Putting Your Best Proposal Forward: A Grant Writing Technical Assistance Workshop

Presented by:
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Community Foundation
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL NEW YORK

Today's Session

- Brief History of the Community Foundation for SCNY/ Staff Roles
- Philosophy and Granting Goals/ Priority Issues
- CFSCNY Funding Opportunities for 2026
- Managing Your Application in Foundant
- Budgets
- Grant Management 101
- Reporting/Payment Process and Requests
- Helpful Hints
- Questions

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What is a Community Foundation?

- A community foundation is a philanthropic organization which serves the residents of a defined geographic area.
- It is nonprofit, tax-exempt, publicly supported, and autonomous.
- The purpose of a community foundation is to grow an endowment that will continually benefit its defined area through grantmaking, scholarships and other charitable initiatives.
- There are close to 900 community foundations in the United States.
- How to locate your local community foundation

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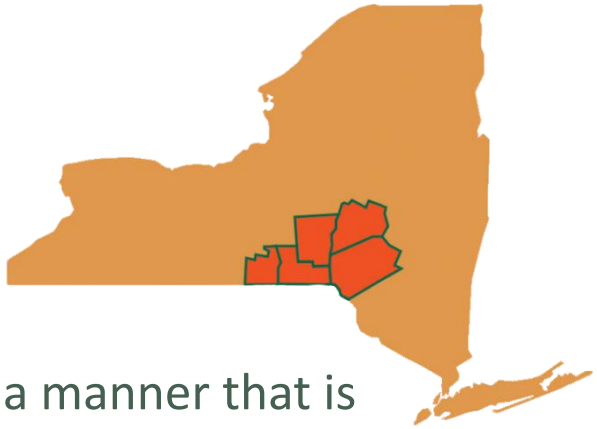
A Little About CFSCNY



- Began operation in 1997
- Mission: "To offer caring individuals an effective way to endow their community in a manner that is responsible, responsive and lasting."
- We serve Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Otsego, and Delaware counties.
- We offer grants for operating, capacity building, capital, economic/workforce development, and program.
- Current number of funds: 170 with an endowment of about $52 million dollars.
- Granted over $3 million dollars in 2025.
- Offer technical assistance such as guidance on grant writing and networking opportunities with other organizations and experts.

"For **good**. For **ever**."

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Our Staff

Tina Barber: Executive Director

Darlene Cempa: Finance Officer

Stacy Mastrogiacomo: Program Officer

Shawn Graham: Development Officer

Shaina Orwan: Communications Officer

Aundraya Dancy: Office Manager

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Role of the Program Officer

Provide technical assistance and capacity building support to organizations

Staff liaison to CF Grant Panels and the Grant Committee

Oversees the grant process; prepares each year's grant guidelines and criteria at direction of the Board of Directors

Reviews proposals, performs due diligence; attends all proposal review meetings (Program Officer has no vote)

Once grant is awarded, prepares grant contracts, reviews periodic reports, performs due diligence, including site visits as necessary

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Who May Qualify?

- Any 501(c)(3) where a grant will benefit significantly (but not necessarily exclusively) residents of the Foundation's service area: Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego and/or Tioga counties.
- Certain local government agencies, municipalities and public-school systems within the Foundation's service area.
- Organizations requiring a 501(c)(3) as a fiscal sponsor may be eligible to apply. Must have prior approval from Program Officer.
- Some grant opportunities have other restrictions, please refer to grant guidelines prior to applying.

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The Goals of Grant-Making from CFSCNY

Funding priorities determined through our Needs Assessment. Our focus areas include housing, mental health, poverty, building nonprofit capacity, and ensuring equitable access to capital. Our goals are to:

- Expand Access to Community Resources
- Strengthen Organizational Capacity
- Ensure Long-Term Sustainability for organizations
- Enhance Quality of Life for Community Members
- Preserve and Maintain Community Spaces
- Foster Innovation in Programs and Ideas

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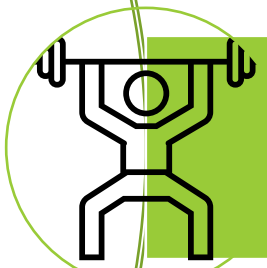
Grantmaking Culture and Philosophy

We respect applicants as the experts in their field.

We respect our advisors.

Partial funding should only be awarded with caution.

Funding indirect costs is the right thing to do.



Competent, trained, & adequately compensated staff are essential for successful programs & healthy organizations.

Transparency is fundamental.

