



## Community Grants 2021 – Frequently Asked Questions (February 3, 2021)

### BACKGROUND AND KEY CHANGES

#### Where does the funding for Community Grants come from?

Since 1967, over 100 generous donors have created permanent endowment funds at The Miami Foundation. They entrusted us to support, forever, the issues they cared about. Each year, we use a board-approved spending percentage from these funds to address Greater Miami's current pressing needs while honoring the donors' intent. These endowed funds generated the \$1.25 million we will award in Community Grants this year.

#### What organizations are eligible to apply? And, does their location matter?

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. Your nonprofit itself does not have to be headquartered in Miami-Dade County, but we strongly encourage organizations based outside Greater Miami to collaborate with local partners to be most effective.

We welcome organizations using various approaches, including direct services, advocacy, community organizing, partnerships, or others appropriate to your mission and vision.

#### What is the “Idea Stage”? What information will you be looking for?

The Idea Stage is our revised approach to the “pre-proposal.” We have tried to simplify this initial stage and make it less time-intensive for nonprofits. You can use our [Online Application Worksheet](#) to see what you will need to submit online. The first part includes the typical information that provides a profile of your organization.

What is different this year is the narrative portion of the application. There are two broad questions where you will provide an “executive” summary of what you seek to do and then how it connects with each of the Community Grants program priorities explained in the guidelines. We estimate the total narrative will be a little over one page of written text if you use all the space allowed. The application also provides optional questions to provide additional information including brief supplemental written information, a supplemental attachment of your choice or creation that best captures your work (limited to two pages), and a link to a public site or media item. In addition, our team is holding [Community Grants office hours](#) to talk about your application.

#### How have the funding categories changed?

Our funding categories must always stay true to the donors' intent. However, we review them every year and make updates to include new funds, the most effective use of funds, and timely needs and opportunities. In light of the major health and justice crises our community has experienced, the 2021 update process was particularly essential and robust, and we engaged in deep community conversations for insight. The revisions we made are intended to clearly focus on **how we can build stronger** community resources, opportunities and progress.

#### What happened to Creativity? If I previously applied to that category, can I apply this year?

We are very committed to supporting Creativity. However, we have changed how arts and culture fit into this program to make more clear and transparent how we have been using these modest funds. Creativity funding was already focused on supporting the arts as a powerful source of personal or community transformation. You will see in the 2021 guidelines that creativity is incorporated under **Thriving Youth and Families** with this note: *We welcome approaches that include the arts and creative expression to advance personal development.* We have also been extremely fortunate to dramatically expand resources for arts and culture outside of Community Grants. Please note that in partnership with The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation, the Foundation will reopen the Pérez CreARTE Grants Program in late April 2021.

### **How are the Program Priorities used?**

The five Program Priorities **apply across all of the funding categories**. They reflect what the Foundation is most interested in regardless of the issue. They describe something that we and our nonprofit partners together can **build more of** – more opportunity, progress, and success – to **create impact and change** on the issues. For the Idea Stage, you will generally summarize how your proposed work is connected to each of the five priorities. Foundation reviewers will use these same priorities in our Review Criteria and Metrics to guide what we will look for. To help nonprofits think through what they want to include in their applications – and to create transparency – we have shared the [Review Criteria and Metrics](#) we plan to use on our website. More information is provided in this document under, “What is the review and selection process?”.

### **Help me understand the new options for Program Support and Mission Building Support.**

We wanted to create more flexibility that can help nonprofits be increasingly powerful community resources. We encourage you to approach your request based first on your current goals for community impact. The two options provide you more leeway in how funds can best help fuel those goals. We know this may be especially valuable as nonprofits continue to recover, innovate and adapt based on the crises of 2020.

Your current priority may be funding for a specific program or project, in which case, **Program Support** is the appropriate choice. It typically fits those proposing to deliver a particular service or do a time-specific project.

We added **Mission Building Support** to recognize that some groups – such as those focused on advocacy and organizing – have varied, organization-wide activities that drive their mission and goals for social change. But, they don't define them as programs or projects. Our intent is to have an option more suited to supporting this type of work and open up new possibilities for any nonprofit with proposed work and goals that do not fit a program or project approach.

