**Grant Application Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is The Community Foundation interested in funding?**

The Community Foundation is a devoted advocate for the vitality and well-being of the Rappahannock River region.

The Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that manages and distributes charitable giving in the Rappahannock River region. Our goal is to promote greater philanthropy by addressing the challenges faced by donors in a responsible and knowledgeable manner. We distinguish ourselves from other local charities by providing efficient and effective services to build a collection of permanent funds.

We facilitate philanthropy within the counties of Caroline, King George, Stafford, Spotsylvania and the City of Fredericksburg.

The Community Foundation focuses its discretionary resources on critical concerns and promising opportunities in our region as determined by our Board on an annual basis.

The foundation provides funding in many other areas, such as human services and the arts, thanks to the diverse interests of our many donors.

1. **Is my organization or project eligible for funding from The Community Foundation?**

The Community Foundation awards grants to nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status, schools, governmental or religious organizations.

1. **My organization does not have a 501(c)(3), but we do have a fiscal sponsor. Do we qualify for a grant?**

Yes. Please include your fiscal sponsor's 501(c)(3) documentation when submitting your application as well as submit a letter from the fiscal agent indicating that the organization has agreed to serve in that capacity.

1. **Does The Community Foundation fund capital projects?**

The Community Foundation does not generally fund the following:

* Programs outside of Planning District 16
* Capital building expenses
* Fundraising events or event sponsorship
* Endowment funds
* Lobbying
1. **Does The Community Foundation give grants to individuals or businesses?**

No. Outside of our scholarship programs, we only award grants to nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status, or organizations with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

1. **When is the deadline to submit a grant proposal?**

Deadlines vary depending upon the [grants program](http://www.cfrrr.org/apply-for-grants-and-scholarships/grant-programs/) to which you are applying.

1. **Do you provide grants for general operating support?**

Generally, yes, our grants programs provide support for general operations. If your organization is a first-time grant applicant, we are more likely to fund a specific project.

1. **Can we set up a meeting to speak with you about our program before submitting a letter of inquiry or application?**

Often a scheduled phone call can answer grant applicants’ questions. Depending upon staff availability, we are happy to meet with applicants, as needed, to review proposals prior to submission via the on-line grants management system. Contact us at info@cfrrr.org to request a meeting.

1. **Our organization is not located in Planning District 16, but we serve residents in this area. What geographic region does The Community Foundation serve with its grants?**

The Community Foundation was created to serve Planning District 16, which includes the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Community Foundation grant funds support organizations that are located in, or benefit residents of the planning district. Your headquarters may be located elsewhere, but your program must directly serve the people of this region in order to be eligible for a grant.

If you are located outside our service area, visit [Community Foundations of Virginia](http://www.communityfoundationsva.org/) or the [National Community Foundation Locator](http://www.cof.org/community-foundation-locator?menuContainerID=34&crumb=2) to find a community foundation serving your area.

1. **What happens after I submit a letter of inquiry or a proposal?**

Once you submit a letter of inquiry, we will review it for eligibility. If we need further information, the Donor Services Manager will call or email, and may request a site visit. After confirming that your request is a match for one or more grant programs, the Donor Services Manager will invite you to submit a proposal. A brief summary of promising Letter of Inquiry concepts is shared with foundation donors on a quarterly basis.

The Donor Services Manager evaluates competitive grant proposals, and then submits them to a board committee for review and possible approval.

1. **How does The Community Foundation make its funding decisions?**

The Donor Services Committee and volunteer reviewers meet several times each year to review proposals and approve grants. Our committees are comprised of board members and other volunteers who serve without compensation and for rotating terms. They discuss funding requests in a series of confidential meetings at The Community Foundation and weigh the merits of each proposal. The review process, from time of application to time of approval, decline or deferral by our board, typically takes about three months. Each grant opportunity has individual guidelines, which include the review and award schedule for the application.

Letters of inquiry are accepted on a rolling basis, but proposal deadlines vary by grant program.

1. **What happens after my organization receives a grant?**

Once a grant is awarded, we will email a grant agreement and a link to complete on-line reporting to you (or your fiscal sponsor). Read the grant agreement carefully and make note of your responsibilities, then electronically sign and submit it. We will release payment of the grant upon receipt of the agreement, in accordance with the payment schedule and any special conditions spelled out in the grant agreement.

Please keep us informed about your progress and accomplishments. We may schedule a site visit. This is how we gather the information needed to provide accountability to our donors and the community, and how we continue building our relationship with you.

