

Criteria Used to Review Applications

When reviewing grant applications, the staff and grant committees of the Community Foundation focus on the broad goal of improving community well-being. When reviewing organizations, we look at the following elements that we believe characterize competent and effective organizations and certain programmatic elements that we believe most effectively lead to a healthy community for Southwest Washington residents.

We believe effective organizations have:

- A mission statement that clearly defines the organization's purpose and reflects their understanding of the communities they serve
- A clear articulation of why it believes what it is doing is important and that it will be effective and produce desired results
- An appropriate strategic and funding plan given its size and developmental stage
- Clearly defined priorities, strategies, and measurable outcomes
- Experienced and highly qualified staff and leadership
- Skilled governing board whose knowledge includes financial management and the community served
- Support in the community, constituent involvement, and can mobilize financial and in-kind support as well as volunteers
- Knowledge about the people or organizations it serves, where it fits in its community, and collaboration with others, as needed

We believe effective programming:

- Addresses an identified community need
- Has a methodology that makes sense and takes into account best practices in the field
- Is built on a thoughtful practical plan that outlines specific outcomes
- Includes exploration of innovative approaches, participants and partnerships
- Is delivered by an organization that is knowledgeable about the issue and their constituency
- Engages the skills, abilities and experience of community members in creating effective changes together
- Collaborates with like organizations to avoid duplication of services
- Is culturally competent
- Is responsive to and respectful of the dignity and need for hope of the people they serve
- Has staff and volunteers reflective of the community
- Is delivered in user-friendly ways and locations that overcome barriers to participation
- Responds to the diverse needs of constituents and offers resources or referrals to other programs when needed
- Fosters civic engagement

Ideally, through the answers you provide in the grant application as well as through the information we gather when we follow-up with applicants, each of the issues outlined in the criteria will be covered. We recognize that not every organization will meet all of our criteria. The criteria are meant as a general guide to help us review the strength of your organization and your programming and are not a definitive checklist or the only factors we take into consideration when considering your proposal.

We recognize that organizations change over time and may have organizational structures that are unique that may make you seem more or less in line with our criteria. We believe there are many models of successful nonprofit organizations and are interested in learning from you about how you have been successful.

What We Fund

Programs and projects that fall into one or more of the following categories

Arts and Culture

Enriching the lives of all citizens

- Accessibility
- Community Celebrations
- Dance
- Drama
- Film
- Music
- Public Art
- Puppetry
- Theatre

Civic & Community Building

Neighbors connecting over common concerns

- Community Centers
- Downtown Beautification
- Historical Societies
- Libraries
- Parks & Recreation
- Public Radio & Television
- Walkability of Neighborhoods

Education

Quality education and learning opportunities for all

- Adult Literacy
- Early Learning
- Mentoring
- Technology
- Tutoring
- Vocational Training
- Workforce Development

Environmental & Conservation Efforts

Working to protect and steward the natural environment

- Clean Air
- Forestland
- Green Building
- Land Conservation
- Stream & River Restoration

Health & Human Services

Working to meet the basic needs of all citizens

- Affordable Housing
- Aging Populations
- Domestic Violence
- Healthcare
- Homelessless
- Hunger
- Living Wage Jobs
- Mental Heath
- Respite Care

Welfare of Animals

Fostering communities where all animals are treated with compassion and respect

- Audubon Societies
- Educational Outreach Programs
- Endangered Species
- Humane Societies
- Wildlife Sanctuaries

After your application is submitted

Our review process involves multiple steps, including a thorough staff review, applicant interviews, and input from our Grant Committees. We want to ensure that we have the time necessary to learn about your organization and the work that you are doing in the community. Staff follows up with every applicant and provides grant applications and all supporting materials to the Grants Committees. The Community Giving Fund and Children's Trust Fund Grant Committees typically meets in late January to determine which proposals they will recommend to our Board of Directors for funding. You will be informed of the Board's decision as soon as these decisions have been made. Grants are formally presented by mid-March. The La Center Casinos Charitable Fund Grants Committee meets and awards grants quarterly.

Frequency of Funding

Grants to any one organization will generally not be approved more than once each year.