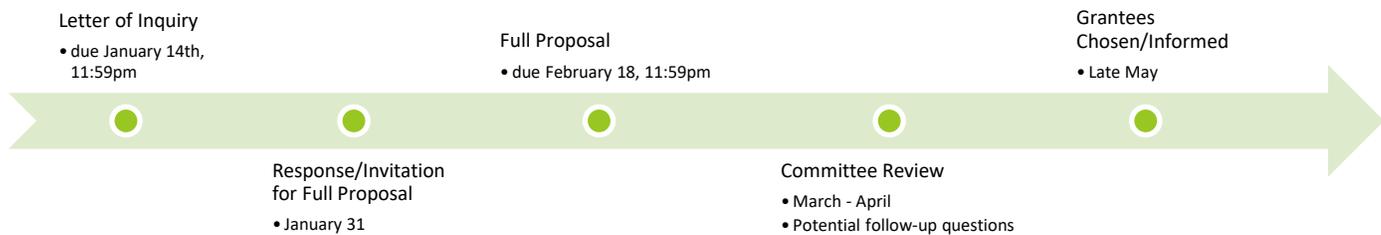
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each proposal submitted to ECF is carefully screened and reviewed by a committee made up of community members. Proposals are assessed according to the following criteria:

1. *ECF Strategic Plan:* To what degree does the grant request further ECF's strategic goals?
   - Equity: An Evanston that is inclusive and equitable for all
   - Collaboration: An empowered and engaged community that collaborates across sectors to define problems and work on solutions. Proposals will be rated according to how well the roles and responsibilities among all collaborative partners are articulated and the strength of documentation supporting the collaboration/partnership
   - Thriving Nonprofit Sector: Build organizations' infrastructure in support of long-term growth, sustainability, and better mission fulfillment

2. *Sustainability:* To what degree is the project likely to be sustainable and "live on" beyond the grant period? How does the organization intend to continue the funded program/project after the Foundation's support ends? Does the organization have philanthropic support from its board or leadership?

3. *Long-term Impact:* Capacity Building: To what degree will the investment strengthen the capacity of the organization to achieve long-term results? Program: To what degree will the project have a long-term impact on Evanston?

4. *Organization Suitability:* Capacity Building: Will it advance the organization's ability to extend its mission?
Program: How well does the organization demonstrate an understanding of the challenge and opportunity in Evanston, specifically the current Evanston resources available and the population served? Does the organization demonstrate their capacity and qualification to undertake this work? Is the organization making steps towards a leadership reflective of the demographics it serves? How does this proposed program fit within their mission?

5. *Goals, Measurement Plan, Timeline:* Are there specific and realistic goals, a basis on which to track progress and measure success, and a reasonable timeline? For two-year proposals, clarity of how and why a multi-year plan better suits this project?

6. *Clear, Realistic Methods and Budget:* Is it clear how this grant will be implemented? Is the implementation plan realistic? If applicable, does the proposal address the recruitment of participants and strategies to break down barriers of participation for underrepresented communities? If applicable, has the organization selected a suitable vendor? Is the project budget appropriate to the goals? Does the organization have a solid plan to fund the remainder of the project?