



The Community Foundation of South Alabama 2024 Competitive Grant Guidelines

Through its competitive grant-making process, The Community Foundation of South Alabama (“CFSA”) awards grants to local nonprofits serving Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia, Monroe, Conecuh, Choctaw, Clarke, and Washington Counties. These grants are funded through the Foundation’s unrestricted funds and field of interest funds established by donors to address the most pressing needs in our community.

The following guidelines offer general guidance to local nonprofits seeking to apply for funding through The Community Foundation of South Alabama’s competitive grant process. Each proposal is evaluated on its potential impact; the quality of planning, leadership, support, and vision expressed; the relative need for the program proposed; and the current funds available for distribution. Due to the large number of funding requests and the limited amount of funds available, not all proposals can be supported. An unsuccessful proposal does not reflect on the worthiness of a particular project.

Grant-making Priorities – Closing the Opportunity Gap

In 2016, The Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) joined the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON) comprised of 45 foundations across the United States committed to closing the youth opportunity gap. Children in our communities deserve every opportunity to reach their full potential. Our goal is to ensure that all kids in Southwest Alabama have the opportunity to thrive, from cradle to career.

The Community Foundation of South Alabama has six key focus areas for our eight-county footprint: **Family, Education, Work, Racial Equity, Arts and Culture, and Mental and Behavioral Health.** For 2024, the Foundation will accept grant applications in the following six priorities:

- **Promoting parenting education**
- **Expanding opportunities to help young people get well-paying jobs through workforce training**
- **Increasing access to preschool education**
- **Increasing youth access to extracurricular activities**
- **Advance matters of fairness and racial equity with a critical focus on underprivileged youth**
- **Increasing youth access to equitable, high-quality arts and culture**
- **Mental and behavioral supports for individuals and families**

Promoting Parenting Education: Parenting is one of the most important tasks for a family, and one of the most challenging roles in our society. Parents are keys to the provision of safe, nurturing, and positive learning environments for children as they grow and mature. Parents acquire the knowledge

and skills to perform this important role through their ethnic and cultural heritage, their kinship network, their friendships, their community, and the resources that are available to them. Many parents across CFSA's eight county service area do not have access to parenting education, tools, mentors and/or classes, and are missing out on opportunities to stimulate their infant and toddler's brain development.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Provide parenting education services that assist parents or primary caregivers to strengthen their knowledge and skills thereby enhancing positive parenting practices and promoting the health and optimal development of young children.
- Increase early care and education services that support children's early learning, health, and the development of social competence.
- Provide family support services that work with families to strengthen their resiliency and to address the stressors that impair their ability to nurture and support the healthy development of their children, particularly those with a focus on resources for teen parents, parents of a child with special health needs, grandparents raising children and single fathers.

Expanding opportunities to help young people get well-paying jobs through workforce

training: Many young people in CFSA's eight county service area face significant financial struggles, challenges finding employment, and a large segment of the youth population is being left behind economically. Jobless young people are more vulnerable to a range of challenges, including the ills already plaguing local communities: high rates of unplanned pregnancy, unstable housing, substance abuse, and crime (as both victim and perpetrator). Early work experiences (e.g., paid employment, internship, or work-based learning) are especially critical for young people.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Increase workforce readiness and job attainment.
- Increase career-oriented educational opportunities for underserved youth.
- Increase educational attainment and financial literacy among working-age youth and young adults.

Increasing access to preschool education: Poverty has little association with the cognitive abilities of nine-month-old children. However, by the start of kindergarten, not only do children from low-income families perform significantly worse on tests of cognitive ability than children from higher-income families, but teachers also report that these children have much more difficulty paying attention and exhibit more behavioral problems. The poverty gap in school readiness appears to be growing as income inequality widens.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Build or expand preschool programming or infrastructure that would enable the delivery of high-quality preschool educational services to children, particularly in low-income or rural areas.
- Provide a well-rounded curriculum that supports all areas of development.
- Address child health, nutrition, and family needs as part of a comprehensive service network.

Increasing youth access to extracurricular activities: Many young people across CFSA's eight county service area do not have access to extracurricular or after-school activities. Participation in extracurricular activities promotes healthy, well-rounded lifestyles. Participation can also increase physical wellness and positive behaviors, which can lead to increased self-esteem, self-control, and have been shown to enhance attendance, graduation rates and test scores. When children do not participate in organized activities, they lose the ability to gain important life skills necessary as they enter adulthood.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Provide access to extracurricular and after-school activities for youth under the age of 18, particularly in low-income and/or rural communities.
- Increase access to physical literacy, sport and play, the arts, community service, leadership, cultural awareness and understanding, for youth under the age of 18, particularly in low-income and/or rural areas.
- Utilize programming as a civic engagement, educational and/or rehabilitation or therapeutic tool, particularly in low-income and/or rural areas.

Advance matters of fairness and racial equity with a critical focus on underprivileged youth:

Social and economic inequity disproportionately affects minorities and the underprivileged in all communities. The Foundation is dedicated to supporting impactful nonprofits working to uplift underprivileged and minority communities that are tackling the issues that disproportionately impact them.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Build or promote a range of equitable strategies and resources in minority communities.
- Reduce barriers towards achieving racial equity.
- Uplift the most underprivileged youth in our service area.

