Community Grants 2021 Guidelines

The Miami Foundation is constantly growing and evolving to strengthen Greater Miami. For over 50 years, we’ve been building endowment funds with generous donors to be a permanent community resource. Each year through Community Grants, we use these endowments to address Greater Miami’s most pressing needs, while honoring the intent of funds donated to the Foundation.

The COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice reckonings of 2020 have dramatically redefined the present and future. Along with responding, we sought to listen and learn. We have revised our approach to better support nonprofits as they strive to recover, innovate and adapt how they can positively impact residents’ lives and power long-term progress.

Please carefully review these guidelines and the Community Grants Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), as the program has changed from previous years. The guidelines below outline the 2021 program, application process, and how to connect with Foundation team members.

Across all funding categories, we’ve used the phrase “proposed work” to explain that the Foundation welcomes various approaches including direct services, advocacy, community organizing, partnerships, or others appropriate to your mission and vision. We have also created more flexible funding options to better support this work. Throughout the guidelines, the descriptions share our intent but should not limit your potential approaches.

The guidelines are being made available in Spanish and Haitian Creole as an important way for nonprofits to engage diverse communities in shaping proposal plans. Applications will need to be submitted in English.

We welcome your feedback and look forward to working and learning together.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

We will invest a total of $1.25 million across the categories below. They represent the areas for which we have funds available to build community resources, opportunity and progress.

- **Access to Health and Wellness | $225,000** | Improve health outcomes by connecting people to quality health resources and education, reducing health disparities or tackling contributing social determinants of health
- **Economic Stability | $225,000** | Improve residents’ ability to meet local affordability challenges by helping them secure affordable, stable housing, recover from financial crisis and/or increase earning potential
- **Inclusion of People with Diverse Abilities | $150,000** | Expand opportunities for people with disabilities to lead purposeful, productive lives and be increasingly integrated into all aspects of community life. See our summary of this funding category here.
- **Sustainable Environment | $150,000** | Develop a healthier, more livable community by preserving our unique environment, building resiliency amid climate change, and expanding local awareness and stewardship
- **Thriving Youth and Families | $500,000** | Expand opportunities for youth to excel from early childhood to career through high-quality education, enrichment experiences and personal development that build resilience, or work that ensures their safety and stability. This can include support for adult caregivers so the whole family can thrive. Note: We welcome approaches that include the arts and creative expression to advance personal development.
PRIORITIES

Our priorities are what we will look for to evaluate a proposed program, project or community work. These priorities will serve as criteria during the review process.

- **Advance equity of marginalized people and communities**: We will prioritize working with marginalized communities. This includes approaches that tackle disparities around race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors. We will focus attention on people of color and the organizations they lead, particularly to address Black racial equity and justice given their deep roots in historic racism.

- **Focus on progress**: We will support work guided by tangible indicators of growth and progress for people and communities that are best suited to the type of work – whether it is direct services or advocacy and organizing work to change institutions and systems. The results will have strong potential to create timely and impactful opportunities for individuals and communities to advance and thrive.

- **Build solutions**: We seek approaches that identify underlying barriers or challenges that hold people or communities back from their highest potential. Strong approaches will strive to address the barriers and challenges in ways that can improve peoples’ current situations and help equip them for the long-term.

- **Collaborate with community**: Authentic relationships with the people affected by issues and disparities are vital to inform and shape the most effective work. We will prioritize organizations that intentionally gather and apply community guidance or leadership to add valuable insight into solutions.

- **Sustainability**: We seek to support nonprofits’ goals for high-quality, viable work while also investing in what each organization needs to be strong and healthy. We will look for proposals that reflect how each nonprofit envisions that funds can be best used to power its proposed goals while also supporting its capacity.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with an active IRS status pursuing activities with a clear charitable purpose as well as projects with an established fiscal sponsor that meets this criteria. The proposed work must primarily serve Miami-Dade County residents. While we will give preference to investing in nonprofits based in Greater Miami, we also encourage partnerships with groups outside our community to bring in their ideas and capacity. If you have a current grant through any Foundation program, you must be in compliance with that grant to apply.

