

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Foundation conducts several grants programs each year that address a variety of community needs and issues. Each program has its own focus, priorities, guidelines and grant size. The first key step is for organizations to carefully review our guidelines and determine if the funding program is appropriate to your mission and programming. When making application, respond to the narrative questions as stated in the guidelines, provide the financial information and other requested attachment, and adhere to the stated funding ranges. Foundation staff has thoughtfully developed guidelines based on the type of information that best allows us to assess the purpose, need and potential viability of a proposal, its community benefit and the organization's capacity to implement its plans.

❖ **What are the Foundation's priorities for the type of activities it funds?**

The Foundation has two types of grants programs. The **Community Grants Program** is our most general program and awards grants around a broad range of areas and issues. Our **Special Funding Initiatives** are issue-specific and have more defined priorities. Given our range of funding, we approach our grantmaking not solely in terms of categories or fields of interest, but around a theme of *community building*. We seek to support proposals that *strengthen community-based resources* people can turn to, and whose *approach uses and builds relationships* among individuals, organizations and communities to *connect people with resources and opportunities* that help them achieve their full potential. A summary of the current year grants programs is available on our website or by contacting the Program Department, as are list of prior grants for all our programs, which provide examples of activities we have supported.

❖ **Who can apply for funding from the Foundation?**

Eligible applicants include 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and colleges and universities based in Miami-Dade County. Proposals from organizations not based in Miami-Dade should have a program presence or primary project partner based in the county. Some grants programs are also open to grassroots groups that do not have 501(c)3 status, but they have either a fiscal agent that is a 501(c)3 or demonstrated history of financial management of the level of funding they are requesting. Consult guidelines for each grant program for specific eligibility requirements. The Foundation's grants programs do not provide grant support to individuals. Grants are rarely awarded to government entities – the county municipalities, public schools, or other taxing authorities. Rare exceptions may be made when an entity is clearly, uniquely positioned to access and serve key populations not being served or reached by nonprofits.

❖ **Can I use a fiscal agent?**

Yes. Your proposal must include an agreement on the fiscal agent's letterhead signed by both parties that outlines the terms of the agreement, what services the fiscal agent will provide and any fee that will be charged for their services. Being a fiscal agent for a group does not exclude the agency serving as a fiscal agent from submitting its own application.

❖ **How can I get funding guidelines?**

The **Community Grants Program** guidelines are available throughout the year on the Foundation's website, or by calling the office. Community Grants proposals are due November 15th. **Special Funding Initiatives**, RFP release date and proposal deadlines are set annually. Funding announcements with deadlines are included in our quarterly newsletter. For each program, a flyer announcement with due dates is mailed to all nonprofits on our database about six week prior to the proposal deadline. At that time guidelines are posted on our website or available by calling the office. Contact the Program Department if you need to verify that you are on our mailing list.

❖ **What can grant funds be used to pay for and what are your funding limitations?**

Grant awards may be used for most activities that support nonprofits' work, including personnel salaries and benefits, project supplies and materials, equipment and space rental to hold for project/program activities, printing and copying, etc. The Foundation does not provide grant support for memberships, fundraising events, or memorials. While the Foundation does not typically cover expenses for travel outside of Miami-Dade County or conferences, staff will consider making exceptions in cases where the training opportunity is essential to ensuring the quality of a particular project or program. Capital grants are awarded on a limited basis and typically only when the vast majority of funding has already been secured. Funds may not be used to cover standard indirect rates charged by universities.

❖ **What is the greatest weakness that you see in funding proposals you receive?**

The greatest area of weakness typically relates to how an organization will gain access to the people it wants to reach. Past experience clearly shows that the approach of "design a great program and they will come" does not work. We look very closely for evidence that the organization or organizations working on a project have strong potential to reach and engage those they want to reach. We evaluate this based on outreach plans you present in the proposal, but more importantly based on looking at what existing programs you have that can provide you access that you can expand on, the results of your past experience in engaging your target population, and whether you are working with other organizations or individuals who already have strong, trusting relationships with the people you seek to reach.

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❖ **Can an organization apply for more than one grant program in the same year?**

Yes. However, organizations should check the guidelines for each program to ensure that their proposed activities fit within its funding priorities, as some priorities do change from year to year. Organizations that are still in the grant period for any grant **must be current with all reporting requirements** in order to submit a new request.

❖ **Can an organization submit more than one proposal for the same grant program?**

Generally, no. The primary exception is separate departments within the same college or university. However, each department should be aware they are, in essence, competing against each other. Being a collaborating partner in someone else's proposal does not exclude an agency from submitting its own application.

❖ **Can two or more organizations apply together as a partnership?**

Yes, the Foundation promotes partnerships and is committed to helping groups build new relationships and capitalize on each other strengths and resources. We strongly encourage partnerships or collaborations in which two or more groups have a significant role and share funding resources in implementing a project.

❖ **Do you fund faith-based organizations or groups?**

Yes, as long as groups can demonstrate that: 1) the project will serve the community at-large, not just the members of a specific congregation; and 2) the project's focus is on addressing a community need, not promoting religious beliefs. Funded activities cannot require persons to be of or adopt one particular faith or set of religious beliefs.

❖ **How can an agency determine if its activities fit the Foundation's priorities?**

In addition to carefully reviewing guidelines for each grant program, an organization can call Program Department staff to discuss eligibility issues, which program/project might be most appropriate, and general information on assembling a proposal. Staff is available to provide guidance about your individual organization. However, such guidance is in no way a guarantee funding. In the actual review process, a proposal is considered on its merits, in relationship to all other proposals received and funds available. Only then can the Foundation make specific funding determinations.

❖ **Who makes decisions about funding and how are they made?**

The Foundation's Board of Governors has the ultimate decision-making authority on grant awards. Program staff is responsible for managing the review and evaluation process and presenting recommendations to the Board at its quarterly meetings. Staff and advisory committees, made up of community people who have strong knowledge or expertise in a particular subject or of the community, evaluate proposals with a view towards projects that are most in line with the Foundation's priorities and have the greatest potential for positive impact and success.

❖ **If I get funding from the Foundation, what are the reporting requirements?**

Grantees typically submit a six-month and year-end report, however some initiatives require quarterly reporting. Reports include both narrative and financial information. Reporting requirements and deadlines are stated in the grant agreement, which grantees must sign before receiving grant payments. For most programs, grantees must use our standard Reporting Guidelines and forms, which are provided when grants are awarded.

❖ **Can we meet with Program staff to tell you about our organization, discuss an idea or have a draft proposal reviewed?**

Due to the volume of proposals we receive – about 300 per year - staff is not able to review draft proposals. We welcome phone calls or emails from potential applicants with specific questions. We strongly encourage you to put Foundation program staff on your mailing or email list to receive news and information about your work throughout the year. Unfortunately, given the annual volume of funding requests, staff has limited ability to meet individually with potential applicants except as time allows during the review and evaluation process.

❖ **If a grant is successful, can an organization apply for a continuation of funding or a "renewal grant"?**

The Foundation does not do continuation or renewal grants. A new proposal must be submitted for each year's program. If an organization submits a request for the same program as the prior year, staff gives greatest consideration to those where the applicant demonstrate strong past performance and where the new request demonstrates growth and development in terms of using prior experience to improve the quality, reach or efficiency of the program activities.

Website: www.dadecommunityfoundation.org

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