Also, any organization might have some pressing operational or infrastructure need where the lack of money to pay for it hinders their overall capacity to advance their mission goals. Examples, purely to illustrate, might include: *“If I just had administrative or management support for X, it would free up staff to do more for our community.”* Or, *“If we could just upgrade our technology, I could shift my teams' time from manual work to do more for our community.”*

Whichever option you pursue, we will be looking at your goals for impacting the community and **your** best thinking on how the requested funds can help unlock your potential to achieve them.

### **Why does the Foundation ask for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) information?**

Equity is a core internal Foundation value. We strive to be always learning and improving our practices so they reflect equity. We will use the DEI information to advance our understanding of who we are and are not reaching, the equity of our funding patterns, and the overall diversity and gaps in Greater Miami's nonprofit sector. We ask about the executive leader, senior leadership (meaning director level and above) and board since they tend to significantly influence the organization's direction. We hope it will also prompt nonprofits to examine how diversity, equity and inclusion are reflected in their organizations.

Our new guidelines enable you to share how your work reflects equity. You will tell us how what you propose seeks to advance equity for marginalized communities and how you collaborate with communities, and you can indicate the geographic locations where your work takes place. The DEI information will complement this by helping us understand who is leading the nonprofit's mission and direction. While we encourage you to provide this information to help the Foundation learn, we have provided options for Unknown and Prefer Not to Provide.

### **What is the review and selection process for Idea Stage applications?**

The Idea Stage applications will be reviewed by Foundation programs team members with the support of our Senior Vice President and Strategy Advisor. All bring a deep knowledge of community and relationships we can tap for even broader perspective. They will use the [Review Criteria and Metrics](#) to guide their evaluation of each application's strength. In addition to rating applications individually, reviewers will also consider the strength of each one relative to others in that funding category, as well as the diversity of geographic reach – and gaps – in the entire pool of applications. *(continued on following page)*

The Foundation views transparency as key to advancing equity, so we are making public the Review Criteria and Metrics we plan to use. We do not expect them to change fundamentally. However, we may need to adjust them to **ensure fairness and equity** based on issues we could not anticipate before using the metrics in real-time.

At the Full Proposal stage, the Foundation will engage external reviewers for each funding category. They will ensure that selection is guided by perspectives from people with community experiences and people with expertise and subject matter knowledge, as well as Foundation Trustees and Fundholders. This stage will include factors related more to feasibility and capacity.

#### **Will I be able to get feedback on my application?**

Yes! After the Foundation completes each stage, organizations can reach out to understand their individual rating and the other considerations – indicated above – that factored into the Foundation's decisions.

### **OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS**

#### **My organization works with a marginalized group not listed in the guidelines. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes! The Foundation's overarching priority is to advance the equity of marginalized people and communities. Those stated in the guidelines are some of the most pressing ones, but the list is in no way intended to be comprehensive and does not exclude any organization serving groups not explicitly stated from applying.

#### **I'm a college or university. Can I apply?**

Yes. Colleges and universities are eligible to apply for Community Grants. You may submit up to three proposals, but each should be from a different department or college.

#### **I'm a church or faith-based organization. Can I apply?**

Yes. We welcome applications from faith-based organizations that provide programs, services or activities for the broader community that align with our guidelines. However, we do not fund programs or activities focused on spreading a particular religious belief or that are limited to serving members of your organization.

#### **Does my organization need to be a certain size to apply for Community Grants?**

No. We welcome organizations of all sizes that are eligible and are working toward the Community Grants priorities.

#### **Can I apply in partnership with another organization? How do you handle this type of application?**

Yes! We welcome and encourage collaboration. The partners should select one nonprofit to serve as the lead applicant for the partnership to Community Grants. 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.

#### **Can I apply for the same program I applied for, or was funded for, last year?**

Yes – however, given that we have revised our guidelines, we encourage all organizations that may have received past funding to review the 2021 program carefully and consider your work relative to the new guidelines. You may certainly apply for the same program. But, you may see that it connects to our new priorities differently.

#### **I have a current grant from another Foundation funding program. Can I still apply for a Community Grant?**

Yes. We do not limit nonprofits to receiving funding from just one of our programs. You can apply for Community Grants as long as your other current grant(s) is in good standing.

#### **Does my program or approach need to be “new” to apply?**

No. Community Grants seeks to sustain, grow or start community work that advances our priorities.

#### **What if I have more questions?**

First, make sure you have reviewed the Community Grants guidelines. If you still have questions or would like to discuss your application, sign up for [Community Grants office hours](#) with a member of the Foundation team.