

Grant Application Instructions (Shumaker Family Foundation, 2023)

Applying for a Grant

Before contacting us to see if your organization is eligible for a grant, please read through our grant criteria.

Granting Philosophy

- We fund only organizations with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status **or** a fiscal agent.
- We support programs and organizations that promote peace and justice and demonstrate respect and appreciation for human diversity in all its forms, such as race, culture, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and social class.
- We fund organizational strengthening projects, such as capacity-building or operating funds, when we are satisfied that an organization is prepared to work toward the next level of effectiveness.
- We prefer not to be the sole or majority funder for an organization, but we understand that sometimes a small organization needs a funder to take a chance on them and help them build the capacity to grow and to attract other funders.
- We strongly prefer to do a site visit (in person or virtual) before considering an organization's application.
- We understand that organizations and projects often require 2 or more years of support to see results, and we do consider *multi-year grants*.
- We may consider offering *renewal grants* for 2 additional years beyond the first year (with a shorter application) if the organization or project shows adequate progress in relation to proposed accomplishments and if the Foundation has adequate grant funds available to renew the grant.
- An organization that has received 3 consecutive years of funding from us may be asked to reapply, starting with a full Letter of Inquiry (LOI) or by invitation.
- Our **Social Justice** grants promote efforts leading to an equitable distribution of wealth, privilege, and opportunities. The Foundation has historically emphasized domestic violence and child abuse prevention and treatment. This continues to be a priority, but we now seek to support the leadership development of Black, Latino, or women leaders and grassroots social justice organizations led by those from the communities they serve.
- **Environmental** grants go to organizations that promote conservation, sustainability, and animal welfare, or those that educate human beings to work toward these purposes. We also support efforts to assist with conservation, sustainability, and animal welfare in those communities locally whose environments have been disproportionately affected due to systemic reasons.

- For **Education grants**, we focus on projects that strengthen STEM, arts, and early childhood education programs for underserved communities, as well as programs that strengthen teachers and the education process. We favor programs and organizations developed by leaders from within the communities they serve and those that have traditionally lacked access to philanthropy.

What We Don't Fund

- Individuals
- Organizations that are not registered not-for-profits or their equivalents (i.e., those with a fiscal sponsor)
- Projects of any organization that participates in activities harmful to the environment
- Projects of any organization that participates in activities that promote violence
- Organizations or programs that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or social class
- Organizations that promote a particular religion
- Organizations that seek to convert people from one religion to another
- Organizations that make any particular religious observance a condition of receiving food, shelter, or other resources
- Annual campaigns
- Special events
- Organizations based outside the United States
- Local animal shelters or animal rights organizations located outside of KS and MO

Grant Assessment Criteria

1. **Does the activity fit within our strategic directions?**
2. **Is the organization strong and well-organized enough to carry out what it promises?**
 - Are both the board and staff made up of diverse members and members from the community served?
 - Is the staff diverse at all levels of the organization? Is the organization inclusive in its policies and practices? Are there intentional paths to leadership in place to encourage Black, Latino, and other BIPOC staff to apply for executive positions?
 - Do all Board members make an annual donation and/or take part in fundraising activities?
 - Is the CEO/Executive Director a good and effective leader?
 - Is there good collaboration between the CEO/ED and the Board?

- What do leaders of comparable organizations think about this organization?
- Is this a grassroots organization created by leaders from within the community—i.e., proximate to the problems the organization seeks to address?
- What is the distribution of assets between program assets and reserves?
- How do the assets compare with annual revenues and expenditures?
- If the organization has been in existence for some time, what is the year-over-year trend?
- Are funding sources diversified?

3. Is the proposed program sound?

- Do the **Project Director** and other staff include those with lived experience?
- Did the idea for this program come from within the service community?
- Is the budget adequate for the work proposed? Does it include sufficient provision for administrative oversight? For community feedback?
- If this is an innovative project, is there a potential for replication or dissemination?
- Are there other individuals/organizations that support this project/program within the community?
- Are potential funders invited to do a site visit?

4. Is this the best use of our funds?

- What are the synergies between this and other programs and/or organizations that address the same issues?
- Will our investment be magnified by the work of collaborators, volunteers, grant matches, etc?
- Does this strengthen the organization and/or the field?
- Would the program/project/organization go forth equally well without *our* funds?
- Does the program/project/organization benefit a relatively large number of people for the cost? Is that the goal?
- Whom does it benefit indirectly?
- Could we accomplish the same goals more effectively if we grant the same funding to a different (smaller/larger) organization?
- Is this a grassroots, community-based organization whose leadership may not have had easy access to the local funder community?

- Is the organization one that would benefit from and build capacity with a grant that might seem “risky” to other funders?
5. **NOTE: We like to support solutions that are upstream and can have longterm impact, systemically or through a cultural shift. Our goal is to make the biggest impact we can with the limited funds we have available to grant each year.**

Geographic Factors

- All grants in the **Social Justice** and **Education** categories go to organizations in the Kansas City region, where site visits can be made within a day.
- **Environmental Justice** grants are *increasingly based in the Kansas City area (MO and KS)*, though we may consider some systems-level programs that are national in scope.
- We fund animal welfare/animal rights programs for Environmental Justice solely in the Kansas City area.
- **We do not fund any organizations based outside the United States.**

Sizes of Grants

Generally, our grants range in size from \$10,000 to \$30,000. An appropriate request depends on the size of your organization, the project or program for which you want support, and how well we know you. All requests must go through our online [Grant Application Process](#). We are happy to talk with you about a grant request amount, so feel free to reach out and ask for feedback before applying. (Note: the LOI asks for an amount, but we can discuss this amount with you if we invite an application.)

Your Initial Inquiry

If you are applying for a grant, please submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) on our grant application system, once it becomes available — or reach out to our Executive Director to ensure that your request fits our criteria and that we have funding available. Some years we opt to not use LOIs, in which case our applications will only be by invitation. Feel free to reach out to us with any questions about the process or about eligibility. If we notify you that we have accepted your LOI, you will be able to proceed to the Application section of our system and complete a Grant Application.

LOI and Application Deadlines

- **Environmental Justice Grants:**
 - LOI due February 15 (if LOIs are available in a given year)
 - Application (by invitation) due March 15
- **Social Justice and Education Grants:**
 - LOI due June 15 (if LOIs are available in a given year)
 - Application (by invitation) due July 15

Applying for Grant Renewal

Renewals are not guaranteed, but we may consider a shorter renewal application for a 2nd and 3rd year of a grant, as long as reports are submitted in a timely manner and funds are used as proposed. Due dates are as follows:

- Environmental Justice Grants (over \$10,000)
 - Interim Report: Due **October 1**
 - Annual Report/Renewal Application: Due **April 1**
- Education and Social Justice Grants (over \$10,000)
 - Interim Report: Due **February 1**
 - Annual Report/Renewal Application: Due **August 1**

Multi-year grant recipients need not fill out an application for a subsequent grant year, but they should complete all reports before the new grant year.

With the exception of grantees who were awarded a 1-year grant only, current grantees who wish to apply for a renewal should request an Access Code in order to access and fill out the next year's application for "Returning/Renewing Applicants." Returning applicants following a 3rd consecutive year grant renewal may also fill out a "Returning/Renewing" application, if invited and given the Access Code.

Annual reports are due at approximately 10.5 months to allow us time to assess progress before a board decision on whether to renew the grant.

Financial accounting for the grant and a narrative explaining the financial accounting should accompany the annual report for all grants.

After 3 years of funding, any organization interested in applying for a new grant will be asked to start a new grant cycle, either with an LOI or an invitation to fill out an application for returning grant recipients.

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