



The Community Foundation of South Alabama 2018 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

The Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) has joined the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON) comprised of 50 foundations across the United States committed to narrowing the opportunity gap present among youth. Strong, thriving children grow into capable adults who can contribute to a prosperous and sustainable society. We cannot afford for any of our in South Alabama kids to miss out on that opportunity. Solving these problems is not only a social obligation; it is an economic imperative.

The Foundation of South Alabama has identified three focus areas for our eight-county footprint: **Family, Education, and Work**. For 2018, the Foundation will accept grant applications in the following four priorities:

- **Increasing youth access to extracurricular activities**
- **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: Many youth 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 the extracurricular and after-school activities 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 tools, particularly in low-income and/or rural areas

Promoting Parenting Education: Parenting is one of the most important tasks of the 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 the 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
- Addresses child health, nutrition, and family needs as part of a comprehensive service network

Grant Cycle Timeline:

- **April 16, 2018** - Invitation to submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) will be made available at www.communityfoundationsa.org.
- **May 4, 2018** - All Letters of Inquiry must be submitted electronically via CFSA's Online Application by 11:59 p.m. CST. **Letters of Inquiry submitted after the deadline will not be considered.**
- **June 15, 2018** - Select applicants will be invited to submit a formal proposal. This date is dependent upon the quantity of LOIs received. Formal proposal instructions and deadlines will be made available to invited applicants via email. Applicants will submit their formal proposal electronically using the CFSA Online Application.
- **July 13, 2018** - All formal proposals must be submitted electronically using the CFSA Online Application by 11:59 p.m. CST. **Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Hard copies will not be accepted.**
- **July 13 – Aug 30, 2018** - 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 will be contacted via email to schedule phone interviews and/or site visits.**
- **September 21, 2018** - 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 Letter of Inquiry (LOI) through CFSA's online application. Please note that CFSA will only accept proposals via the online system and the published deadlines are firm.
- LOIs are reviewed and selected applicants will be invited to submit Full Proposals.

- Full Proposal instructions and due dates will be provided to those applicants invited to submit full proposals.
 - Site visits and/or follow-up conversations may be conducted after the Full Proposal deadline.
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Types of Grants & Grant Terms

Through its competitive grant-making, CFSA awards capacity building grants and program grants. These grants are typically one-year funding commitments.

Capacity Building Grants

CFSA defines organizational capacity building as any strategy that improves and enhances a nonprofit's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. CFSA recognizes great value in developing the internal capacities of nonprofit organizations to increase their effectiveness and community impact. More pointedly, CFSA believes that by supporting organizational capacity building it will enable nonprofits to strengthen their operations and effectively address systemic issues that significantly impede the quality of life for individuals and families that they serve.

Organizations proposing a capacity building grant should address how the project strengthens the organization and how it will enhance its mission and benefit the community served. **Funding for capacity building is not designed to support a specific program or initiative**, but rather to enhance the overall daily operations of an organization. Examples of capacity building activities include the following:

- Strategic planning
- Enhanced marketing and communications
- Leadership capacity (Board or Executive)
- Improved fundraising and development
- Organizational assessments
- Staff and board training
- Technological improvements

When considering whether the activity that you seek to propose qualifies as organizational capacity building, you are encouraged to ask the following questions:

- **Does this activity allow my whole organization to operate more effectively, or does it have a limited effect on a program or initiative?** For example: Improving fundraising skills affects the entire organization over a long period. But having a fundraising event for a program only affects that program for that fiscal year.
- **What are the major operational areas that need attention and will help the organization grow and achieve its mission?** For example: There may be a need for financial management software, a donor database and upgraded communications materials. Not being able to do them all, an organization must select one that is going to move it forward strategically.
- **Is there a bottleneck in the organization that is stalling growth?** For example: An organization may need to recruit new volunteers, but not have a way to reach the local community, such as a website.

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 10% 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. Due to the purpose and nature of capacity building grants, CFSA does not require a percentage of other funding; however, preference is given to those requests that demonstrate other sources of support. CFSA grant amounts typically range between \$5,000 - \$15,000.

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; however, specific requests may be allowed by invitation only. If you have a capital project that you would like CFSA to consider, please contact CFSA program staff to discuss.
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Funding Considerations

CFSA seeks to fund proposals that:

- Focus on work aligned with one or more of CFSA's priority of *Closing the Opportunity Gap*
- Exhibit the potential to accomplish meaningful results or impact in one or more of 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 Brooke Switzer BSwitzer@communityfoundationsa.org or call 251-445-6295