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Nonprofit Capacity Building Grants 2025 Guidelines

A representative from your organization must attend a pre-application information session in order to be considered for a grant ([REGISTER HERE](#)).

ABOUT NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

The Community Foundation's core focus on strengthening nonprofits in the Mid-South includes investing in the internal capacity of organizations to equip them to effectively manage operations and high-performing programs. Healthy and sustainable organizations exhibit strengths across these areas: clear mission and purpose backed by a strategic vision; strong board governance and oversight; stable staff and volunteer leadership; efficient, effective management and program practices and policies; sound financial management and resources to carry out the organization's mission; and a solid relationship and engagement with the communities it serves.

WHAT IS A NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT?

The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis seeks to address the organizational strength and overall health of nonprofits in the Mid-South by supporting their capacity building efforts through financial grants. Reviewed by a committee of community volunteers, these grants are awarded to established nonprofits for one-time projects that help improve the management, governance, and administration of the organization, not direct programmatic improvements. By strengthening the internal capacity of an organization, the Community Foundation believes the programs and services will also be strengthened. Nonprofit Capacity Building grants require the recipient to raise matching funds (\$1 for every \$1), thereby encouraging the grantee to use our grant to leverage resources from other donors and funders.

TYPES OF PROJECTS THAT NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS SUPPORT

The average Nonprofit Capacity Building grant is around \$15,000, and there is \$200,000 total available for grants this year. Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of core programs
- Staff or board training
- Assessment of technology systems or implementation of technology upgrades
- Human resources planning, succession planning, or fundraising planning
- Merger or formal collaboration between organizations

For more specific examples, please see previous Nonprofit Capacity Building grants awarded [here](#).

The following projects are NOT eligible for grant support:

- Operating costs, including salaries, other than those related to the capacity building project
- Project requests from organizations with many branches or departments (YMCA, public libraries, etc.) that do not come through the office of the president/executive director

- Expansion of existing programs or creation of new ones
- Brick-and-mortar projects or endowment campaigns
- Pass-through grants to other nonprofits
- Nonprofit religious activities
- Grants to supplant lost funding or eliminate budget deficits

If you are unclear where to focus your proposal or of your organization's capacity needs, contact Aerial Ozuzu, Director of Community Impact, if you would like to discuss proposal ideas.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

To be eligible for a Nonprofit Capacity Building grant, your organization must have an *in-progress* profile on LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org. This profile must be published by the grant award date and maintained for the duration of the grant period. The in-progress LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile of eligible applicants will demonstrate that the organization:

- Has operated as a 501(c)(3) agency for the last two consecutive years or longer
- Operates in the Community Foundation's service area: west Tennessee, northern Mississippi, and/or eastern Arkansas
- Is permitted by the Tennessee Secretary of State to solicit funds
- Has the last two years of 990's and audits, if required
- Operates under sound financial management and is financially stable
- Has at least one paid staff member and stable, demonstrated board leadership
- Provides significant community impact in, has solid relationships with, and reflects the makeup of the communities it serves

The following organizations are NOT eligible to apply for funding:

- Individuals, for-profit entities, private foundations, and religious organizations
- Organizations that received a Capacity Building grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis in the previous fiscal year

MATCHING POLICY

If awarded a capacity building grant, nonprofits are expected to raise funds to match the Community Foundation's grant dollar-for-dollar. This requirement is intended to help the nonprofit leverage funds for the project by reaching out to new donors and funders. Organizations may use existing unrestricted funds that are not designated for other purposes. Policies for the match include:

- Nonprofits are expected to raise funds equal to the grant amount, and therefore the grant amount requested should not exceed 50% of the total project cost. For example, if the total budget for a project is \$30,000, the nonprofit may only request a grant of up to \$15,000 and must raise the additional \$15,000 to complete the project.
- The match is expected to be cash, not in-kind. These should be cash on hand or newly donated intended for grant use specific to the capacity building project. ***Other arrangements may be discussed on a case-by-case basis.***
- The entire match does not have to come from one source. The strategy for raising the match should be thought out before an application is submitted and in most cases a nonprofit's board or development committee should be involved.

