COMPETITIVE GRANT GUIDELINES FOR 2021-2022

VALUES AND MISSION

The Clowes Fund, a family foundation, seeks to enhance the common good by encouraging organizations and projects that help to build a just and equitable society, create opportunities for initiative, foster creativity and the growth of knowledge, and promote appreciation of the natural environment. We pursue these goals by awarding grants in three areas: arts, education and social services. We also recognize the special value of efforts that create links among these areas. The Fund has a special interest in supporting projects that strengthen the communities in which Clowes family members and the foundation’s directors live and work.

FUNDING PRIORITIES: FIELDS OF INTEREST AND GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

Fields of Interest – The Fund supports organizations and programs that focus primarily on socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals through the arts, education and certain social services:

- Social Services
  - Immigrant Services – We are interested in supporting efforts to address the economic, linguistic, legal, and mental and emotional hurdles that foreign-born individuals (i.e., immigrants, refugees and asylees) and their children face during integration into the United States’ society and its economy.
  - Workforce Development – We are interested in ensuring that all individuals have access to both jobs skills training and the support services necessary to enable them to participate fully in the economic life of their communities. In addition, we are interested in supporting youth development efforts that prevent students (ages 15 to 25) from dropping out of school and assist in the re-entry of dropouts or their pursuit of an alternate course to economic self-sufficiency.

- Arts and Education
  - We support primary and secondary education through efforts that emphasize classroom instruction, such as professional development for educators or programs that are fully integrated into the school day. (We consider community-based programs, such as after-school or summer enrichment, as youth development within our workforce development interests.)
  - We support arts education programs that foster critical thinking skills and creativity.

Geographic Regions – The Fund concentrates its support in Indianapolis, Indiana and New England, and priority interests vary in each region. First-time grants are limited to social services (i.e., immigrant services and workforce development). See Preliminary Proposals below for application instructions. Explore our website for additional information.

- Indianapolis, Indiana – Social services requests serving Marion County.
Massachusetts – Social services, education and arts education requests serving Suffolk, Middlesex, Essex and Worcester counties, as well as other communities with significant populations of immigrants, refugees and asylees.

Vermont – Social services requests serving communities within the state of Vermont and arts education requests serving Windham County.

New Hampshire – Social services requests serving Hillsborough, Merrimack, Grafton, Sullivan and Cheshire counties, as well as other communities with significant populations of immigrants, refugees and asylees.

Maine – Social services and education requests in southern and mid-coast parts of the State, which include Cumberland, Androscoggin and Knox counties.

SIZE AND TYPES OF GRANTS

The median grant size is $55K, including many multi-year grants; however, most first-time grants are in the range of $20K over one year. The Fund occasionally awards larger grants to current and recent grantees.

The Fund prefers to support innovative projects and programs, to provide “step up” money to expand programs, or to build organizational capacity. Most grants are for projects/programs, seed money, capacity building and operations; capital and endowment grants are rare and based on an established grant history. The Fund occasionally awards challenge or matching grants at the request of applicants.

In addition to grants awarded through the competitive process, the Fund awards a limited number of small unsolicited grants through its member, director and employee discretionary matching grants programs.

Grantees must be 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations based in the United States that are also described in Internal Revenue Code section 509(a)(1), 509(a)(2) or (in certain cases) 509(a)(3).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Fund approaches the grant proposal process in two phases: preliminary and final. Details about each phase follow.

If your organization has not received a competitive grant from the Fund within the past five years (2017-2021), you must submit a Preliminary Proposal to introduce your organization. We accept Preliminary Proposals for immigrant services and workforce development requests only; we no longer accept Preliminary Proposals for education or arts education requests. Few Preliminary Proposals advance to Final Proposals.

If your organization has received a competitive grant from the Fund within the past five years, you may skip the preliminary phase, but you must seek guidance by submitting a statement of intent before submitting a Final Proposal.

Preliminary Proposal: Online Application Form and Narrative Summary (due November 1)

A Preliminary Proposal consists of the Online Application and a Narrative Summary (as attachment), both of which must be submitted via GOapply by November 1.
The Narrative Summary should include a brief description of your organization, the need your request is intended to address, the target population, and the time frame to be covered (the Fund will not support activities that occur prior to approval of the grant; i.e., prior to July 1).

The Narrative Summary should be a PDF document of no more than three pages, numbered and typed in at least 12-point font, with margins of at least one inch.

Characteristics of a successful Preliminary Proposal:

- The proposal aligns closely with one or more stated priorities.
  - **Indiana** – Successful proposals are aligned with priorities for immigrant services, and workforce development efforts that directly promote racial equity or demonstrate a high level of innovation.
  - **New England** – Most successful proposals are from communities outside of Greater Boston that are largely populated by immigrants, refugees and asylees or in rural areas that lack other resources, and where we have some local knowledge through previous grants or resident board members. (In Boston, the Fund generally satisfies its interests in English as a new language programs through English for New Bostonians, workforce development through SkillWorks and education through EdVestors.)