1. **Do you perform site visits?**

Yes. After receiving a formal request, we determine that a meeting or site visit is necessary. We have found that nothing compares to a face-to-face meeting with you, at your program site, to help us understand the impact of your work. If a grant is approved, it is understood that you will be willing to allow us to visit with you afterward wherever your funded project is taking place. The expectations for the visit are that you will talk with us and show us what is happening in your program. The visit usually includes an opportunity to speak with the principal staff members and volunteers as well as with program participants.

1. **Can I get a grant from a Donor Advised Fund?**

Donors that have established charitable funds make grants to nonprofit organizations based on their own areas of interest. Typically, these funds do not accept direct requests from individual nonprofit organizations, but rather will invite an organization to apply.

However, through our in-depth consulting services we share our community knowledge with to individual donors and their families and often act as a matchmaker – connecting philanthropists to local nonprofit organizations.

1. **How should I show gifts from Donor Advised Funds of The Community Foundation on our list of contributors?**

To help spread news of The Community Foundation’s mission and impact and to grow new charitable resources for local nonprofits, we ask that grantees help announce grant programs in the community.

List the name of the fund, followed by “of The Community Foundation.”

For example:

Smith Family Fund of The Community Foundation

Anne Felder Fund of The Community Foundation

1. **How should I recognize grants from competitive grant programs?**

 To help spread news of The Community Foundation’s mission and impact and to grow new charitable resources for local nonprofits, we ask that grantees help announce grant programs in the community.

Please use the following wording in any public announcements and printed materials associated with the grant project:

This project is made possible by a grant from

The *[Name of Fund]* Fund

of The Community Foundation

For example:

This project was made possible by a grant from

The Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund

of The Community Foundation

1. **If a nonprofit is awarded a grant and they can’t meet the deadline for submitting a Progress Report or Final Reports?**

The timely submission of reports is an important part of the grant process and is factored in future grant decisions. Please contact us as soon as possible if you believe you will not be able to submit your progress or final report in a timely manner.

1. **What should a nonprofit do if it needs to modify the grant or budget during the grant period?**

We do not expect you to change the grant program presented in your proposal. If you must for some compelling reason, then seek pre-approval from The Community Foundation as soon as possible. Call or email the Donor Services Manager with any requests for grant modification.

1. **Will The Community Foundation help connect my organization or project to other funding sources through Donor Advised Funds or family funds?**

When communicating with donors about issues and causes in the community, The Community Foundation provides information on organizations and needs in the greater Fredericksburg area that are pertinent and timely. Despite our efforts, we are unable to highlight or focus on every organization that serves our area. Unfortunately, we are unable to assist you in setting up an informational meeting with or distributing information about your organization to donors.

1. **How does the Foundation communicate with nonprofits?**

The best way to stay in touch with The Community Foundation is to sign up for our e-newsletter, using the signup form at the footer of the [www.cfrrr.org](http://www.cfrrr.org) website.

1. **What can my nonprofit do to keep in touch and stay connected with The Community Foundation?**

Your nonprofit can engage in the following:

* Sign up for our mailing list by entering you email in the signup at the footer of this page.
* Visit our website to learn more about the programs we are operating and how to access them, including our [current grant opportunities](http://www.cfrrr.org/apply-for-grants-and-scholarships/grant-programs/).
* Respond to staff requests for updates on your organization’s work, which will inform our work with donor giving circles and philanthropist consulting.
* Follow us on social media.
	+ Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationRRR](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationRRR)
	+ Instagram: [www.instagram.com/community\_found/](http://www.instagram.com/community_found/)
	+ Twitter: [www.twitter.com/Community\_Found](http://www.twitter.com/Community_Found)

1. **Does The Community Foundation offer scholarships?**

Yes. The Community Foundation proudly administers [scholarship funds established by generous donors](http://www.cfrrr.org/apply-for-grants-and-scholarships/scholarships/) to assist students with their educational needs.

1. **What if I have additional Questions?**

If your question is not answered here or in the individual grant guidelines at [www.cfrrr.org](http://www.cfrrr.org), please contact The Community Foundation.

**Donor Services Manager, Casey Hu**

Her office hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am to 4pm

Foundation office hours: Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm

540.373.9292

casey.hu@cfrrr.org

www.cfrrr.org

**Get started!**

**Follow These Steps to a Quality Grant Application.**

The Community Foundation reviews hundreds of grant applications each year. Creating a strong grant application takes thought, research and, most important, time. These tips aim to guide grant writers to build their best application.