OUR GRANTEES ARE OUR PARTNERS

The grantor-grantee relationship is pivotal for converting community resources into impact. The funder provides resources and the grantee provides services; one can not function without the other. We practice trust-based philanthropy and operate through a culture of “yes”

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Priority Issues 2026*

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- Housing
- Racial Justice and Equity
- Arts and Culture
- Non-Profit Capacity Building
- Mental Health
- Food Security
- Early Childhood Education and Care

*All priority areas are determined through the regular review of current qualitative and quantitative data

CFSCNY Grant Opportunities for 2026

Spring and Fall Community Grant Cycle Guidelines

In an effort to provide flexible funding to trusted nonprofit partners, these grant cycles will offer unrestricted *general operating support* in our five-county region.

Funding

- Grant requests can be a maximum of **$20,000**
- One year grant term
- Number of grants awarded will depend on request sizes

Funding Criteria

To help manage expectations and guide the review process, we will prioritize organizations that:

- Are experiencing or anticipating public or private funding cuts
- Serve rural and under-resourced communities
- Are led by or serve historically underrepresented or marginalized populations
- Have a clear need for flexible operating support to sustain or stabilize their work

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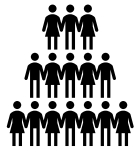
Spring and Fall Community Grant Cycle Guidelines Contd.

Who is eligible to apply?



- 501(c)3 organizations in our five-county region that have an established relationship with the Foundation
- We may consider fiscally sponsored organizations with prior approval on a case-by-case basis
- This cycle is **not intended for first-time applicants or new organizations to the Foundation**

Who is not eligible to apply?

- Organizations with a current multi-year grant from CFSCNY
- Organizations that received the prior Community Grant Cycle award
- Municipalities and School Districts

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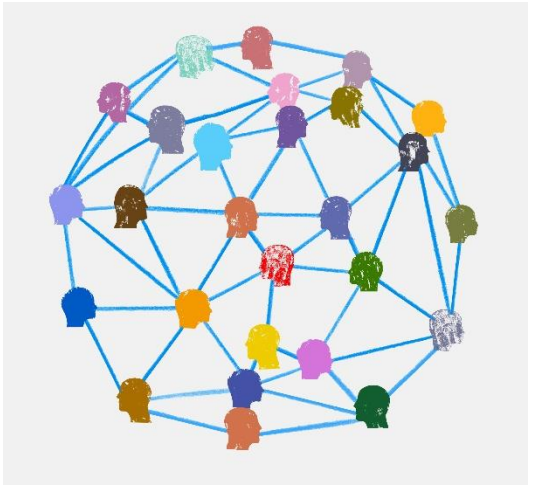
Community Grant Cycle: How It Works



Timeline:

Spring cycle open now, application deadline: Monday, March 16th

Fall cycle will open Monday, August 3rd, application deadline: Monday, September 21st

- **Screening LOI (Letter of Intent)**
  - Used to determine eligibility
  - Once eligibility is confirmed full application will be assigned
- **Full Application**
  - Short and focused- designed to respect your time
  - Aligned with our priorities- no “extra” or unrelated narrative sections
  - Centered on your organization's reality- focuses on current challenges, emphasizes how flexible support would help right now
  - Designed to inform decisions

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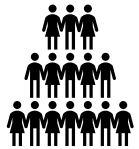
2026 Arts and Culture Fund

Arts and Culture Fund Guidelines

Who is eligible to apply?



- 501(c)3 organizations in our five-county region
- We may consider fiscally sponsored organizations with prior approval on a case-by-case basis
- Theatres, arts councils, museums, non-profit galleries, and performing arts organizations

Types of support available

- Capital
- Program
- Operating Support
- Capacity Building
- Season or Performance Support

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Arts and Culture Fund Details

- Cycle will be held once per year
- Award requests of up to $20,000
- Extended LOI Process
  - LOI is required prior to application
  - After LOI is reviewed, selected organizations will be invited to submit a full application
- Cycle is open now
  - LOI Deadline is Friday, February 20th
  - If invited, full application deadline is Friday, March 27th

This opportunity is for organizations whose primary purpose is for the practice, performance and interpretation of the arts. This is not an opportunity for other types of organizations that might want to add an arts component to their existing programming

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Small Grants Program

Small Grants Program

Who is eligible to apply?

