

# 2018 Community Grants Program Guidelines

Application Due Date  
September 1, 2017  
5:00 p.m.



Community Foundation  
of Howard County

[www.cfhoco.org](http://www.cfhoco.org)

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A colorful illustration of a town scene with various buildings, trees, and a clock tower. The text 'HOWARD COUNTY' is written on a sign in the foreground.

HOWARD COUNTY

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**The Mission of the Community Foundation of Howard County is to inspire lifelong giving and to connect people, places and organizations to worthy causes across Howard County.**

## 2018 Community Grants

The Community Foundation of Howard County (“Foundation”) seeks to enhance the potential of Howard County residents to live fulfilled and enriched lives. To that end we fund nonprofit organizations which ensure access to local human services programs, arts, cultural and environmental activities, and educational opportunities. By distributing grants that allow the nonprofits to achieve their charitable objectives and supporting programs that touch and transform the lives of Howard County residents, we are encouraging residents to actively participate in the economic and social fabric of our community.

The Community Grants Program provides funding for operational and project needs within the 2018 calendar year. Operational grants provide support for the day-to-day costs of running a non-profit organization. Operational grants are unrestricted income to help an organization carry out its goals without imposing the requirement to develop activities directly attributable to the grant. A Project grant is given to support a specific set of activities, with a beginning and an end, explicit objectives and a pre-determined cost. Project grant funds are restricted and must be used for the specified project.

Based on the availability of funds, the Foundation may provide:

- **OPERATIONAL GRANTS** of up to 25% of the three-year average of an organization’s operating budget or \$15,000, whichever is less.
- **PROJECT GRANTS** of up to 25% of the total project budget or \$15,000, whichever is less.

## Applicant Qualifications

The Foundation considers grant applications from organizations:

- Determined as charitable under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or other entities that meet IRS charitable guidelines;
- Delivering services to Howard County residents in the areas of human services, arts & culture, education, environment or community affairs;
- Providing programs and services to the intended beneficiaries without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran or military status, pregnancy, ancestry, age or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, county or local laws, regulations or ordinances;
- With operating<sup>1</sup> or project budgets of \$100,000 or more; and
- If previously funded through one or more of the Foundation's grant programs, must be up-to-date on all post award reporting requirements.

**NOTE 1:** *National and state-wide organizations must have a Howard County operating budget of \$100,000 or more.*

## Common Questions

### **Are new organizations eligible for operating grants?**

Yes, the Foundation will consider funding projects from newly established organizations

### **Can programs that provide service to specific populations be considered?**

Yes, organizations that offer gender-based programs or have programs and services designed to benefit a specific population (e.g., children with developmental disabilities or senior citizens) will not be considered discriminatory for this reason alone.

### **Can programs that provide faith-based services be considered?**

Yes, as long as the organization does not discriminate against a participant on the basis of religion or religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to actively participate in a religious practice. Any specifically religious activity or service made available to participants by the organization must be voluntary.

## Submitting an Application

### Acceptance Period

Community Grant applications are accepted via our online application portal. To be considered, a complete electronic application must be received by 11:59 p.m. on September 1, 2017.

**Applications received via mail or email will not be accepted.**

### Application Portal

This is the first year that the Foundation is using the Application Portal for our Community Grant program. You are considered a “New User” and will need to enter information on your organization as well as create your user profile. Since the Application Portal groups information by the company profile and connects individuals to that profile, we ask that you not create multiple organization profiles. Instead, if you are uncertain what to do, please contact us at [Grants@CFHoCo.org](mailto:Grants@CFHoCo.org), and we will advise you on how to proceed.

### Grant Application

The *2018 Community Grant Program Guidelines* and required templates are available for download at [www.CFHoCo.org](http://www.CFHoCo.org). Once on the website, from the menu bar on the left, click on “Receive” and select “Grants”, then “Community Grants.” Once you have registered with the Application Portal, you can preview the current grant application and associated forms.

The Foundation encourages you to thoroughly read and understand the *2017 Community Grant Program Guidelines* and to contact us with any questions or concerns.

**Applications that do not adhere to the Community Grants Program Guidelines will not be considered for funding.**

All applications must include:

- An electronically signed application,
- A budget
- Current list of Board of Directors/Trustees, and/or
- The most recent annual returns.

