

2025 Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Competitive Process Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What are the qualifications to apply to the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo's Competitive Process?

Organizations must be 501(c)(3) not-for-profits located in or serving one of the eight counties of Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming.

What if I don't have my 501(c)(3) non-profit status yet?

We will only process letters of intent (LOI) from 501(c)(3) non-profits that have received official approval from the Internal Revenue Service by our submission deadline. We will require proof from those that don't come up as valid through our database.

Can I use a passthrough?

While the Community Foundation will allow passthroughs, it's not encouraged. Sponsoring organizations are 100% responsible for any requests they submit acting as passthrough including all follow-up and reporting.

How do I apply for funding from the Community Foundation's Competitive Process?

The first required step is to submit a LOI through the Foundation's Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager (GLM) system. An access link is available on the Community Foundation Competitive Process webpage: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/community-foundation/>

LOI are accepted from January 2, 2025 until February 3, 2025 at 4 PM. Only LOI submitted through GLM will be processed.

LOI that align strongly with one of the Solutions listed under the four Community Goals will be invited to submit a full application.

What does the Community Foundation fund?

For 2025, the Community Foundation is looking to support requests that align with one of the Solutions listed under our four Community Goals as outlined on the Competitive Process webpage: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/community-foundation/>

The Community Foundation has funded variations of these four Community Goals for over 15 years and has committed to supporting these goals through 2027.

How did the Community Foundation decide to only fund within these four Community Goals?

Research! Since 2006, every five years the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has done a strategic plan to determine its funding priorities. The current plan is the result of publicly available data and trends, along with interviews with community leaders, a sector survey, focus groups, and input from 950 residents experiencing financial hardship. This plan will guide the Community Foundation's work through 2027.

What kind of funding does the Community Foundation offer?

We offer programming support and, for those organizations who have an established history with us, general operations support.

In order to apply for general operations support, a non-profit **MUST** have had at least one grant funded through any competitive process at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo during the past five years. A list of all competitive processes is at: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/>

How can I determine whether I meet the five-year requirement so I can submit a general operations LOI?

Log into the Community Foundation's Foundant GLM with your account and review the Request History tab.

Does the Community Foundation award multiyear grants?

We welcome multiyear requests from organizations who have an established history with us and strongly align with one of the Solutions. Please contact Director, Community Impact Darren Penoyer to discuss multiyear requests: 716-852-2857, x206

What is the maximum amount I can request?

The average grant from the Community Foundation through this process is \$18,000 to \$20,000.

How many LOIs does the Community Foundation get?

On average, the Community Foundation gets around 120 LOI. It has been as high as 200. At most 40-45 will be invited to submit a full application.

In the end, how many grants are made?

The Community Foundation makes about 30 to 35 grants through this process each year.

Can I meet with Staff to pitch my idea and get feedback in advance of submitting a request?

No. Due to the Community Foundation's position in the region, the tight timeline, and the sheer volume and unpredictability of the requests, we will not meet with non-profits submitting to this process.

We have created a fair, even process for non-profits. The LOI requires a small time commitment. We estimate it will take less than one hour. Should you feel you have alignment with a Solution, please feel free to submit a LOI for review.

I received a grant from the Community Foundation's Competitive Process in 2024. Can I apply in 2025?

No. Given our limited resources, we will not allow a non-profit to apply to the 2024 Community Foundation Competitive Process if they received a 2024 Community Foundation Competitive Grant or have a grant still open from Community Foundation Competitive Process cycles past.

I received a grant from another grant process at the Community Foundation, such as Garman, Wilson, Bauman, Niagara Area Foundation, etc. in 2024. Can I apply to the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Competitive Process?

As long as you did not receive a grant from the 2024 Community Foundation Competitive Process or have a grant still open from Community Foundation Competitive Process's past cycles, you can apply to the Community Foundation Competitive Process this year.

Having grants from other funds or funding sources within the Community Foundation does not affect your eligibility to apply to the Community Foundation Competitive Process.

What if my program doesn't align with one of the Community Goals/Solutions?

As a community foundation, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has multiple processes, one of which might align with your needs. All processes open to public application are listed at: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/>

Note that timelines between the different processes vary greatly.

Additionally, there are many different regional funders beyond the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo who might provide funding. A suggested resource is the NY Funders Alliance interactive member directory: <https://www.nyfunders.org/members>

If I click on all the Community Goals/Solutions, will that increase my chances of getting a grant?

In the past, Staff has received feedback from applicants who were surprised that they were not invited to submit a full application because they believed their LOI addressed all the Solutions listed.

In fact, when organizations submit LOI trying to address all Community Goals/Solutions, those LOI are inevitably confusing and unfocused. We sincerely don't want you to address all of them. Submit an LOI that truly reflects your strategic plan and your mission.

The Community Foundation strongly encourages non-profits to only click on up to two Solutions and write a LOI that reflects those you choose. We want you to have a targeted request. Concentrate on what you do and do it well! Addressing all the Solutions results in a weak LOI.

What does the Community Foundation look for when reviewing requests?

There are many variables but some general guidelines for staff and board reviewing programming requests:

- Longer term, more frequent programming is of interest. Week-long, month-long, or even summer-time programming is unlikely to survive in competition.
- Number served.
- Measurable change is always preferable.
- Experience/capacity
- Importance to the community

The above are only suggestions. We strongly recommend all interested non-profits review the list of last year's grants to get an idea of what we will support:

<https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/community-foundation/>

I missed the deadline to submit a LOI. Are there exceptions?

No. It is a hard deadline. We work to create a fair, even process and cannot allow exceptions. The LOI is relatively easy to complete and non-profits have one month to submit. We are empathic that non-profits are very busy, but please submit early and do not wait until the last minute knowing even the best laid plans can go awry.

I was denied! Can I get feedback?

Absolutely! A contact will be listed on the correspondence you received. Please know, our funding is limited and sometimes we sincerely just can't support all the great requests we receive. But if there was a material issue, we will share that information so improvements can be made when you apply next year.