

Meeting the Moment: Strengthening Nonprofits in a Time of Need

2026 [Community Investment Fund](#) grant application FAQs

In response to the growing challenges faced by nonprofits—including surging demand for services, declining donations, and reduced federal support—the Community Foundation is adapting its Discretionary Grantmaking approach for 2025–26. In order to maximize impact, the Community Foundation is only inviting **organizations that have been previously funded** over the past 10 years (2016 – 2025) through either the [Community Investment Fund](#) grant process or the COVID-19 grant process. **Only CFNOVA grantees from 2016-2025 are eligible to apply for 2025 -26 [Community Investment Fund](#) awards.**

General operating support grants of **\$15,000 or \$30,000** will be awarded based on organizational [budget size](#).

Funding will prioritize **Organizational Strengthening, Capacity Building and Addressing Immediate Client Needs**

These changes reflect insights from our latest *Insight Region*® report, [The State of Nonprofits in Northern Virginia](#), which highlights the critical need for sustained investment in the sector. Now more than ever, nonprofits require flexible funding to continue serving our region’s residents during this pivotal time.

Who can apply?

The 2025-26 application that opens on November 3, 2025 and closes on December 8, 2025 is **invite-only** and is open to organizations that have received [Community Investment Fund](#) or COVID-19 Fund awards since 2016. Organizations that have received funding from the Foundation between 2016 and 2025 will be able to see their profile in the [Foundant system](#).

When is the deadline to submit applications?

The deadline to submit your grant request application to the Community Foundation is December 8, 2025, by 5 pm.

Based on these criteria, if I am not a past grantee and am not eligible for a grant, will there be other funding opportunities from CFNOVA?

At this time, there is no additional funding, but we will promote opportunities as they become available.

How do I apply?

A link and password will be sent to past grantees via email to gain access to the [Foundant system](#) to complete the application.

What if I know I am a past grantee, but did not receive a password?

If you are a past grantee and do not receive a password, please email grants@cfnova.org and a CFNOVA staff person will respond.

Can I access a PDF copy of the application in advance to work on a draft of our responses?

For a PDF copy of any grant application, an invited applicant should [log in to Foundant](#), enter the password for the application, click on the 'Preview' button, then click on 'Question List' button.

Are there restrictions based on geography for any of the open funding cycles?

All 501(c)3 organizations that have received grants from the Community Foundation between 2016 and 2025 and that provide services in the Northern Virginia region are eligible for grants. The Community Foundation service area includes Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties, and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.) Please note, the Lamond Fund is limited to organizations along the Route 1 Corridor in Fairfax and Alexandria serving children and families.

Can our organization apply for a grant through one [Community Investment Fund](#) area as well as through the Arts or Environment Funds? (Note, the Arts and Environment Fund application will open in January 2026).

No, only one application per applicant will be accepted across all these funding opportunities. If you apply for Community Investment Funds, you may not apply for the Arts or Environment Fund grants in January. **Select the focus area that most closely aligns with your mission.**

When is the grant award meant to be utilized?

The 2026 grant will be awarded in February 2026 and should be utilized by **January 1, 2027**.

Do organizations have to meet a certain operating budget to apply?

Organizations with budget sizes up to \$4.5 million are eligible for a \$15,000 grant and Organizations with budgets above \$4.5 million are eligible for a \$30,000 grant.

Will applications be considered from an all-volunteer organization if there are no paid staff members?

If you have been invited to apply, you are eligible.

Are there any restrictions for previous grantees?

All previous grantees must submit their previous grant reports to be considered for funding. If previous year's grant reports have been submitted, and you have been invited to apply, you are eligible to apply.

What are the focus areas?

Within the grant application, you will be asked to identify which of the following focus area(s), your organization's mission most closely aligns with – *Aging; Basic needs (including eviction/foreclosure prevention, emergency assistance - ex food, medical, dental); Child and Youth Development; Education; Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Mental Health; Military Personnel and Their Families.*

Can we update our organization's profile in the Foundant system before applying?

Yes. We encourage all invited applicants to review and update their organization's profile in the Foundant system prior to submitting an application to ensure accuracy and completeness.

What are the criteria used to evaluate applications?

Applications will be evaluated based on alignment with the Community Foundation's focus areas, demonstration of addressing urgent client needs or engaging in capacity-building efforts.

Are collaborative applications between multiple organizations allowed?

While only one application per organization is permitted, collaborative efforts may be described within a single application. The lead organization should submit the application and clearly outline the roles of partner organizations.

Can we apply if our organization received funding before 2016 but not after?

Only organizations that have received Community Investment Fund or COVID-19 Fund awards since 2016 are eligible to apply for the 2025–26 cycle.

Is there a limit to how many times an organization can receive funding from the Community Investment Fund?

There is no limit to the number of times an organization can receive funding, provided all previous grant reporting requirements have been met and the organization has been invited to apply.

What types of expenses are considered allowable under general operating support?

General operating support grants may be used for a wide range of expenses including operational support, rent, utilities, technology, program delivery, and other costs that support the organization's mission.

Will feedback be provided to applicants who are not selected?

While in the past, we have strived to provide general feedback, due to the volume of applications and inquiries, individualized feedback will not be available for applicants. Thank you for your understanding.

Are there any reporting requirements for awarded grants?

Yes. All grantees are required to submit a Grant Report detailing how funds were used and the outcomes achieved by September 17, 2026. Specific reporting guidelines will be provided upon award notification.

Can we apply if our organization is fiscally sponsored by another nonprofit?

Yes, fiscally sponsored organizations may apply, provided the sponsoring organization has received [Community Investment Fund](#) or COVID-19 Fund awards since 2016 and meets all other eligibility criteria.

Is there a preference for certain types of programs or populations served within the focus areas?

While all listed [focus areas](#) are eligible, priority may be given to programs that demonstrate measurable impact, serve high-need populations, and align closely with the findings of [The State of Nonprofits in Northern Virginia](#) report.

Contact information

If you need any technical support in accessing your application on the grants portal, please contact grants@cfnova.org.