

2025 Letter of Intent Process

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is now accepting Letters of Intent (LOI) for the 2025 competitive grants cycle.

The LOI is the first step in the Community Foundation's 2025 competitive grant process. It involves completion of a simple electronic form to determine if a project merits further consideration in light of available resources and current priorities. *Please note, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has only one annual competitive grant cycle.*

Deadlines:

- LOI available online January 2, 2025
- LOI will be accepted until February 3, 2025 at 4 PM. No exceptions.
- Invitations for full grant proposals will be sent via email by March 31, 2025
- Full proposals will be due April 28, 2025 at 4 PM
- Grant outcome notification will be sent to applicants in early July 2025

To submit a LOI for a competitive grant, please go [HERE](#) to access the Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager

LOI must address at least one of the Solutions listed under the Community Foundation's four Community Goals. For 2025, applicants may apply for funding to support:

- **Programming**
 - For programming, the Community Foundation will cover salaries, fringe, supplies, etc. to implement the program.
 - A portion of the request may include:
 - Salary for management of employees implementing programming
 - 10% of the grant total amount for indirect costs
 - For programming requests, longer term, immersive programming up to a yearlong will be given priority consideration.
- **General operations**
 - Organizations wishing to submit a request for general operations support MUST have had at least one grant funded through a competitive process at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo during the past five years.
 - The current list of competitive processes can be viewed [HERE](#)
 - Organizations requesting general operations support need to focus their narrative on how their programming aligns with their chosen Solution
 - If an organization does not meet the general operations requirement, they are still welcome to submit a request for programming support.

Special consideration will be given to requests that fit a Solution AND advance the racial equity work of the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Taskforce: www.racialequitybuffalo.org:

I. Achieve racial/ethnic equity. Requests must address one of the following Solutions:

Solutions

1. Increase interaction and bridge racial/ethnic divides between residents and organizations throughout WNY.
2. Promote civic engagement and leadership in communities of color.

NOTE: Organizations submitting a request under Community Goal I must demonstrate how racial equity is a cornerstone of the organization, weaving through mission, programming, and day-to-day operations.

II. Promote economic mobility through educational achievement for residents living in low-income households. Requests must address one of the following Solutions:

Solutions

1. Improve the school readiness of children (ages 5 and under) living in communities of poverty.
2. Improve the academic achievement and postsecondary completion of students living in low-income households.

III. Steward significant environmental resources. Requests must address one of the following Solutions:

Solutions

1. Protect and restore the region's waterways.
2. Strengthen individual environmental organizations and support a more racially inclusive and collaborative environmental community.

IV. Promote regional vibrancy through architecture, arts, and culture. Requests must address one of the following Solutions:

Solutions

1. Increase access to long term arts instruction for children and youth living in low-income households.
2. Strengthen race equity through the arts.
3. Restore and leverage significant historic buildings and architectural landmarks, with a preference for sites that promote cultural tourism. (Defining historic as official recognition by State/National Register of Historic Places or local preservation ordinance.)

NOTE: Special funding available to support the following:

- Programs that serve the visual, speech or hearing impaired (~\$5,000)

Preference for this special funding will be given to applications that align with one or more of the four Community Goals.

Eligibility

- Grants are awarded only to organizations that have current Section 501(c)(3) status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service.
- Applicants must be located in or serving one of the eight counties of Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming.

Other Matters

- Submitted LOI will receive an emailed acknowledgement sent to the account used to log into the system.
- Funding request in the full application must be for the same amount requested in your LOI submission unless a change is approved by the Foundation.
- Any one organization may submit up to two LOI maximum. If a full application invitation is extended to one of the LOI submitted, the selection of the LOI is at the discretion of the Foundation
- Eligible organizations can receive only one competitive grant per year.
- If a non-profit received a 2024 Community Foundation competitive grant from this process, they will not be eligible to apply to the 2025 cycle.
- The Foundation will offer the opportunity for multi-year support with consecutive year support contingent upon prior year outcomes.
 - Multi-year grants will only be offered to those organizations with a past grant history with the Community Foundation and based on the request.

- Please contact Director, Community Impact Darren Penoyer to discuss multi-year requests *before* submitting a LOI.
- The Foundation requires that all grants be closed out within one year of the receipt of funds, with the exception of multi-year awards.
- The Foundation is receptive to requests that address advocacy, research and policy analysis aligned with the four Community Goals.
- For programming or capital requests, the Foundation will consider allowing up to 10% of the grant amount for indirect costs.
- The Foundation reserves the right to pay grants in a single installment or in “draws” at its sole discretion.
- The Foundation requires that all successful applicants obtain three bids for any equipment purchase of \$10,000 and above.
- The Community Foundation reserves the right to conduct an independent evaluation of grant expenditures for up to four years. The grantee agrees to provide the information necessary to complete such an evaluation. Failure to submit requested information in a timely fashion may obligate the grantee to refund the grant.
- The use of grant funds for purposes not pre-approved by the Foundation or not supported through required documentation will result in a request that those grant funds be returned to the Foundation.
- The failure of an applicant to properly close out a grant in a timely manner will be a factor when considering new grants.
- The Foundation will not consider competitive funding for:
 - Higher education scholarships (separate application, deadlines, and process)
 - Projects outside the eight Western New York counties (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming)
 - Religious purposes. Funding cannot be used to support religious activities such as worship or proselytizing. Secular programs or services must be available to eligible participants without regard to religious belief or willingness to participate in religious activities.
 - Schools not registered with the New York State Education Department
 - Attendance at or sponsorship of fundraising events for organizations
 - Field trips, museum, cultural, and event admissions/tickets, unless they are part of a long-term program or curriculum
 - Annual events or festivals
 - Any partisan political activity. Funds from the foundation cannot be used to support or oppose a candidate for political office.
 - Projects and activities that have occurred. The Foundation will not, except in extraordinary cases, provide payment or reimbursement for expenses incurred prior to the funding decision being communicated to the applicant.

Funding amounts

- The historical average for a competitive grant through this process is in the \$18,000 to \$20,000 range. General operations grants will not exceed \$20,000

2025 LOI Questions

NOTE: LOI must be submitted electronically online utilizing the Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager. No paper or emailed LOI will be accepted. The following questions are provided for your reference when completing the LOI online.

- Mission statement
- Amount requested
- Annual operating expenses
- Community Goal(s)/Solution(s) your grant addresses (pick no more than two)
- Type of support requested (choose one):

- Program
 - General operations
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IF THIS IS A GENERAL OPERATIONS REQUEST, YOU WILL BE ASKED THIS SET OF QUESTIONS:

- Outline how you address the specific Solution(s) you selected above (1,500 character limit)
 - Describe your mission (1,000 character limit)
 - Please describe the population you serve (1,500 character limit)
 - What organizational outcomes will you accomplish in 2024? (1,500 character limit)
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IF THIS IS A PROGRAM REQUEST, YOU WILL BE ASKED THIS SET OF QUESTIONS:

- Program name
- Outline how this program addresses the specific Solution(s) you selected above (1,500 character limit)
- Target audience for this funding (1,000 character limit)
- Number served with this funding (numeric response)
- What will change in the lives of the people you serve as a result of this funding? (1,500 character limit)
- What are the outcomes? Please specify (1,500 character limit):
 - Frequency
 - Duration
 - Other applicable measures