- Type of grant requested is seed or step-up money for an innovative project or program. The Fund typically does not provide operating grants or support for ongoing programs as a first-time grant.

- The proposal explains not only why the Fund is an appropriate funding partner, but also why now?

- Request is $20,000 or less, and impact can be demonstrated in a single year.

- The organization has an operating budget less than $2.5 million.

**Final Proposal: Online Application Form, Narrative and Other Required PDF Attachments (due February 1; requires statement of intent or invitation following Preliminary Proposal)**

Before you submit a Final Proposal, you must receive an invitation following Preliminary Proposal or seek guidance by emailing a brief statement of intent by mid-December. Earlier statements of intent are strongly encouraged to allow ample time for discussion.

A statement of intent may be a few paragraphs, typically no more than one page, describing your planned proposal. Staff will respond with guidance about an appropriate grant size, type and term, or will discourage a new proposal. Staff guidance does not guarantee funding.

After receiving staff guidance or an invitation following Preliminary Proposal, you may submit a Final Proposal. A Final Proposal consists of the Online Application, the Narrative, and other Required Attachments, listed below, all of which must be submitted via GOapply by **February 1**.

The Narrative is a PDF document of no more than eight pages, numbered and typed in at least 12-point font, with margins of at least one inch. It should address the following topics:

1. **Brief summary statement including project title, total amount, type and duration of the proposed grant.**
• If requesting a multi-year grant, state the total amount requested as well as each annual amount; for example: ABC Agency is seeking a two-year capacity building grant of $50,000 ($30,000 in year one and $20,000 in year two), for our XYZ initiative.

2. Purpose of the grant and the needs it will address.
   • How you determined these needs.
   • Who will be served through the program?
   • What will be different after the grant is completed. Explain the measurable results listed on the application. If requesting multi-year support, you may include measurable results for the full grant term or the first year.
   • How you engage program participants in planning and evaluating your activities.

3. Why your organization is the appropriate group to meet such needs.
   • History, mission, key strategies, goals and successes.
   • How the proposed program aligns with your strategic plan.

4. How the project will be executed.
   • Timeline and implementation plan (a chart works well).
   • Human resources that will be invested in the program:
     o Qualifications of key staff.
     o How your organization ensures that it does not discriminate in either policy or practice against people because of their age, race, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, cultural beliefs, disability or sex, including sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
     o What forms of inclusion (racial, cultural, religious, immigrant background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, etc.) are important to your work? How well does your board and staff leadership reflect the community that you support and the inclusion cited above?
     o The multiple ways that board members contribute to the organization (e.g., financial contributions, time, expertise, community networks, etc.).
     o If applicable, the role of volunteers in this program.
   • Any collaborative relationships relevant to the proposed project or program.

5. Funding plan.
   • What the grant will purchase or support (e.g., staff time, consultants, supplies, etc.).
   • The financial resources that will be invested in the program; what other funders are involved with the program; how much is committed; how much is pending?
   • If less than 100% of board members contributed financially to your organization last year, explain why.
   • If you receive partial funding or are declined funding, what alternative plan will you follow?
   • Plans for long-term sustainability and/or maintenance of the proposed program.

Required PDF attachments in addition to the Narrative, attach the following:

1. Most recent audited financial statements. If your organization does not have an audit, provide a statement of financial position (balance sheet) and statements of activities (profit and loss and budget versus actual) that have been accepted by your board of directors. Staff may later request financial statements for prior years.

2. Current organizational budget.

3. Detailed project or program budget showing the proposed use of the grant.
   • All budgets should include both income and expenses.
• Make sure the budget figures match what you entered on the Online Application.
• For multi-year requests, submit at least the first-year program budget and note projections for subsequent years.
• Project budget is not required with an operating request.
• Post grant, you will be required to report actual versus budget and expenditure of the grant.

4. Board roster with professional affiliations.

Characteristics of a successful Final Proposal:
• Alignment with one or more of the Fund’s priorities and with your strategic plan.
• Grant type, timing and amount requested are appropriate to meet the proposed needs and are consistent with guidance received in response to a statement of intent.
• Clear quantified, measurable results.
• The organization has demonstrated good stewardship of any previous grants by providing thorough, timely reports (financial and narrative).
• The Fund believes that effective organizations are deeply rooted in the communities that they support as indicated by inclusive, representative leadership.