- If the grant project is approved by our committee and is already being partially funded by another foundation, Nonprofit Capacity Building grant funds can be used to match the other grant. Additional matching funds would not have to be raised. Please be sure that Community Foundation staff is aware of the situation if this is the case with your grant proposal.
- No grant funds will be released from the Community Foundation until the nonprofit has raised 100% of the matching funds. When the match has been raised, the nonprofit will complete a request for funds in the online grant portal, and the grant check will be processed in 2-4 weeks.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Grant Timeline	
August 27, 29, and September 3	Attend a <u>mandatory</u> pre-application information session (register here)
September 3	Application opens online
September 19	Deadline to have a LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile in progress OR updates to an existing profile
September 26	Deadline to submit application online via GranteeView
October 18	Applicants notified via e-mail whether they are invited to continue in the grant process by hosting a grant committee site visit
October, November	Grant committee site visits with second round applicants
December 13	Applicants notified of funding decision via e-mail
January 1 – December 31, 2025	Grant term

A complete application includes an in-progress LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile and application submitted via the Community Foundation’s online grant portal, GranteeView. To access the grant portal, [click here](#).

All eligible applications are reviewed by a Community Foundation grant committee to determine which applicants are invited to move forward in the process and host a site visit. (If your organization is invited to host a site visit, further information and instructions will be provided upon notification.) Members of the committee then attend applicant site visits, before making funding recommendations to present to the Community Foundation’s Board of Governors.

Grants are awarded for a 12-month term, and all funds must be raised and spent by the end of that term. Organizations that are awarded a grant are required to complete one check-in (virtual or in person) at 12 months after the completion of the term and one written grant report at 18 months to share the project’s short-term impact on the organization’s capacity. Written report should be completed in GranteeView.

EVALUATION BY COMMITTEE

The [Strengthening Nonprofits Committee](#) is composed of 26 members who reflect our community and/or serve on the Community Foundation's Board of Governors. Committee members have significant nonprofit leadership experience, other deep industry experience, and/or are engaged donors to the foundation. A core value of our Community Investment Principles (see below) is inclusion. Therefore, it is expected that the membership of this committee goes beyond subject-matter experts to consider other parts of the community and other lived experiences that may be affected by the work of this committee and the Board of Governors. All members understand the grant requirements and are given a grant evaluation tool by which to guide their decision making.

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS PRIORITIZED?

All else being equal, the grant committee gives funding priority to the following.

Applications that:

- Clearly define the challenge the proposed project will address and how this addresses goal(s) in the organization's strategic plan
- Demonstrate potential vendors, consultants, and/or products for the project have been thoroughly researched and identified
- Include a realistic timeline for completion and demonstrate that ongoing maintenance and/or costs have been accounted for, if applicable
- Show evidence of sufficient internal capacity to implement the project
- Include a clear, detailed, and reasonable project budget
- Clearly define success for the project that can be easily communicated to stakeholders
- Outline a clear strategy for raising matching funds and how this grant can provide leverage to attract donors or serve as a final element to fully fund the project

Applicants that:

- Are led by person(s) of color AND organizations with a board and staff that appropriately reflects and involves the population(s) it serves
- Have a history of success in the community they serve
- Have stable revenues and expenses

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

This grant process incorporates and upholds the Community Foundation's Values for Investing, [detailed here](#). These values guide our grantmaking as we strive to carry out our vision for the Mid-South to create a just and equitable region.

OTHER APPLICANT RESOURCES

- [Instructions for getting started on your LIVEGIVEmidsouth.org profile](#)
- [Instructions for registering as a Grant Administrator in GranteeView](#)
- [Tennessee Nonprofit Network](#), statewide nonprofit training and technical assistance
- [TechImpact.org](#), for research on nonprofit technology products
- [TechSoup.org](#), nonprofit tech marketplace
- [NTEN.org](#), online information exchange for nonprofits

For questions regarding your LIVEGIVEmidSouth profile, please contact Randy Truong, Community Impact Program Associate, at (901) 722-0039.

For questions regarding your grant application, Aerial Ozuzu, Director of Community Impact, at (901) 722-0022 or aozuzu@cfgm.org.