

2021 Community Grants Program Guidelines

Application Due Date
March 22, 2021
11:59 p.m.

 Community Foundation
of Howard County

www.cfhoco.org



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The Mission of the Community Foundation of Howard County is to inspire lifelong giving and to connect people, places and organizations to worthy causes across Howard County.

2021 Community Grants

The Community Foundation of Howard County (“Foundation”) seeks to enhance the potential of Howard County residents to live fulfilled and enriched lives. To that end we fund nonprofit organizations which ensure access to local human services programs, arts, cultural and environmental activities, and educational opportunities. By distributing grants that allow the nonprofits to achieve their charitable objectives and supporting programs that touch and transform the lives of Howard County residents, we are encouraging residents to actively participate in the economic and social fabric of our community.

The Community Grants Program provides funding for operational and project needs within the 2021 calendar year. Operational grants provide support for the day-to-day costs of running a non-profit organization. Operational grants are unrestricted income to help an organization carry out its goals without imposing the requirement to develop activities directly attributable to the grant. This year we will be offering opportunities for non-profit organizations with operational budgets above \$100,000 and for non-profits organizations with operational budgets below \$100,000.

Based on the availability of funds, in 2021 the Foundation will award grants in two categories:

- **OPERATIONAL GRANTS** of up to \$10,000 for non-profit organizations providing services in Howard County with an organizational budget ABOVE \$100,000
- **OPERATIONAL GRANTS** of up to \$5,000 for non-profit organizations providing services in Howard County with an organizational budget BELOW \$100,000

Applicant Qualifications

The Foundation considers grant applications from organizations:

- Determined as charitable under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or other entities that meet IRS charitable guidelines;
- Delivering services to Howard County residents in the areas of human services, arts & culture, education, environment or community affairs;
- Providing programs and services to the intended beneficiaries without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran or military status, pregnancy, ancestry, age or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, county or local laws, regulations or ordinances;

Common Questions

Are new organizations eligible for operating grants?

Yes, the Foundation will consider funding projects from newly established organizations

Can programs that provide service to specific populations be considered?

Yes, organizations that offer gender-based programs or have programs and services designed to benefit a specific population (e.g., children with developmental disabilities or senior citizens) will not be considered discriminatory for this reason alone.

Can programs that provide faith-based services be considered?

Yes, as long as the organization does not discriminate against a participant on the basis of religion or religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to actively participate in a religious practice. Any specifically religious activity or service made available to participants by the organization must be voluntary.

Submitting an Application

Acceptance Period

Community Grant applications are accepted via our online application portal. To be considered, a complete electronic application must be received by 11:59 p.m. on March 22, 2021.

Applications received via mail or email will not be accepted.

Application Portal

The Foundation uses an online Application Portal for our Community Grant program. If your organization has never used the portal you are considered a “New User” and will need to enter information on your organization as well as create your user profile. Returning organizations/users need only to enter your credentials and log in. If you have forgotten your password, please use the "Forgot your Password" link to the left to reset your password. Since the Application Portal groups information by the organizational profile and connects individuals to that profile, we ask that you not create multiple organization profiles. Instead, if you are uncertain what to do, please contact us at Grants@CFHoCo.org, and we will advise you on how to proceed.

The application portal can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=howardcounty>

Grant Application

Information about the *The 2021 Community Grant Program* is located on the Foundation website at <https://cfhoco.org/grants-and-scholarships/grants/>.

The Foundation encourages you to thoroughly read and understand the *2021 Community Grant Program Guidelines* and to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Applications that do not adhere to the Community Grants Program Guidelines will not be considered for funding.

All applications must include:

- An electronically signed application,
- An organizational budget for current fiscal year
- A “Profit and Loss Statement” for immediate past fiscal year
- Current list of Board of Directors/Trustees
- The most recent IRS 990 Form annual returns or organization audit

Refrain from including materials not requested by the Grant Application, as they cannot be considered during the review process and inclusion may result in your application not being considered.

Application Categories

The Foundation will accept one application from a nonprofit in one of the following categories:

OPERATING SUPPORT	Unrestricted income to help an organization carry out its goals without imposing the requirement to develop activities directly attributable to the grant. Typically provides support for the day-to-day costs of running a non-profit organization (i.e.: rent, utilities, supplies, salaries).	
	Eligibility Restrictions	Provide services to Howard County residents
	Award Amount	Up to \$10,000 for non-profit organizations with an organizational budget ABOVE \$100,000 or up to \$5,000 for non-profit organizations with an organizational budget BELOW \$100,000
	Expenditure Period	January 1 to December 31, 2021
	Reporting	Narrative and Financial

The Foundation does not award grants for:

- Capital campaigns
- Debt retirement
- Endowments
- Expenses already incurred
- For-profit entities
- Individuals
- Medical research
- Political organizations or campaigns
- Private foundations
- Programming that promotes religious instructions or doctrine
- Seed money or start-up funding
- Supporting organizations

Common Questions

Can organizations receive funding more than once per year?

No. An organization may only receive funding once per calendar year. Once funding has been received, organizations will be considered ineligible for the remainder of the calendar year for any other discretionary grant program offered by the Foundation.

Can organizations submit more than one application per grant cycle?

No. Organizations may only submit one application for this grant process.

Can organizations apply for continued funding?

Yes. The Foundation will consider applications for the operation of projects that span multiple years. **However, this program does not provide multi-year funding. Nonprofits must submit a new application and be evaluated each year.** The Foundation is rarely the sole funder of on-going ventures. The Grant Review Committee carefully reviews proposals for other sources of funding and evidence of long-term financial strength.

What is an annual return?