- 501(c)3 organizations in our five-county region
- We may consider fiscally sponsored organizations with prior approval on a case-by-case basis
- School districts and municipalities

Types of support available

- Program
- Small Capital Purchases
- Operating Support
- Capacity Building Projects
- Economic and Community Development

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Small Grants Program Details

- Considers requests under $5,000
- Streamlined application with screening LOI
- 4 cycles per calendar year
- Organizations can apply to one cycle per year
- Cycle Dates:
  - February cycle opens by mid-December- application deadline January 20th
  - April cycle opened January 26th- application deadline March 23rd
  - June cycle will open March 30th- application deadline May 18th
  - October cycle will open July 20th- application deadline September 21st

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Micro-Grants Program

Grant Criteria

- Proposals may be submitted for small purchases, supplies, program incentives, etc.
- Grants will be awarded from $250-$500.
- Applications will be considered as they are received and a decision will be made within 10 business days.
- An organization may submit one application per calendar year.
- Cycle will close when funds have been expended for the year.

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Hygiene Fund Micro-Grant Program

Grant Criteria

- Proposals may be submitted for the purchase of hygiene supplies for your hygiene pantry or program or towards the creation of a hygiene pantry or program.
- Grants will be awarded from $250-$500.
- Applications will be considered as they are received and a decision will be made within 10 business days.
- An organization may submit one application per calendar year.
- Cycle will close when funds have been expended for the year.

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The Women's Fund

Women's Fund Cycle Details

This grant opportunity supports projects or programs that use innovative and/or collaborative approaches to create positive change and that demonstrate the potential to improve the well-being or women and/or girls throughout their lives.

- Once cycle per year. Cycle will open March 9th, application deadline April 20th, decisions announced June 17th.
- Types of support available: capital, program, capacity building, operating, economic and community development.
- Award requests can be between $1,000-$10,000
- Examples of types of support:
  - Leadership development and education
  - Personal safety, serving women and girls in crisis situations
  - Promoting economic self-sufficiency
  - Supporting healthy decision-making and taking control of one's life by improving self-esteem and strengthening social support.

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Community Foundation Library Fund

Community Foundation Library Fund Details

Designed to enhance library outreach efforts and enrich their services while complementing rather than replacing traditional tax-based funding.

- Grant applications will be accepted from public libraries or historical societies **in collaboration with public libraries** in Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga counties.
- Types of support available: small capital improvements, program, capacity building, community development. Does not fund operating support.
- Considers proposals from $500-$2,500.
- Will have two cycles in 2026. Spring cycle has already been completed. Fall cycle will open on July 20th with an application deadline of September 28th.
- Libraries are welcome to apply through both cycles; however, priority will be given to organizations who did not receive funding through the previous cycle.

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Racial Justice and Equity Fund Cycle

Racial Justice and Equity Fund Cycle Details

Prioritizes programs and organizations focusing on marginalized communities in areas of Leadership and Advancement, Health and Wellness, Business and Wealth Creation, Arts and Culture, Civic Engagement, and Youth Education.

- Welcomes proposals from qualified non-profit 501c.3 organizations that seek to provide projects or programs that build community dialogue, increase the capacity of Black-led organizations supporting historically underserved communities, promote racial justice and equity, and counteract systemic racism, in the region served by the Foundation. New or established organizations, programs and projects serving BIPOC populations, are all invited to apply.
- Types of support available: program, capacity building, economic and community development.
- Award requests can be between $500-$10,000.
- Grant cycle will open on March 9th with an application deadline of May 11th.

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Chobani Community Impact Fund

- **Who May Qualify?**
  Any 501(c)(3) where a grant will benefit significantly residents of: ***Chenango, and/or Otsego counties.***
- **Types of Support Available:**

  The Chobani Community Impact Fund plans to distribute $100,000 in grants to organizations that are passionate about making a difference in their communities. The typical grant will range from $5,000 - $20,000.
- 2026 Guidelines TBD. Last few years have focused on food security in school-based programs.
- Timeline TBD- typically opens mid-August with December decisions.
- Extended LOI Process
  - LOI is required prior to application
  - After LOI is reviewed, selected organizations will be invited to submit a full application

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Paul G. and Miriam B. Mattern Fund

Welcomes proposals from organizations seeking to enrich the cultural life and/or the social well-being of the residents of the village and township of Walton, NY.

- Types of support available: capital, program, capacity building.
- Grants will be awarded from $500-$5,000.
- Matching grants are encouraged but not required.
- 2026 cycle will open April 20th with an application deadline of May 29th.

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Tioga County Senior Citizens Fund

- Organizations which serve the needs, interests, and well-being of seniors in Tioga County may apply.
- Award amounts TBD
- 2026 cycle will open on April 20th with an application deadline of May 29th.