Increasing youth access to equitable, high-quality arts and culture: Consistent, equitable arts education provides youth with opportunities to grow, take risks, imagine possibilities, and persist through challenges. By investing in access to arts and culture for youth across the racial, economic, and geographic spectrum, we can help address the achievement gap and create opportunities for young people throughout our region.

The Foundation will work with community stakeholders and organizations to support programs and projects that:

- Ensure equitable access to high quality arts education for K-12-aged students.
- Support arts experiences for students in and outside of school, especially within underprivileged communities.
- Provide opportunities for all youth to experience culturally diverse arts programming led by professional teaching artists and arts educators that reflect their communities.

Increasing mental and behavioral health support: The Foundation will work with community organizations to support evidence-based, tested, and effective programs and activities that provide:

- Support for individuals and families who are battling trauma.
- Support for individuals and families experiencing trauma due to isolation, stress, economic anxiety, and joblessness as well as intimate partner violence and child abuse.

Grant Cycle Timeline:

- **March 29, 2024** - Invitation to submit a formal proposal will be made available at www.communityfoundationsa.org. Formal proposal deadlines are firm. Applicants will submit their formal proposal electronically using the CFSA Online Application.
- **May 15, 2024** - All formal proposals must be submitted electronically using the CFSA Online Application by 4:00 p.m. CDT. Technical Support ends at 12 p.m. CDT. **Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Hard copies will not be accepted.**
- **May 16 – June 26, 2024** - Submissions will be evaluated and follow up phone interviews and/or site visits may be conducted. The length of this phase is dependent upon the quantity of applications received. **Please do not contact the Foundation. Applicants may be contacted via email to schedule phone interviews and/or site visits.**
- **June 27, 2024** - Applicants will be notified of final decision.

Grant Application Process

- Interested applicants should review CFSA's grant-making guidelines and requirements.
- Based upon the cycle's deadlines, eligible applicants must complete and submit a full proposal through CFSA's online application. Please note that CFSA will only accept proposals via the online system and the published deadlines are firm.
- Site visits and/or follow-up conversations may be conducted after the Full Proposal deadline.

Types of Grants & Grant Terms

Through its competitive grant-making, CFSA is awarding **program** grants only in 2024. These grants are typically **one-year** funding commitments.

Program Grants

Program grants enable a nonprofit organization or coalition of organizations and interested stakeholders to implement a specific project designed to benefit the community. CFSA is most interested in supporting sustainable programs that have the potential to produce meaningful results on community priorities and/or needs. Funding is provided for the expansion or refinement of existing programs as well as new programs that show promise of efficacy and sustainability. Grants to programs with a successful track record are also considered. Program grants are restricted to expenses directly and indirectly related to the operation of the project. No more than 20% may be used to pay for indirect or administrative expenses. Grants may not be used for general operating support or organizational capacity building.

Grant Amounts

As a general rule, CFSA prefers program grant requests that do not exceed 50% of the budget for the program/project/activity for which the proposal is seeking support. This demonstrates that the proposal has a diversified base of support and has some measure of community buy-in. CFSA grant amounts may range from \$5,000-\$15,000. Requests should not exceed \$15,000. Please be advised that submitting an application does not guarantee funding.

Limitations, Restrictions & Requirements

Geographic area: Organizations must serve a portion of the eight-county region which includes Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, and Washington counties. All requested funding must directly benefit individuals who reside in CFSA's eight-county region.

IRS charitable status: Applicant organizations must be recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization, government entity, educational institution, or religious organization. If applying using fiscal sponsorship, the applicant must present a formal written agreement.

CFSA Typically Does Not Fund:

- Individuals
- Fundraising expenses
- Religious activities
- Conference or seminar expenses
- Lobbying or political activities
- Political organizations or candidates for public office
- Budget deficit or debit reduction
- Scholarship or endowment funds of another charity
- Tickets for charity benefits
- Capital projects and campaigns

Funding Considerations

CFSA seeks to fund proposals that:

- Focus on work aligned with one or more of CFSA's priority areas of focus to *Close the Opportunity Gap*
- Exhibit the potential to accomplish meaningful results or impact in one or more of the priority areas
- Address community challenges, underserved populations, and/or service gaps
- Articulate measurable outcomes (desired results), effective approaches, and viable plans for maintaining ongoing efforts
- Demonstrate strong community support, capable leadership, and knowledge of, and involvement in, the communities served

- Include a realistic project budget and organizational financial information demonstrates fiscal health (e.g., diversified revenue sources, sustainability, solvent, etc.)

In addition, we strongly encourage proposals that include one or more of the following:

- Incorporate fresh, innovative approaches that are based on research, experience, and best practices in the field
- Use collaborative strategies that support efficiencies, increase the effectiveness, and build leadership in achieving broader community impact
- Leverage the proposed CFSA grant with other financial and human resources

Grant & Reporting Requirements: Each successful applicant will be required to sign a grant agreement with The Community Foundation of South Alabama before receiving a grant payment. Grant objectives, outcomes, payment schedules and reporting requirements will be outlined in the agreement. All grant recipients must also attend an orientation.

Please direct any additional questions you may have about the CFSA competitive grant-making process to Jena Berson, jberson@communityfoundationsa.org.