THE community foundation FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA

FY2027 Grant Guidelines and Timeline

What Applicants Need to Know

FY2027 grantmaking is open to qualified nonprofits serving Northern Virginia. We designed the process to be clear and manageable: each applicant will select one pillar and subcategory, complete a brief eligibility screen, and submit a streamlined application.

Rules of the Road

- **One application:** Each nonprofit may submit one application under one pillar and one subcategory.
- **Open process:** All qualified nonprofits may apply; organizations will not be invited individually.
- **Northern Virginia benefit:** Grant-funded work and expenses must primarily benefit eligible Northern Virginia residents.
- **Document local reach:** Regional proposals must identify the localities served and estimate the number or share of Northern Virginia residents who will benefit.
- **Demonstrate readiness:** Applicants must show financial sustainability and the capacity to deliver the proposed work.
- **Substance matters most:** Need, alignment, readiness, and anticipated impact—not application polish—will guide decisions.
- **Capital projects:** Capital projects are not eligible in this grant cycle.
- **Advocacy and policymaking:** Advocacy and policymaking activities are not eligible in this grant cycle.

Who May Apply

Eligible applicants are qualified nonprofits whose proposed work primarily benefits residents of Alexandria; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, or Prince William counties; or the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, or Manassas Park.

An organization does not need to be headquartered in Northern Virginia. If proposed work extends beyond the region, the Foundation will fund only the documented Northern Virginia portion unless a fund restriction permits broader support.

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Funding and Award Amounts

- **Annual grant requests:** $20,000–$50,000. Most awards are expected to range from $20,000 to $35,000.
- **Direct services:** Priority will go to sustainable services with clear community impact.
- **Smaller nonprofits:** Organizations with annual budgets generally between $500,000 and $1 million, including those with shorter operating histories, may be competitive when well positioned to address defined neighborhood needs.
- **Partner status:** Selected organizations may be considered for a two- or three-year grant totaling up to $100,000.
- **Capacity building and emergency response:** Rolling grants will generally range from $1,000 to $10,000.

Applicant Support

The Foundation will host two or three public webinars, with recordings available afterward. Staff will also offer 20-minute consultations to help nonprofits assess eligibility and choose the pillar and subcategory that best fit their work.

How to Apply

1. **Choose a pillar and subcategory.** Select the options that best describe the proposed work.
2. **Complete the eligibility screen.** Several yes-or-no questions cover geography, nonprofit status, pillar alignment, financial sustainability, and readiness.
3. **Complete the full application.** An application will stop at screening only if the organization or proposed work falls outside legal, geographic, or funding requirements.
4. **Submit one application.** Applicants will follow a streamlined pathway tailored to their selected pillar.
5. **Respond to follow-up.** Staff may request clarification during screening or review.

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How Applications Will Be Reviewed

1. **Staff review:** Every application is checked for completeness and alignment with the strategy.
2. **Organizational and financial review:** Applications that move forward are reviewed for financial health, organizational readiness, and anticipated community impact.
3. **Volunteer review:** Four pillar-specific committees, including subject-matter experts, evaluate applications and recommend award amounts.
4. **Final recommendations:** Staff consider committee input, the available budget, review criteria, and the strength of the overall grant portfolio, then prepare recommendations for approval under Foundation policies.

Key Dates

Date	Milestone
Late October	Open meetings for nonprofits and donors.
December–January	Office hours for nonprofits.
January 6	**Application opens.**
February 3	**Application deadline.**
February–March	Staff review and organizational and financial review.
March	Volunteer review.
April 9	Board review and approval.
April 16	Applicants are notified.
May 7	Public announcement.

Dates are subject to final confirmation in the published application materials.

Using Artificial Intelligence

- Applicants may use AI tools to help prepare an application. Routine use does not need to be disclosed.

- Applicants are responsible for reviewing the final application and making sure it is accurate, original, appropriate, and reflects the organization's work.

Notification and Follow-Up

All applicants will be notified by email after final decisions. Funded organizations will receive a grant agreement covering payment, use of funds, acknowledgment, and reporting. The Foundation may not be able to provide individual feedback on every unfunded proposal, but it will publish general guidance and frequently asked questions to support future applicants.

Additional Donor Support

After grant decisions, staff may identify organizations—whether funded or not—whose work may interest donors. We will protect applicant confidentiality. Unless an organization gives permission, staff will share only public information, such as its mission, service area, program description, and general funding needs. Application materials, financial information, and client-level information will remain confidential. Donor grants may add to, but will not replace, a Foundation award.