



## 2019 Competitive Grant Cycle Guidelines

---

Through a competitive grant-making process, The Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) awards grants to local organizations 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 organizations 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 demonstrated need and evidence 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.

### 2019 Grant-Making Priorities: Closing the Opportunity Gap

In 2017, Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) joined the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON) comprised of 50+ foundations across the United States committed to narrowing the opportunity gap present among today's youth. Strong, thriving children grow into capable adults who can contribute to a prosperous and sustainable society.

CFSA has identified three focus areas for our eight-county footprint: **Family, Education, and Work**. In 2018, CFSA awarded nine (9) grants to organizations committed to innovative and transformative programs dedicated to increasing opportunities for the region's most vulnerable youth.

**For the 2019 Grant Cycle, CFSA will continue to support the "cradle-to-career" approach to youth development as part of the *Closing the Opportunity Gap Initiative* and will accept grant applications in the following four priorities:**

- 1. FAMILY: Promoting parenting education (ages: birth- 5)** The Foundation will work with community organizations to support evidence-based, tested and effective programs and activities that:
  - Aims to improve parenting practices by increasing a parent's knowledge of early childhood development
  - Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues
  - Increase children's' school readiness
- 2. EDUCATION: Increasing access to preschool education (ages: 3-5)** The Foundation will work with community organizations to support evidence-based, tested and effective programs and activities 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
- 3. EDUCATION: Increasing youth access to extracurricular activities (grades: K-12)** The Foundation will work with community organizations to support evidence-based, tested and effective programs and activities that:
- Provide access to the extracurricular and out-of-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
- 4. WORK: Expanding opportunities to help young people get well-paying jobs through workforce training (ages: 16-24)** The Foundation will work with community organizations to support evidence-based, tested and effective programs and activities that:
- Increase workforce readiness and job attainment for Opportunity Youth (ages 16-24 not in school and not employed)
  - Increase career-oriented educational opportunities for youth, particularly in low-income and/or rural areas
  - Increase educational attainment and financial literacy among working-age youth and young adults

### 2019 Grant Cycle Process & Timeline:

**February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019** – Invitation to submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) will be made available at [www.communityfoundationsa.org](http://www.communityfoundationsa.org) Please note, the format will be a series of questions and not a formal letter.

**March 14, 2019** – All LOIs must be submitted electronically via CFSA's Online Portal by 11:59 p.m. CST. LOIs submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

**April 1, 2019** - Select LOIs will be invited to submit a formal application. Application instructions and deadlines will be made available via email. Organizations will submit their formal applicant electronically using the CFSA Online Portal.

**April 19, 2019** – All formal applications must be submitted electronically using the CFSA Online Portal by 11:59 p.m. CST. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Hard copies will not be accepted.

**April 22 – May 10, 2019** – 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 CFSA. Applicants will be contacted via email to schedule phone interviews and/or site visits.



**July 15, 2019** - Applicants will be notified of final decision. Grant distribution (via check) will be disbursed in August upon completing a Grant Award Meeting hosted by the Community Foundation.

### **2019 Grant Types & Terms:**

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

1. **Program Grants:** CFSA is most interested in supporting sustainable, evidence-based 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 that, through program evaluation, show promise of effectiveness, value, 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. Program grants may not be used for general operating support or organizational capacity building. As a general rule, CFSA prefers program grant requests do not exceed 50% of the budget for the program/project/activity for which the application is seeking support. This demonstrates that the proposal has a diversified base of support and has some measure of community buy-in.
2. **Capacity Building Grants:** CFSA defines organizational capacity building as any strategy that improves and enhances an organization's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. CFSA recognizes great value in developing the internal capacities of organizations to increase their effectiveness and community impact. More pointedly, CFSA believes that by supporting organizational capacity building it will enable organizations 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 operations of an organization. Examples of capacity building activities include the following:

- Strategic planning, organizational assessments or evaluations
- Leadership development and training (Board, Executive or Staff)
- Enhanced marketing, branding and communications planning or technology
- Improved fundraising and fund development training or technology
- Database or technology 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 impact the entire organization over a long period. But having a fundraising event for a program only impacts 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 or innovation? For example: An organization may need to recruit new volunteers, but not have a way to reach the local community, such as a website or app.

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.

### **2019 Grant Cycle Amounts:**

CFSA grant amounts typically range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 in total, and may be requested for one or two years.

### **CFSA General Limitations, Restrictions & Requirements:**

**Geographic area:** Organizations must serve CFSA's 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 events or 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
- Tickets for charitable benefits or events
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, marital status, mental or physical ability or sexual orientation
- 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 Director of Operations to discuss.

Generally, organizations should not have an open, active grant with CFSA and must have met all grant reporting requirements of previous grant awards to be eligible to apply for a competitive grant. Large organizations with many branches or departments may be eligible to submit a grant proposal while another grant is active. Also, each organization is limited to one grant proposal for consideration during a single grant cycle. CFSA may give preference to organizations who have not received funding within the previous 18 – 24 months.



CFSA seeks to fund programs and projects 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

**2019 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 and must complete assigned reports.

**Please direct any additional questions you may have about the CFSA competitive grant-making process to Brooke Switzer, Director of Community Initiatives**  
**[BSwitzer@communityfoundationsa.org](mailto:BSwitzer@communityfoundationsa.org) or call 251-445-6295**