Each nonprofit may submit one proposal. We welcome collaboration – for collaborative efforts between two or more nonprofits, the partners should select one nonprofit to serve as lead applicant. Any awarded funds are to be used for the sole purpose of the partnership’s work, and the lead applicant would be responsible for managing the funds on behalf of the partners. The lead applicant organization may also submit a separate individual application for its own work. Colleges and universities may submit up to three proposals, but each should be from different departments or colleges.

USE OF FUNDS

**Grant Size**: Our maximum grant award is $40,000. Our average grant award is about $20,000.

**Types of Funding**: For greater flexibility, nonprofits can select from two options. For both types, nonprofits will have discretion in proposing how funds are used to advance their goals that align with the program guidelines.

- **Program Support**: Funds to support a particular program or initiative you propose to start, sustain or grow.

- **Mission Building Support**: Funds can be used more generally to advance organization-wide work and goals that drive your mission, rather than a specific program or project. Or, there may be some key aspect of your operations or infrastructure that is holding you back from achieving your overall mission and aspirations. Your proposed goals would focus on how you seek to be a stronger community resource. The funds can be used for more general expenses, but they should help you unlock your potential for greater community impact.

**Approaches**: We welcome a variety of approaches within the funding categories and priorities including direct services, advocacy, community organizing, partnerships, and others as appropriate to your mission and vision.
Restrictions: As required by IRS rules, grant funds may not be used: a) to carry on lobbying activities as defined under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; b) for partisan political activities that are prohibited under Section 501(c)(3); c) to make a grant to any individual for travel, study or other similar purposes or to make a sub-grant to any other organization unless the grant complies with Section 4945(d)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code and the grant is part of the approved purpose; or (d) to undertake any activity for any purpose other than the charitable and educational purposes specified in Section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Community Grants will have a two-stage process: an initial Idea Stage and a Full Proposal Stage for invited applicants based on review of the submitted applications.

Idea Stage: To respect your time investment, this first stage is brief. Here is what organizations will submit:

- **Organization Profile:** This will ask for basic contact information, budget and staff size, and diversity, equity and inclusion information to help the Foundation learn about the diversity of our reach and equity of our funding practices. You will select your funding category and provide a short statement about your mission and the purpose of the funding request.

- **Narrative:** The narrative should be a brief summary of what you seek to do and how it connects with the Community Grants program priorities. The entire narrative will amount to a little over one page of text and ask you to answer two questions:
  1. Describe the local problem or opportunity you seek to address. What is your vision for change, and your role and goals to make it happen? (3,000 characters including spaces)
  2. Describe your proposed work in that role and related goals over the next year. How will you create opportunities and progress for people and communities in line with each of the Community Grants priorities? (4,000 characters including spaces)

- **Supplement Information:** You will have open text space to share other information you think is important for reviewers to know about your organization or your proposed work. You will also have the option to upload attachments you think best convey your work (e.g. media, news stories, brief reports).

Idea Stage Review: Applications will be evaluated according to review criteria and metrics that align with the program priorities. We consider applications on both their individual strength and in the context of other submissions.

Full Proposals: Nonprofits that reflect the strongest potential to build community resources, opportunity and progress will be invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal will request more information about implementation, target populations, outcomes, use of funds and sustainability. Full proposal questions will be shared at the time of invitation.

The Foundation will engage review committees to ensure rich perspectives from people with personal and professional experiences related to each funding category. The full proposal stage will include an optional opportunity for invited new applicants and emerging nonprofits to have virtual conversation with reviewers.

CONNECT WITH US

Office Hours: Before submitting, we encourage applicants to sign up for office hours with Foundation staff. This time will allow us to learn more about each other and discuss what you are planning to submit. [Click here to schedule through Calendly.](#)

Timeline:

- Idea Stage Applications Due: Friday, February 26, 2021, at 4 p.m.
- Full Proposal Invitations Released: Friday, March 26, 2021
- Full Proposals Due: Wednesday, April 21, 2021
- Estimated Notification of Grant Awards: Friday, June 4, 2021
- Grant Period: June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022

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