



A Collective Giving and Endowment Fund of Foundation For The Carolinas

2021 BASIC OPERATING GRANTS – APPLICATION GUIDE

For the period July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

During the 2021 grants cycle, the Charlotte Lesbian and Gay Fund (CLGF) will award grants to Charlotte-area organizations serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community. This document is meant to guide applicants through the application process.

Basic Operating Grants are intended to build capacity and strengthen the effectiveness of 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations whose primary objective is to serve the Charlotte-Mecklenburg LGBTQ+ community. Eligible organizations will provide at least 75% of their services and utilize at least 75% of their budget within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. Grants will be awarded to support general operations of organizations that fulfill the vision of CLGF: “...to cultivate one community with the belief that all people should be treated with respect and dignity.”

CLGF has limited discretionary funds and frequently receives requests for more funds than we have to grant. We expect this to be the case again during the 2021 grant cycle given the pressure many organizations are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there may be many exemplary applications that receive partial or no funding. In these instances, the organization may request feedback on the decision, if desired.

To conduct a fair and ethical grants program, all CLGF volunteers and staff are required to follow a Conflict-of-Interest Policy for the grant process when an organization with which they are affiliated is a grant applicant. Please do not lobby Board or Grant Committee members on behalf of your organization.

For questions, please contact Alexis Owens at Foundation For The Carolinas (aowens@fftc.org).

Please do not submit a grant application for the following purposes, as they will not be funded:

- Capital campaigns and endowment funds
- Hardware, software, or other similar forms of technology infrastructure
- Requests in which funds will be re-granted to other organizations
- Events, the proceeds thereof, that benefit other organizations
- Debt retirement/deficit funding
- Projects that promote policy advocacy, political activity, or religious views
- Activities occurring prior to grant decision
- Projects that are typically the funding responsibility of federal, state, or local government
- New proposals that duplicate existing or established programs or services
- Strategic planning in “ordinary course of business”

- Publication of books (unless being published to be sold in order to raise additional funding for the organization)

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

- Grant awards must be made to eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, and applying organizations must have their 501(c)(3) status at the time the application is submitted
- Operating grants are only awarded to organizations whose primary objective is to provide services or benefits to the LGBTQ+ community, and eligible organizations must provide at least 75% of their services and utilize at least 75% of their budget within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.
- Applicant organizations must attest that at least 75% of their services are provided and at least 75% of their budget is utilized within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, and must agree to use grant funds solely within Mecklenburg County.
- Applicants may apply for ONE Operating grant per annual grants cycle.
- The CLGF Board and Grants Committee reserve the right to request additional information at any time.
- Applicants are expected to return funds to CLGF if the organization is unable to utilize the funds for the purposes specified in the application or by the grant use deadline.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Applicant organization's services should support CLGF's mission and vision by including these key components:

- **Build** understanding and appreciation, as well as promote the value of inclusion, within the organization's circle of influence, especially LGBTQ+ populations not previously targeted.
- **Cultivate** opportunities for leadership by contributions of LGBTQ+ people.
- **Engage** and include all people from diverse backgrounds, and sexual orientation and gender identity in programs, services, and organizational values.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

As you complete your application, give special consideration to documenting the following criteria which will be used in making grant decisions:

- **Scope of impact:** This organization has a positive impact on its audience and the Charlotte LGBTQ+ community.
- **Nurtures individuals to actualize their potential:** This organization supports individuals within the LGBTQ+ community on their personal journey through acceptance, pride, support of community and leadership.
- **Presents a positive image of LGBTQ+ people to the community:** This organization presents a fair and positive understanding of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
- **Effectiveness:** This organization is effective at providing the services and benefits it offers.
- **Diversity:** This organization engages and includes people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Defined measures:** This organization identifies clear objectives and uses metrics and measures to define a successful outcome.
- **Budget:** This organization's budget presents reasonable costs for services performed and an efficient way to achieve the objectives.
- **Organizational experience:** The organization has the appropriate talent, skills, and experience to execute its objectives and effectively utilize grant funds.

Before You Begin: Strategies for a Successful CLGF Basic Operating Grant Application

HOW SHOULD YOU START?

- Clarify your organization’s priorities and/or the program’s needs before doing anything else. In many cases, this will help you choose the correct application form to submit.
- Know your organization’s purpose. Are you seeking unrestricted operating support, or funding to underwrite a program, project, or event? Requests for funds to underwrite a program, project, or event, are not being considered during the 2021 grant cycle and should not be submitted.
- If there is already a similar organization or program in your region, be prepared to discuss the potential impacts in your application. Consider: Does your organization represent an expansion or duplication of services in your area? How is your organization is different or better suited to meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community?

TIP

Share your passion, your organization’s strengths and how you will make a difference through your work. Differentiate yourself from similar organizations.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

- Carefully review the application guidelines and be certain that your request aligns with CLGF’s scope and priorities.
- Be specific and answer all of the questions in the application thoroughly. The application should stand on its own and include all of the information necessary for evaluation without a need for explanation or follow up questions.
- Identify clearly defined goals and measurements.
- Content from past applications should only be reused when it appropriately answers an application question. Do not simply copy and paste content from past applications throughout your application.

TIP

Do not simply cut and paste from an old application – pay close attention to your dates and details

ENSURE THE APPLICATION IS COMPLETE

Foundation For The Carolinas provides a dashboard to help applicants plan ahead for the information that will be required and to identify any missing information.