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2026 Grant Cycle Dates

Small Grants	**Feb.**	Opened 12/8/25 - Due 1/20/26 - Decisions 2/18/26
	April	Opens 1/26/26 - Due 3/23/26 - Decisions 4/15/26
	June	Opens 3/30/26 - Due 5/18/26 - Decisions 6/17/26
	Oct.	Opens 7/20/26 - Due 9/21/26 - Decisions 10/21/26
Community Grants	**Spring**	Opens 1/16/26 - Due 3/16/26 - Decisions 4/15/26
	Fall	Opens 8/3/26 - Due 9/21/26 - Decisions 10/21/26
Arts & Culture Cycle		Opens 1/16/26 LOI due 2/20/26 Full applications due 3/27/26 Decisions 4/15/26
Women's Fund		Opens 3/9/26 - Due 4/20/26 - Decisions 6/17/26
Racial Justice and Equity		Opens 3/9/26 - Due 5/11/26 - Decisions 6/17/26
Library	**Spring**	Opens 12/8/25 - Due 1/26/26 - Decisions 2/18/26
	Fall	Opens 7/20/26 - Due 9/28/26 - Decisions 10/21/26
Chobani Community Impact Cycle		Opens LOI due **DATES TBD** Full applications due
Microgrants and Hygiene Fund		Opens 1/16/26 - Ongoing until funds are expended
Mattern Fund and Tioga County Senior Citizens Fund		Opens 4/20/26 - Due 5/29/26 - Decisions 6/17/26
Catskills Campaign for the Future		Opens 11/1/26 - Due 11/30/26 - Decisions 2/17/27

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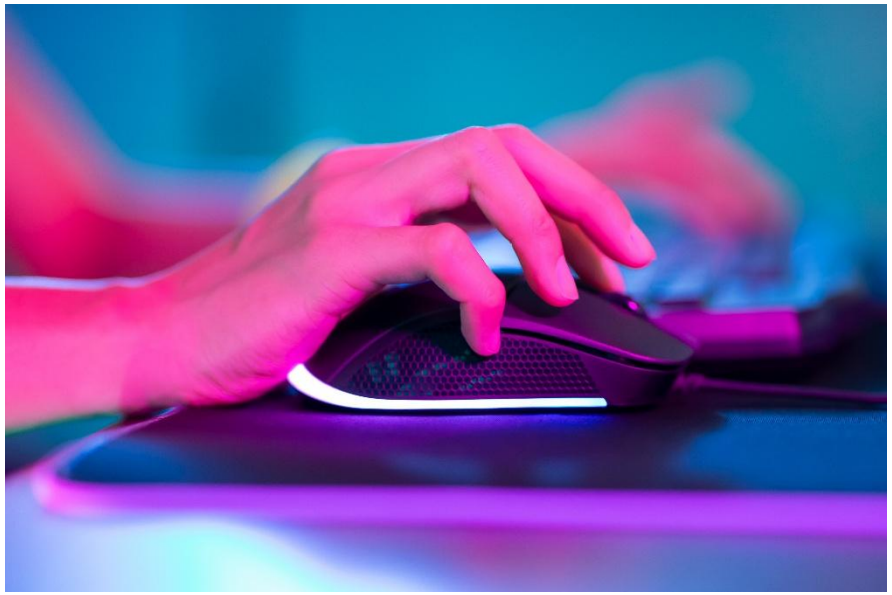
Additional Information:

- Visit our new website: donorswhocare.org for
  - *Account Access
  - *FAQ sheets
  - *All grant guidelines and cycle dates
  - *Request for Payment Form
  - *Application and report samples
  - *Applicant tutorials
  - *A copy of this workshop



- Branched questions on LOI and Application
- Religious institution guidance and screening

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Adjusting Grantmaking for Uncertain Times

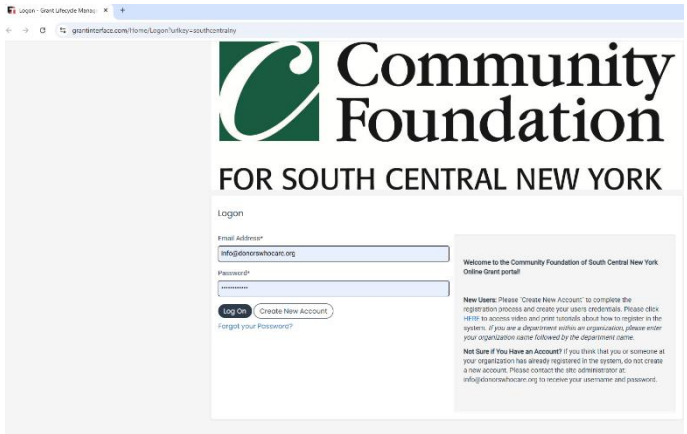
- **Funding Landscape Changes:** Potential shifts in federal and state funding impacting grant capacity.
- **Strategic Grantmaking:** Prioritizing organizational needs over wants, especially early in the year.
- **Reserving Funds for Urgent Needs:** Ensuring flexibility to address unforeseen community or organizational emergencies.
- **Our Commitment Remains Strong:** We will continue our work and will fully allocate our funding by year-end, but with a more cautious, wait-and-see approach.