Ineligible Requests
The Fund will not consider grants for the following types of activities or entities:
• Organizations that discriminate in either policy or practice against people because of their age, race, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, cultural beliefs, disability or sex, including sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
• Programs that proselytize or promote specific religious doctrine;
• Sponsorships for fundraising events;
• Scholarships or direct financial awards to individuals;
• More than one request per organization per calendar year, including Clowes support that your organization may be receiving through a third party or funding collaborative;
• Lobbying or political elections;
• Certain Type III Supporting Organizations.

General Tips Regarding the Proposal Process
• Incomplete or late applications, multiple requests, applications not received via GOapply and proposals that do not follow the formatting requirements will not be considered.
• Avoid undefined acronyms in all proposals.
• Previous support from the Fund neither precludes nor implies future funding.
• These guidelines and priorities may change in future years.
• A comprehensive checklist is provided for your use on page 8.
The Fund may donate materials used in the grant process to an archival institution. Materials submitted by your organization will be treated as non-confidential and non-proprietary. If your organization accepts a grant, it must release the Fund from liability and give the Fund license to use, display and distribute all materials submitted in connection with the grant process.

Using the Online GOapply System

All proposals must be submitted online via GOapply. As a quick reference to the information needed for GOapply, you may first download a copy of the Application Form at https://www.clowesfund.org/application-process. The Grant Self-Evaluation Form is available on our website as well. To apply online, follow these steps:

2. Click on the green “Apply” button.
3. Follow the applicable steps to the “GOapply” button.
4. Enter the requested data and upload required documents.
5. You can save the application and return to the site to finish it at a later time (be sure to remember your username and password).

Overview of Proposal Process Timeline

- **September** – Updated guidelines posted; previously funded organizations submit statement of intent by mid-December.
- **November 1** – *Preliminary Proposals are due* online via GOapply; receipt is auto-acknowledged.
- **December** – Preliminary applicants receive either invitations to submit a *Final Proposal* or declinations.
- **January** – Staff available to review draft narratives for Final Proposals.
- **February 1** – *Final Proposals are due* online via GOapply; receipt is auto-acknowledged. Staff may choose to schedule a meeting or site visit to discuss the proposal.
- **March-April** – Indiana and New England grants review committees convene. An assigned reviewer will read your proposal and make a funding recommendation. The committees may decline proposals, award grants within the Fund’s small grant range, or forward proposals to the full board.
- **May-June** – Board convenes and makes final grant decisions.
- **July 1** – Funding decisions are communicated; grant contracts are issued (may be sooner).
- **August** – Grant Self-Evaluation Reports are due one year and 30 days after the close of the grant period; though the most common report deadline is August 1, refer to the grant contract.
Checklist for Submitting a Proposal

When submitting a proposal, check that:

☐ Your proposed program aligns closely with one or more of the Fund’s fields of interests.
☐ The proposed grant activities will occur in one of the Fund’s geographic regions.
☐ You are a previous grantee (2017-2021), and you emailed Fund staff a brief statement of intent by mid-December, and in return received guidance about an appropriate proposal.
☐ You submitted a Final Proposal via GOapply by February 1.
☐ You completed the online application, and
☐ You attached a Final Proposal narrative and other required attachments in PDF format.
☐ Your Final Proposal narrative addresses each of the five outlined topics.
  ☐ The narrative is written as though the reader has no prior knowledge of your organization regardless of previous grant history, discussions or correspondence with Fund representatives. (This is important because proposals are reviewed by volunteer directors and members from all over the country.)
  ☐ If you used any acronyms, you defined them.
  ☐ The body is at least 12-point font with one-inch margins.
  ☐ It is no more than eight pages.
  ☐ The pages are numbered.
☐ You attached your organization’s most recently audited financial statements (or a reasonable substitute; e.g., board-accepted balance sheet, profit and loss and budget versus actual statements) as PDF.
☐ You attached a current organizational budget PDF that shows both income and expenses.
☐ Unless you were invited to submit an operating request, you attached a project or program budget PDF with adequate notes to explain what other resources are committed and how the Fund’s grant would be spent.
☐ You checked that the totals on budget attachments match the amounts stated in the online application.
☐ You attached a PDF board roster with professional affiliations.
☐ You have fulfilled the reporting requirements for previous Fund grants. (You must submit a final report on a previous grant before a new grant will be issued. If the previous grant period is not complete by the proposal deadline, you must have submitted an interim or status report within eight months of the proposal deadline – i.e., since June 1, 2021 – all reports must be submitted to reports@clowesfund.org.)

Do you have questions about the Fund’s process? Explore the website, especially the Indiana and New England pages and the FAQ page for additional information. Still have a question? Contact us. (Likewise, we promise to visit your organization’s website if your proposal aligns well with the Fund’s interests, and we will contact you if we need additional information.)

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