Generally, the following information is required:

- Basic information on the organization:
 - Mission statement
 - Legal name or DBA
 - Federal Tax ID number
 - Fiscal sponsorship details (name of organization, address, contact name), etc.
- Financial information:
 - Include budget vs. actual dollars and total income and expenses for the year, including salaries and other overhead expenses whenever possible.

TIP

Almost all funders request at least two years of financial statements that include budget vs. actual dollars. Profit and loss or bank statements alone will not meet this requirement

- Breakdown of the organization's income sources (e.g., board contributions, member dues, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, foundation grants, ticket sales, etc.).
 - Consider including an explanation for any substantial changes in income or expenses and how the organization is addressing the changes.
- **Narrative or needs statement:** Knowing the organization's priorities or programmatic needs before beginning the application will help with this section. Describe not only why your organization is requesting support from CLGF, but also **how and why it aligns with CLGF's priorities.**
 - Be clear and succinct – word and character count are limited.
 - Identify the problem to be addressed and the needs to be met with the funding. What unique service(s) would the community be deprived of if funding is not received? Provide supporting data whenever possible.
 - Describe your organization's objectives, activities, strategies, staffing, and partners.
 - Consider specifying your plans for ongoing progress at the termination of the grant, particularly if operating expenses are projected to increase and/or if overall funding for the organization has or is expected to decrease. List other financing sources or strategies that are being sought or developed.
 - **Goals and metrics:** What does the organization plan to achieve? Describe the goals and overall impact of the organization, and list objective measures that are used to determine the success of the organization. Minimize subjectivity wherever possible and emphasize how you will be able to gauge success.
 - **Attachments:** Budgets, IRS 501(c)(3) determination letters, NC Solicitation License letters, Board of Director and/or staff list, letters of support from project partners (if applicable), etc.
 - Current year budget and year-to-date (YTD) actual results should include the following information: income/expense category, annual budget, YTD actuals.
 - Prior two years' budget compared to actual results including the following information: income/expense category, annual budget, year-end actuals, difference (+/-).
 - Board and staff list should include the office held for board members and titles for staff members.

2021 CLGF OPERATING GRANT CYCLE OVERVIEW

Online registration

- Before applying for a CLGF grant, all applicants must complete an online registration on the Foundation For The Carolinas website.
- **IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR A PRIOR YEAR GRANT CYCLE OR APPLICATION, PLEASE USE THE SAME REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**

Application availability

- Grant applications will be available online at <https://fftcgrants.communityforce.com> beginning February 2, 2021.

Deadline to submit application

- **Friday, March 5, 2021, 12:00 PM ET**

Grant application review

- The Grants Committee reviews all grant applications. CLGF's Stakeholders (donors of \$1,000 or more annually) also have the opportunity to review grant applications and provide their input on grant awards.
- If there are questions related to your application, a member of the Grants Committee will reach out to the primary contact listed on the application. Please respond promptly to any questions received.

Grant evaluation reports

- CLGF takes its governance role very seriously and must ensure that grant award funds are spent appropriately and as intended. With limited funds to award, CLGF also monitors the effectiveness of funds spent to ensure grants are meeting community needs and prioritized efficiently.
- Each grant recipient is therefore required to submit an evaluation report, outlining the results and effectiveness of how the funds were spent. **Failure to provide an evaluation report as required may jeopardize future grant participation.**
- Evaluation reports are also used for CLGF communications and may be considered in future grant decisions for your organization. This "state of the organization" summary helps CLGF understand the results and impact that were achieved by providing the Operating funds.
- **Evaluation Reports for Basic Operating grants will be due no later than June 30, 2022** (reporting period July 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022)

Deadline for using grant funds

- Basic Operating grant funds must be used on or before May 31, 2022, and funds that are not used by this date must be returned to CLGF.

2021 BASIC OPERATING GRANT CYCLE TIMELINE

January 4, 2021	<p>Application Guide Available on FFTC website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested applicants can contact CLGF with any questions at gayfund@gmail.com Grants Committee members will be available to meet with organizations on an ad-hoc basis to discuss the process and to answer questions
February 2, 2021	<p>Online Grant Applications Available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information can be entered and saved, to be completed later, before submitting Applications will be entered online (https://fftcgrants.communityforce.com)
March 5, 2021 12:00 PM (NOON) ET	<p>Operating Grant Application Deadline</p>
March/April 2021	<p>CLGF Grants Committee and Stakeholder reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants may be contacted to provide any required information omitted from the application and/or to provide supplemental information, if needed
Late May 2021	<p>Notification of Grant Award Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant award decisions will be e-mailed to all applicants Grantees will be invited to a public announcement of 2021 grants
June, 2021	<p>Grant awards announced to the public</p>
June 30, 2021	<p>Distribution of funds to grantees upon receipt of grant award agreement</p>
June 30, 2022	<p>Basic Operating Grant use deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Operating Grant funds must be used on or before May 31, 2022 Funds not used by this date must be returned to CLGF <p>Operating Grant Evaluation Reports due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Operating grant evaluation reports are due by June 30, 2022 Evaluation report should cover the period from July 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022

BASIC OPERATING GRANT APPLICATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED BEGINNING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021, AND MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021 AT 12:00 PM (NOON) ET