**Refrain from including materials not requested by the Grant Application, as they cannot be considered during the review process and inclusion may result in your application not being considered.**

### Application Categories

The Foundation will accept one application from a nonprofit in one of the following categories:

<b>PROJECT SUPPORT</b>	Expenditures are restricted to a specific set of activities, within a specified period of time, at a pre-determined cost. Typically supports innovative, community-based initiatives and partnerships that help enhance an organization’s mission.
<b>Eligibility Restrictions</b>	Project budget must be \$100,000 or more
<b>Award Amount</b>	Up to 25% of the total project budget or \$15,000, whichever is less
<b>Expenditure Period</b>	January 1 to December 31, 2018
<b>Reporting</b>	Narrative and Financial
<b>OPERATING SUPPORT</b>	Unrestricted income to help an organization carry out its goals without imposing the requirement to develop activities directly attributable to the grant. Typically provides support for the day-to-day costs of running a non-profit organization (i.e.: rent, utilities, supplies, salaries).
<b>Eligibility Restrictions</b>	Operating budget must be \$100,000 or more
<b>Award Amount</b>	Up to 25% of the three-year average of an organization’s operating budget or \$15,000, whichever is less
<b>Expenditure Period</b>	January 1 to December 31, 2018
<b>Reporting</b>	Narrative and Financial

**The Foundation does not award grants for:**

- Capital campaigns
- Debt retirement
- Endowments
- Expenses already incurred
- For-profit entities
- Individuals
- Medical research
- Political organizations or campaigns
- Private foundations
- Programming that promotes religious instructions or doctrine
- Seed money or start-up funding
- Supporting organizations

**Common Questions**

**Can organizations receive funding more than once per year?**

No. An organization may only receive funding once per calendar year. Once funding has been received, organizations will be considered ineligible for the remainder of the calendar year for any other discretionary grant program offered by the Foundation.

**Can organizations submit more than one application per grant cycle?**

No. Organizations may only submit one application and must select one of the two categories.

### **Can organizations apply for continued funding?**

Yes. The Foundation will consider applications for projects that span multiple years. **However, this program does not provide multi-year funding. Nonprofits must submit a new application and be evaluated each year.** The Foundation is rarely the sole funder of on-going ventures. The Grant Review Committee carefully reviews proposals for other sources of funding and evidence of long-term financial strength.

### **I'm having trouble entering information in the forms I downloaded. What do I do?**

Contact the Foundation's Director of Programs for assistance. The templates were created as a protected form. This format requires the applicant to tab through the form in order to enter the requested information.

### **What is an annual return?**

Tax-exempt organizations are required to file an annual return with the IRS. The Foundation accepts the Form 990, Form 990-EZ, and verification of a Form 990-N filing.

## **How Are Applications Evaluated?**

### **Criteria**

The Foundation looks for proposals which:

- Address a significant need affecting a broad segment of the region's population or special populations considered at risk.
- Include innovative strategies that offer creative solutions without duplicating other efforts.
- Outline clear organizational goals with measureable outcomes.
- Support and encourage collaboration. The Foundation defines collaboration as "*A partnership agreement between two or more organizations to strengthen their abilities, effectiveness and activities to improve or expand their capacity to reach a common goal/objective.*"
- Have established sound management and administration, including a clearly defined and effective governance structure and financial systems.
- Document capacity to mobilize resources including financial support, in-kind support and volunteers to sustain programs.
- Provide evidence of careful planning to address community needs and access community resources.

### **Process**

The Foundation staff pre-screens and reviews all proposals received. Only completed applications are forwarded to the Grant Review Committee. The Grant Review Committee is

made up of Trustees of the Community Foundation of Howard County and volunteers representing business, government and nonprofit sectors of our community.

On occasion, the Foundation staff may request additional information for more extensive evaluation by the Grant Review Committee. Foundation staff and a Grant Review Committee member may conduct site visits or telephone interviews for proposals selected for more extensive evaluation. Site visits may also take place outside of the grant cycle timeline. After extensive review and deliberation, the Grant Review Committee will make funding recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees makes the final decisions on grant awards. Written notification of grant decisions are sent to applicants late January/early February 2018. Grant funds will be dispersed in one payment, within 60 days of the receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions.