1. **Read carefully the grant guideline sections.**
2. **Make sure your organization meets The Community Foundation’s eligibility requirements.**
3. **Talk with a foundation staff about your grant proposal.**We gladly welcome nonprofit staff or board members to contact us. Before submitting an application it can be helpful to talk with foundation staff to receive feedback and advice. A [Letter of Inquiry](http://www.cfrrr.org/apply-for-grants-and-scholarships/grant-programs/) is often the best way to approach the foundation initially.
4. **Plan to meet the right** [**application deadlines**](http://www.hamptonroadscf.org/Nonprofits/Apply-for-a-Grant/Application-Deadlines)**.**Different grants have different deadline dates so please take note of them. In fairness to other applicants, there is nothing we can do if you apply late or in the wrong grant cycle.
5. **Leave enough time to thoroughly complete and review your application before submitting it.** Remember that all grant (not scholarship) applications must be submitted online and are due by 5 p.m. on deadline day.

Applications are only accepted via our online application system.
All applications must be submitted online by 5 p.m. on deadline day. There is no need to email or mail an additional copy.

1. **Gather the materials and information you will need to apply.**
You will need to have handy the following materials to upload:
* Your EIN number, organization contact information and grant program contact information.
* A detailed, itemized project budget that includes revenues and expenses. You are required to use our [Budget Template](https://www.cfrrr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Budget-Template-for-Grant-Application.xlsx) for any final submission.
* Current total operating budget amount for your organization, including revenue and expenses.
* A list of contributors to the project. This list should be by category (e.g. individual donor, government, corporate or foundation grant) or by giving level and the total amount of contributions and pledges secured.
* A list of other pending grant requests for the project, the amount requested and an estimated decision date.
* Board of directors list, including name, professional affiliation and address.
* Most recent audited financial statements.
1. **Submit an effective project budget**

The budget section is the backbone of a grant application. While budgets may vary widely from one organization to the next, the goal of the project budget is to help Foundation staff understand the scope of the proposed program for which an organization is requesting funding. It is important to show exactly how the funds will be used and should include all revenue and expenses related to the proposed program. **Use our** [Budget Template](https://www.cfrrr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Budget-Template-for-Grant-Application.xlsx).

* Cost estimates should be realistic. Call vendors to get quotes.
* Large expenses should include an explanation that details how amounts were derived.
* Never use the word “Miscellaneous.”
1. **Work on your application over a period of time.**Plan ahead and know that you can access and update your application any time. Be mindful to periodically save the application. If it “times out” you will lose the information you have entered if it has not been saved.

We strongly recommend you complete your application in a word processing program like MS Word and then copy and paste your work into the online application forms.

1. **Do your homework**

Be able to explain why your proposed program is important and how it matches with the Foundation’s grant guidelines. If others are doing similar work explain what makes your work unique.

1. **Write in a simple, direct, and persuasive style**

Make sure your ideas are organized and easy to understand. Provide a detailed explanation of the proposed program goals and demonstrate how you plan to accomplish those goals.

* Don’t use jargon or other special words that people outside your field won’t know.
* Spell out abbreviations.
* Do not assume The Community Foundation knows anything about your mission or the proposed program.
* Use the Attachment tool thoughtfully.
* Provide evidence-based facts, explanations and reasoning.
1. **Review your application.**
* It is wise to have at least one other person read your application.
* Proofreading is essential.
* Use the grant guideline as a checklist – have you answered each question? Addressed each priority?
1. **Submit your application.**
All grant applications are **due by 5 p.m.** on their deadline day. No late applications will be accepted. Make certain that you “Review and Submit” and then click on “Submit” again in order for the application to go through. You cannot revise an application once it is submitted. If revisions are needed contact foundation staff and they will work with you on revisions.

You can review your application in the GiftsOnline portal at any time by returning to the portal: <https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_2098?SA=AM>

1. **Know that we will stay in touch.**
* We'll send you an email letting you know we received your application.
* Please add mail@grantapplication.com to your safe email sender list so your spam filter does not block Community Foundation messages.
* The Donor Services Manager may contact you to set up a site visit or interview.
* After the grant has been reviewed by committee and presented to the board, the Donor Services Manager will call you to let you know the outcome of your application. You also will receive an email letting you know if your application was approved or declined.
1. **If your grant is approved, prepare to report your progress.**
We will email your a grant agreement to be signed and returned. It will include information on submitting online reports. Separate links are sent for the report requirements. Mark your calendar with due dates and save the report links!