What This Means for Your Grant Application

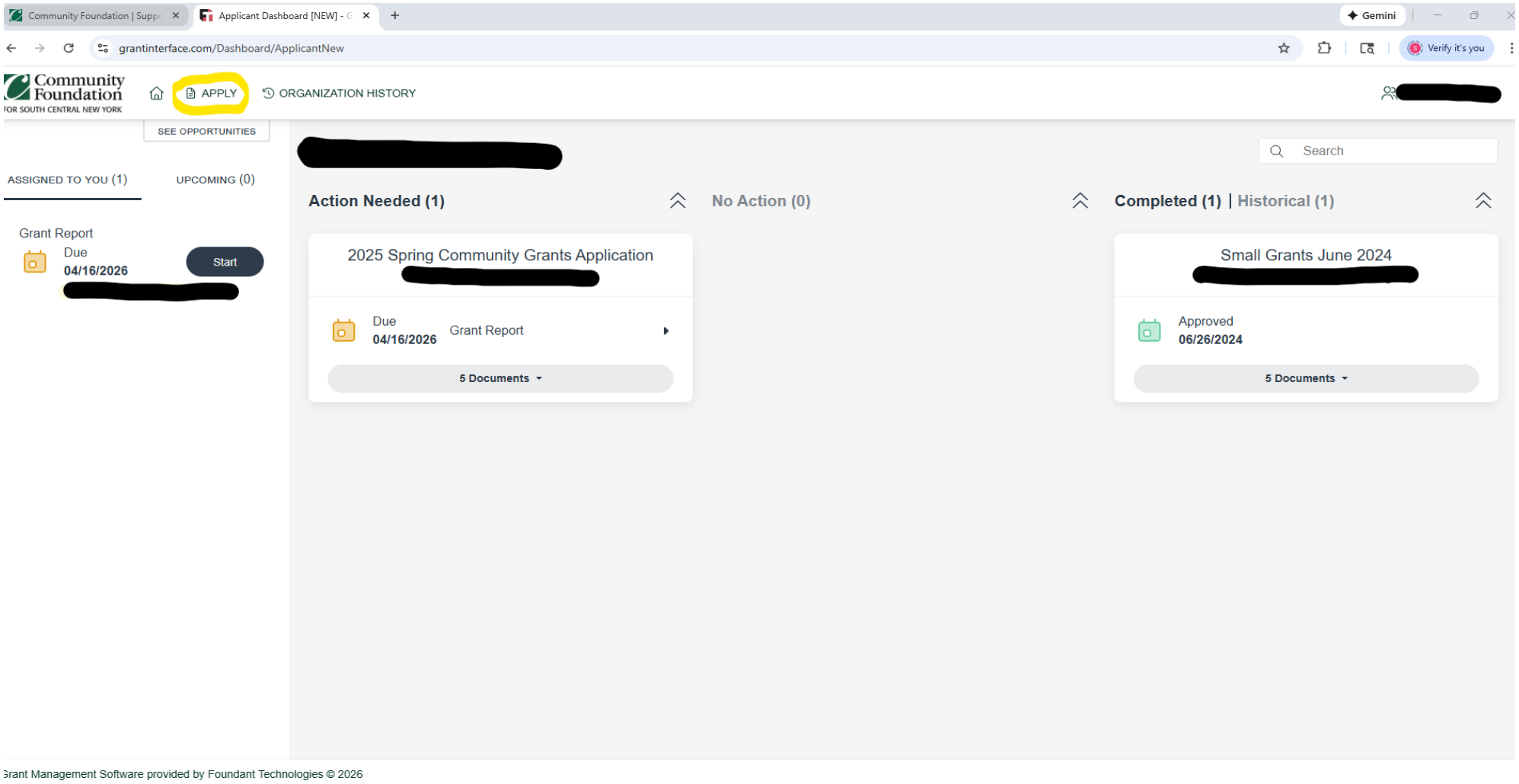
- **Focus on Core Needs:** Demonstrate how your request supports essential services or organizational sustainability.
- **Clarity and Impact:** Be clear about community impact and why this funding is critical now.
- **Prepare for Tough Decisions:** Some requests we have funded in the past may not be approved.
- **We're Still Here for You:** We remain committed partners. Reach out with questions, ideas, or just to check in.
- **Stay Connected:** Follow our website and social media for updates on convenings, capacity-building trainings, workshops, and information-sharing opportunities.

