2017 Mini-Grant Program Guidelines

Community Foundation of Howard County

www.cfhoco.org

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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.

2017 Mini-Grants Program

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 Mini-Grants Program is ideal for smaller nonprofits, projects that are time-sensitive, first-time applicants, nonprofits less than five years old, school enrichment programs that are not funded through the district budget, and nonprofits not eligible for grants through the Community Grant program. The program's rolling deadlines and streamlined evaluation process enables the Foundation to assist organizations in meeting our community's most critical needs. Typically applicants are notified of grant decisions approximately 60 days after each due date and Grantees receive funds approximately 30 days after submitting signed Terms and Conditions.

The Foundation may provide grants of up to $5,000.

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 budgets^ of $200,000 or less or project budgets of $100,000 or less; 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: *National and state-wide organizations must have a Howard County operating budget of $200,000 or less.*

Common Questions

Are new organizations eligible for 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.

Can a government agency apply for a grant?
Government agencies will not typically receive mini-grants, although they may be involved as partners in funded efforts.

Submitting an Application

Acceptance Period

Mini-Grant applications are accepted via our online application portal. To be considered, a complete electronic application must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the due date.

Due Date	Notification Date
February 29	March 31
July 29	August 31

Applications received via mail or email will not be considered.

Grant Application

The *2017 Mini-Grants Program Guidelines* and required templates are available for download at www.CFHoCo.org. Once on the website, from the menu bar on the left, click on "Receive" and select "Grants", then "Mini-Grants." Once you have registered with the Application Portal, you can preview the current grant application and associated forms.

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

All applications must include:

- An electronically signed application, and
- The most recent annual return.

Based on the application category, the following may also be required:

- A budget,
- Vendor quotes,
- Current list of Board of Directors/Trustees, and/or
- A required site visit or meeting.

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 the following categories:

HCPSS ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS	May be one-time or ongoing programs or extracurricular activities designed to enhance Howard County Public School students' learning, not covered by the HCPSS budget. Expenditures are restricted to a specific set of activities, within a specified period of time, at a pre-determined cost.
	Eligibility Restrictions Project budget cannot exceed $50,000 **Award Amount** Up to $2,000 **Expenditure Period** 12-months from receipt of award **Reporting** None
EQUIPMENT PURCHASES	Small scale purchases that meet a critical organizational priority or for technology enhancements. Expenditures are restricted to the specific items/services described in a quote from a reputable vendor and represented on the application.
	Eligibility Restrictions Project budget cannot exceed $50,000 **Award Amount** Up to $2,000 **Expenditure Period** 12-months from receipt of award **Reporting** None
ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT	May be for Board or staff education, program evaluation, shared training resources or collaborative planning efforts with other organizations. Expenditures are restricted to a specific set of activities, within a specified period of time, at a pre-determined cost.
	Eligibility Restrictions Project budget cannot exceed $50,000 **Award Amount** Up to $2,000 **Expenditure Period** 12-months from receipt of award **Reporting** None
PROJECT SUPPORT	May be for an established program, to adapt a proven program to a new situation, discover whether an approach is viable, or that help enhance an organization's mission. Expenditures are restricted to a specific set of activities, within a specified period of time, at a pre-determined cost.
	Eligibility Restrictions Project budget cannot exceed $100,000 **Award Amount** Up to $5,000 **Expenditure Period** 12-months from receipt of award **Reporting** None, however a site visit may be requested.
OPERATING SUPPORT	Unrestricted income to help an organization carry out its goals without imposing the requirement to develop activities directly attributable to the grant.
	Eligibility Restrictions Operating budget cannot exceed $200,000 **Award Amount** Up to $5,000 **Expenditure Period** 12-months from receipt of award **Reporting** None, however a site visit may be requested.

The Mini-Grant program 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 requires participants to participate in religious instruction or adhere to a doctrine in order to receive services
- 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 five categories.

Can we change the application templates?
No. The templates creates a consistent format for the grant committee to review and if not used or altered will cause the application to be considered incomplete.

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. Users can tab through the form to enter the responses.

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:

- With a clearly defined purpose or program;
- That addresses a significant need within the organization or community;
- That provides services to Howard County residents;
- That have a measurable impact on the target population or organization;
- With well-defined costs that are reasonable and realistic; and
- That is well presented with clearly articulated needs and goals.

Process

The Foundation staff pre-screens and reviews all proposals received. Only complete applications are forwarded to the Mini-Grants Review Committee ("Committee.") The 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 to assist the Committee in the evaluation process. After thoughtful deliberation, the 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.

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

Grant Award

Written notification of grant decisions are sent to applicants within 60 days of the close of the grant round.

Grant funds will be dispersed in a single payment. Successful applicants are required to sign a grant contract and agree to comply with its terms and conditions prior to the release of funds. While the Mini-Grant program does not require the submission of a final report, a site visit may be required. However, we encourage you to update the Foundation on the project that was funded.

We ask that donor recognition be provided to the Foundation, which may consist of the Foundation's name and/or logo being included in 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 the Foundation's Program Officer, Tracy Locke-Kitt, by phone, 410-730-7840 or via email, grants@CFHoCo.org.

Appendix A – Application Checklist

RESOURCES

☐ Carefully review and adhere to the Mini-Grants Program Guidelines for eligibility requirements and program details.

☐ Download the application forms from www.CFHoCo.org > Receive > Grants > Mini-Grants.

☐ 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.

APPLICATION PREPARATION

☐ Your application is a conversation with the Mini-Grants Review Committee ("Committee"). Be sure to provide enough detail to adequately inform the Committee.

☐ Refrain from including materials not requested by the Grant Application, as they cannot be considered during the review process.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

☐ Click "Submit" by 11:59 p.m. on the application due date.

☐ Upload a PDF of the most recent annual return.

☐ If you are applying an HCPSS enrichment program, organizational improvement, or project support grant, include an Excel file of the associated budget.

☐ If you are applying for an equipment purchase grant, include a PDF of a quote from a vendor or supplier to support the amount you are proposing.

☐ You will receive an email indicating receipt of your application within three business days. Please follow-up with the Foundation staff if an email is not received.

APPLICATION EVALUATION

☐ Respond to Foundation requests for additional information within three business days, to ensure the timely processing of your application.