Foundation staff is available to address questions about the process or status of your application. Grant Review Committee members do not address application process or status questions.

## Grant Award

### Notification of Decision

Written notification of grant decisions are sent to applicants late January/early February 2018.

### Acceptance of Award

Successful applicants are required to sign a grant contract and agree to comply with its terms and conditions prior to the release of funds. Grant funds will be dispersed in one payment, within 60 days of the Foundations receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions.

### Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients are required to submit a final report by April 30, 2018. The final reports will be submitted via the Application Portal, at which time you will be allowed to submit additional materials, such as pictures, articles, etc. **Failure to submit a final report will make an organization ineligible to submit future grant requests.**

### Foundation Recognition

The Foundation must be listed as a funder of the nonprofit's grant funded programs and/or activities. Recognition may consist of the Foundation's name and/or logo being included on news releases, newsletters, websites, etc.

## Questions? Contact Us

The Foundation staff is available to assist you throughout this process and welcomes your questions and comments. Please contact us by phone, 410-730-7840 or via email, [grants@CFHoCo.org](mailto:grants@CFHoCo.org).

**We invite applicants to participate in a Community Grants Program Information Session**, where we will highlight changes to the program. To get the most out of the session we encourage you to review the materials in advance, so we can spend the majority of the time answering your specific questions.

<b>DATE</b>	August 18, 2017
<b>TIME</b>	9:00 to 11:00 p.m.
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>BECO Conference Room – Lobby Level</b> of the Community Foundation of Howard County Office Building 10630 Little Patuxent Parkway Century Plaza Building 1000 Columbia, MD 21045
<b>RSVP</b>	<a href="mailto:Grants@CFHoCo.org">Grants@CFHoCo.org</a>

## Appendix A – Application Checklist

### KEY DATES

Activity	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Begin Accepting Applications</b>	August 10, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Information Session</b>	August 18 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Applications Due</b>	September 1, 2017 by 11:59 pm
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Applications Reviewed</b>	September through December
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Site Visits (as needed)</b>	October/November
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Grantee Notification</b>	Late January/Early February
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Grant Payment Distributed</b>	60 days after receipt of the signed Terms & Conditions
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Final Reports Due</b>	April 30, 2018

### RESOURCES

- Attend a Community Grants Program Information Session.
- Carefully review and adhere to the Community Grants Program Guidelines for eligibility requirements and program details.
- Download the application forms from [www.CFHoCo.org](http://www.CFHoCo.org) > Receive > Grants > Community Grants Program.
- If you do not have the ability to convert files to PDF format, the CutePDF Writer program can be downloaded for free at [www.cutepdf.com](http://www.cutepdf.com).
- Monitor the Community Grants webpage of [www.CFHoCo.org](http://www.CFHoCo.org) for responses to questions about the program guidelines.
- Visit the Greater Washington Society of CPAs website for information on nonprofit accounting basics at [www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org](http://www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org). Relevant to the completion of your application is the information provided on “Internal Controls.”
- Visit the Greater Maryland Better Business Bureau website on Standards for Charity Accountability at <http://greatermd.bbb.org/standards-for-charity-accountability/>. Relevant to the completion of your application is the guidance provided under “Finances.”

### APPLICATION PREPARATION

- Your application is a conversation with the Grant Review Committee (“Committee”). Be sure to provide enough detail on your organization, services and projects to adequately inform the Committee.
- Refrain from including materials not requested by the Grant Application, as they cannot be considered during the review process.

- Ensure your application has the proper signatures/printed names. Unsigned applications will be considered incomplete and will not be evaluated.

### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

- Click “Submit” by 11:59 p.m. on September 1, 2017.
- Upload an Excel file of the “Organization Budget” and, as applicable, the “Project Budget.” **A PDF of this document will not be accepted.**
- Upload a PDF of either the most recent **signed** Form 990 **OR** the most recent audited financial report.
- If you do not receive an email from the Application Portal, indicating receipt of your application, within 24 hours, please check your spam folder prior to contacting the Foundation staff.

### **APPLICATION EVALUATION**

- Site visits may be conducted and generally occur in October and November. Applicants will be notified by the Foundation staff for a mutually convenient day/time.
- Respond to Foundation requests for additional information within three business days, to ensure the timely processing of your application.