How Do I Begin?

1. FAQ-Where do I begin?
2. Each organization should only have one account. If you are unsure if your organization has an account or if you need to be added as a contact on your account, please reach out for help.
3. You can access the online system through our website or by using this link.
4. This is what the log in page will look like:



Your Dashboard:



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APPLY ORGANIZATION HISTORY

[redacted]

Small Grants April 2026

Small Grants

Program Guidelines

Eligibility

The Community Foundation for South Central New York welcomes proposals of $5,000 and under from qualified non-profit 501c.3 organizations in our 5-county

See More

Closes
03/23/2026

Preview Apply

CFSCNY Arts and Culture Fund 2026

2026 Arts Cycle Guidelines

Inquiries: To make an inquiry to the Arts Cycle, please go to www.donorswhocare.org and log-in or create an account at the link provided under our "Grant Seekers" tab. After successfully logging on, click the highlighted link "CFSCNY Arts and Culture Fund 2026" complete and submit the "LOI". If the inquiry is selected by our panel, you will be asked to

See More

Closes
03/27/2026

Preview Apply

Hygiene Fund Cycle 2026

Hygiene Fund Program Guidelines

Eligibility

The Community Foundation for South Central New York welcomes proposals of $500 and under from qualified non-profit 501c.3 organizations in our 5-county service region which includes Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego

See More

Open

Preview Apply

Micro-Grants 2026

Micro-Grants Program Guidelines

Eligibility

The Community Foundation for South Central New York welcomes proposals of $500 and under from qualified non-profit 501c.3 organizations in our 5-county service region which includes Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego

See More

Open

Preview Apply

2026 Spring Community Grants Application

Spring 2026 Community Grant Guidelines

In response to ongoing financial uncertainty facing nonprofit organizations, The Community Foundation for South Central New York has shifted the Community

CF Library Fund 2026 Spring Cycle

Community Foundation Library Fund Guidelines

Grant Management Software provided by Foundant Technologies © 2026

Budgets

Project Budget

A project budget helps us understand the scope or your request

- Big Picture is What Matters
  - We are looking for a reasonable, realistic snapshot of costs, it should detail SPECIFICALLY what your award will be allocated to
  - Budgets do not have to be overly detailed and do not need to be in any specific format, use what works best for you
- Match the Story
  - Your budget should align with what you described in your application
  - Numbers should generally make sense with the activities and needs outlined
- Show the Full Picture
  - Include major expense categories (not every line item)
  - Reflect how this project or work is supported overall including in kind support
- Estimates are OK
  - We understand costs may change over time, do your best to estimate the costs

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Sample Project Budget

Samaritan Counseling Center Website Modernization and Digital Intake Project 12-month budget period Total Project Amount: $5,060			
Phase 1 Website Redesign			
Category	Project Expenses	In Kind Revenue	Explanation
Website Redesign (8 hours)	$1,280	$350	Refresh, update, streamline flow, collaborate with staff, vendor to reduce fee for service as in kind
Website Development (29 hours)	$1,740	$350	Standardize information, update information, update google ads, streamline navigation, vendor to reduce fee for service as in kind
Phase 2 Create online intake forms			
Form Design (6 hours)	$960	$350	Design and create intake forms, vendor to reduce fee for service as in kind
Form Development (18 hours	$1,080	$350	Collaborate with staff, review and develop full intake packet, vendor to reduce fee for service as in kind
Total Budget			
Budget Total	$5,060	$1,400	Total Project cost ($5,060)-in kind revenue ($1,400)= Grant Request $3,660
Total Grant Request: $3,660	Total Grant Request represents the total project cost ($5,060), minus in-kind revenue ($1,400).		

Organizational Budget

The organizational budget helps us understand the size and overall financial picture of your organization.

- Big Picture Overview
  - Shows your **total annual operating budget**
  - Helps us understand organizational scale- not program detail
  - Gives the review panel a comprehensive picture of your organization's fiscal health
  - No required format, use whatever works for you
- One-Year Snapshot
  - Typically, your **most current or most recent fiscal year**
  - Approved budget or best estimate is fine
- Major Categories Only
  - Revenues: major funding sources (grants, donations, earned income, etc.)
  - Expenses: major expense areas (personnel, programs, admin)

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Organizational Budget Example

Category	Budgeted Amount
Revenue	
Grants & Foundations	$140,000
Individual Donations	$50,000
Other Income	$10,000
Total Revenue	**$200,000**
Expenses	
Occupancy (Rent and Utilities)	$70,000
Salaries & Benefits	$100,000
Fundraising & Marketing	$20,000
Miscellaneous	$10,000
Total Expenses	**$200,000**

Grant Management 101

Our goal is to make grant management clear, reasonable, and relationship-based.