Tax-exempt organizations are required to file an annual return with the IRS. The Foundation accepts the Form 990, Form 990-EZ, and verification of a Form 990-N filing.

How Are Applications Evaluated?

Criteria

The Foundation looks for proposals which:

- Address a significant need affecting a broad segment of the region’s population or special populations considered at risk.
- Include innovative strategies that offer creative solutions without duplicating other efforts.
- Outline clear organizational goals with measureable outcomes.
- Support and encourage collaboration. The Foundation defines collaboration as “*A partnership agreement between two or more organizations to strengthen their abilities, effectiveness and activities to improve or expand their capacity to reach a common goal/objective.*”
- Have established sound management and administration, including a clearly defined and effective governance structure and financial systems.
- Document capacity to mobilize resources including financial support, in-kind support and volunteers to sustain programs.
- Provide evidence of careful planning to address community needs and access community resources.

Process

The Foundation staff pre-screens and reviews all proposals received. Only completed applications are forwarded to the Grant Review Committee. The Grant Review Committee is made up of Trustees of the Community Foundation of Howard County and volunteers representing business, government and nonprofit sectors of our community.

On occasion, the Foundation staff may request additional information for more extensive evaluation by the Grant Review Committee. Foundation staff and a Grant Review Committee member may conduct site visits or telephone interviews for proposals selected for more extensive evaluation. Site visits may also take place outside of the grant cycle timeline. After extensive review and deliberation, the Grant Review Committee will make funding recommendations to the Foundation’s Board of Trustees.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees makes the final decisions on grant awards. Written notification of grant decisions are sent to applicants late April/early May 2021. Grant funds will be dispersed in one payment, within 30 days of the receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions.

Foundation staff is available to address questions about the process or status of your application. Grant Review Committee members do not address application process or status questions.

Grant Award

Notification of Decision

Written notification of grant decisions are sent to applicants late April/early May 2021.

Acceptance of Award

Successful applicants are required to sign a grant contract and agree to comply with its terms and conditions prior to the release of funds. Grant funds will be dispersed in one payment, within 30 days of the Foundations receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions.

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients are required to submit a grant report by January 31, 2022. The grant reports will be submitted via the Application Portal, at which time you will be allowed to submit additional materials, such as pictures, articles, etc. Failure to submit a final report will make an organization ineligible to submit future grant requests.

Foundation Recognition

The Foundation must be listed as a funder of the nonprofit's grant funded programs and/or activities. Recognition may consist of the Foundation's name and/or logo being included on news releases, newsletters, websites, etc.

Questions? Contact Us

The Foundation staff is available to assist you throughout this process and welcomes your questions and comments. Please contact us by phone, 410-730-7840, ext. 4 or via email, grants@CFHoCo.org.

We invite applicants to participate in a Community Grants Program Information Session, where we will highlight changes to the program. To get the most out of the session we encourage you to review the materials in advance, so we can spend the majority of the time answering your specific questions. This meeting will be recorded and can be accessed after the meeting.

DATE	March 4, 2021
TIME	9:00 to 11:00 p.m.
LOCATION	Zoom meeting
RSVP	Grants@CFHoCo.org

We invite applicants to access a meeting time with Foundation staff if needed for further discussion.

For your convenience, please check on available times and schedule a meeting through this link: <https://calendly.com/dathey/30min>

Appendix A – Application Checklist

KEY DATES

Activity	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Begin Accepting Applications	February 19, 2021
<input type="checkbox"/> Information Session	March 4, 2021 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Calls with Staff	Available various times February 22- March 18, 2021
<input type="checkbox"/> Applications Due	March 22, 2021 by 11:59 pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Applications Reviewed	March through April
<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee Notification	Late April/early May 2021
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Payment Distributed	30 days after receipt of the signed Terms & Conditions
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Reports Due	January 31, 2022

RESOURCES

- Attend a Community Grants Program Information Session.
- Schedule a one on one question session with Foundation staff if needed.
- Carefully review and adhere to the Community Grants Program Guidelines for eligibility requirements and program details.
- If you do not have the ability to convert files to PDF format, the CutePDF Writer program can be downloaded for free at www.cutepdf.com.
- Monitor the Community Grants webpage of www.CFHoCo.org for responses to questions about the program guidelines. Direct link: <https://cfhoco.org/grants-and-scholarships/grants/>
- Visit the Greater Washington Society of CPAs website for information on nonprofit accounting basics at www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org. Relevant to the completion of your application is the information provided on “Internal Controls.”

APPLICATION PREPARATION

- Your application is a conversation with the Grant Review Committee (“Committee”). Be sure to provide enough detail on your organization, services and projects to adequately inform the Committee.
- Refrain from including materials not requested by the Grant Application, as they cannot be considered during the review process.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- Upload a PDF of “Organizational Budget” for current fiscal year.
- Upload a PDF of “Profit and Loss Statement” for immediate past fiscal year.

- Upload a PDF of either the most recent **signed** Form 990 **OR** the most recent audited financial report.
- Upload a PDF of a current list of organizational Board of Directors/Trustees
- Click “Submit” by **11:59 p.m. on March 22, 2021.**
- If you do not receive an email from the Application Portal, indicating receipt of your application, within 24 hours, please check your spam folder prior to contacting the Foundation staff.

APPLICATION EVALUATION

- Questions for clarification may be received by the applicant from Foundation staff between the time your application is started online and the review meeting in mid-April.
- Organizations will be reviewed in two categories: one for non-profit organizations with an organizational budget ABOVE \$100,000 and one for non-profit organizations with an organizational budget BELOW \$100,000.