- Grant Agreement
  - You will be assigned a brief grant agreement through the system outlining the award amount and grant terms
  - Agreement will need to be signed by your Executive Director or a Board Officer
- Payment Process
  - A request for payment will also be assigned through your dashboard and can not be submitted until your agreement is signed and approved by Program Officer.
- Use of Funds
  - Funds must be utilized according to your project budget and application narrative
  - If plans change, please reach out to discuss a budget modification. We always try to be as flexible as possible, but a conversation must take place prior to budget/scope modifications
- Reporting Expectations
  - Reporting is simple and proportional to the grant
  - Focus is on learning and impact, not paperwork
- Stay in Touch
  - We value ongoing communication
  - Reach out with questions, challenges, or changes- before they become issues

***We see grant management as a partnership, not a compliance exercise, so remember, we are here to work with you.**

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When to Reach Out to Us

You should contact us if:

- Your plans change
  - Activities shift, timelines move, or priorities evolve (keep us in the loop)
- Leadership or key staffing changes
  - Executive Director transitions
  - Key staff departures
- Your budget changes significantly
  - Major funding is gained or lost
- You're unsure about using funds
  - Questions about allowable use of funds
  - If you are unsure if something *might* be outside the original plan or scope
- You're facing challenges
  - Unexpected barriers, delays, or capacity issues
- You have good news to share
  - Milestones, successes, or learning moments
  - Stories or photos you're proud of

***Communication helps us be better partners.**

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Reporting and Follow-Up

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Streamlined Report:

Can also take verbal report or count site visits as reports

Question Group

Grant Id
Character Limit: 250

Organization Name*
Name of Project.
Character Limit: 100

Project Successes*
In the space provided, please let us know what went well with regards to your funded project.
Character Limit: 1500

Project Challenges*
Please let us know if there were any challenges you experienced implementing your funded project.
Character Limit: 1500

Serendipity*
Was there anything unexpected that happened while implementing your funded project?
Character Limit: 1500

Course Correction
In retrospect, what advice would you give to others that might be interested in taking on a project like this? What would you have done differently?
Character Limit: 1500

Photos-Optional
Use this space to upload a photo that relates to the project you've received funding for.
***Attestation** By including these photos with this report, I attest that my organization has received consent from all parties pictured for the use of these photographs in CFSCNY promotional materials including but not limited to newsletters, annual reports, social media, and web content.*
If you would like to include multiple photos, please combine them into one document and attach, if you need assistance, please contact our Program Officer at stacym@donorswhocare.org.

Grant Payment Process

Up Front vs. Reimbursement

- Grants of $5,000 will typically be paid out up front in full. This may vary if your organization is new to us.
- Awards over $5,000 will typically be paid half up front and the remaining half later once accounting is received for first half.
- Invoices/receipts of $1,000 or more will need to be included with payment request.

Electronic Check vs. Paper Check

- E-check can be processed faster- will be sent to requested email address and can be printed and taken to bank for deposit. Requires access to printer.
- Organization can select which type of payment they prefer on request for payment form.

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REQUEST FOR GRANT PAYMENT

Organization: _____ **Date:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Tel.: _____ **Amount Requested: $** _____
(minimum request $500)

EIN #: _____ **Project Name:** _____

Check Here if Up-front Request ☐ **Check Here If Final Request** ☐

Funds Needed Before: _____

Check Here if Up-front Request ☐ **Check Here If Final Request** ☐

Funds Needed Before: _____

***Check Here If E-Check Preferred** ☐

An e-check is an electronic payment that works like a paper check, but is delivered securely through email instead of mail. Once approved, you'll receive an email notification with instructions to open the check and print it on plain white paper to deposit into your organization's bank account. The check may only be printed once.

** If you do not select the e-check option a paper check will be mailed to you at the mailing address provided, please note that paper check processing time is longer than e-check.*

Email Address of Finance Officer or Other Authorized Individual receiving echeck: REQUIRED FOR ECHECKS

_____

Email Address of Second Person Who Will be Notified of Grant Payment Distribution: REQUIRED FOR ECHECKS

_____

Email Address of Finance Officer or Other Authorized Individual receiving echeck: REQUIRED FOR ECHECKS

Email Address of Second Person Who Will be Notified of Grant Payment Distribution: REQUIRED FOR ECHECKS

Prior to releasing payment, the Foundation must receive the signed grant contract, as well as an accounting of expenses paid for by the grant. Please include:

- Copies of invoices or bills for items exceeding $1,000
- A summary of expenses (may be by category) signed by the Finance Officer or Executive Director

Please do not include sensitive information such as payroll details or social security numbers
To the best of our knowledge, all applicable conditions of the grant contract have been met:

Name & Title (Please Print)

Signature

Other Helpful Hints

- Other sources of funding are encouraged…even if you are only kicking in a small amount from your operating budget
- If your operating expenses are much larger than your revenue, you must explain the reason for this in your narrative. If your operating expenses are much less than your revenue, you must also explain this
- Have someone review your application that knows almost nothing about your organization
- Make sure you are using your tax-exempt status on purchases
- Use the grant staff that are available to you!

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General Grant Writing Tips: Follow The Rules

- For Better or Worse, We are All Different
- Read It, Re-Read It, and Read It Again!
- Pay Attention to the Details
- Attend Information Sessions
- Understand the “Strings”
- Ask Questions

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Edit, Edit, Edit

- More is NOT Better, It's Just More
- Think About What You Want to Say
- Balance Storytelling With "Just the Facts"
- Put Yourself in the Reviewer's Shoes
  - What are we Being Asked to Invest in?
  - How Likely is it that the Community Will See a Return on the Investment?

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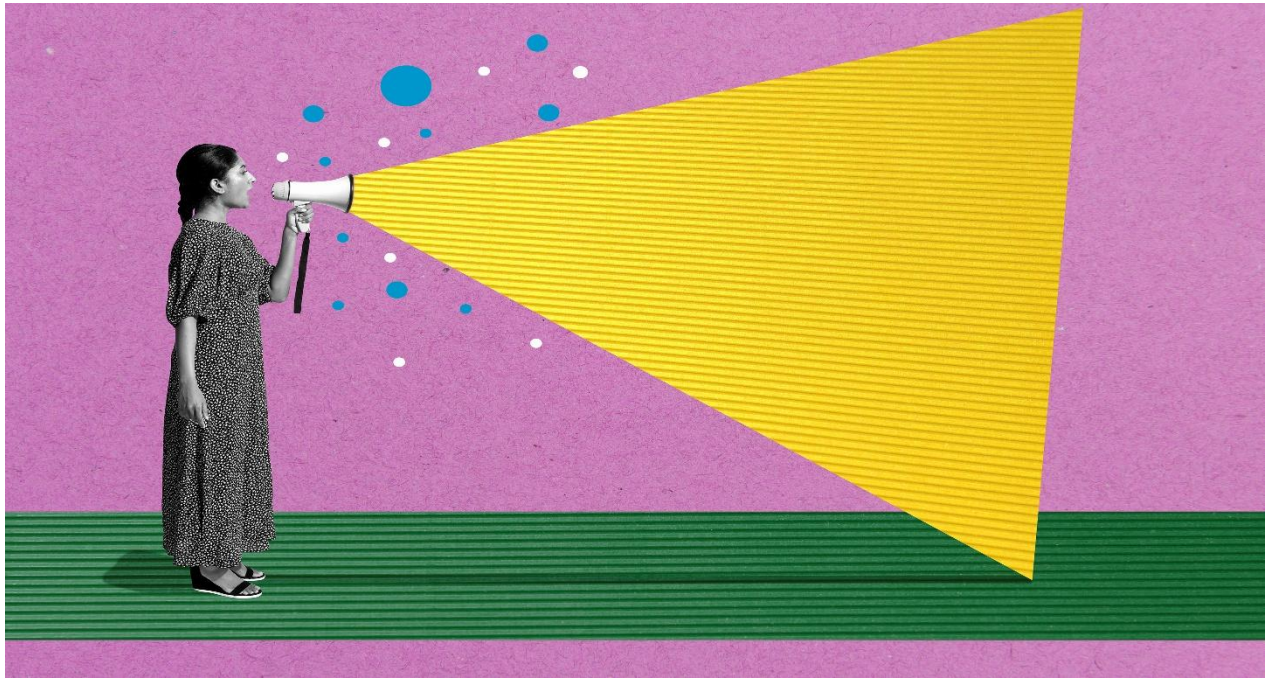
HELP!



Reach out any time, we are here to help!!!

Stacy: stacym@donorswhocare.org- 607-752-2317

Draya: adancy@donorswhocare.org- 607-772-6773

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Questions?