

Austin Community Foundation is proud to mobilize ideas and resources to strengthen Central Texas. For nearly 50 years, we've been building endowment funds together with generous donors to create a permanent community resource—the Forever Austin Fund—that enables us to invest in Austin's most pressing needs and greatest opportunities, now and for generations to come.

These endowed funds generate the majority of the available funding for the Forever Austin Fund grant cycle. Annually, we will make Forever Austin grants to address both urgent and systemic needs in economic mobility, health and humanities, and nurturing our region. ACF is also committed to growing the available funds through the Forever Austin Fund grant cycle by partnering with a network of philanthropists that have donor advised funds at ACF.

Please carefully review the grant cycle guidelines below and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at the end of this packet.

Funding Categories

Austin Community Foundation will make grants across the three categories described below. Category descriptions share our intentions but should not limit your potential approaches. Each applicant may submit only one application to only one category.

Economic Mobility: Ensuring paths to economic mobility for Central Texans is a critical strategy in ACF's focus to close the opportunity gap. By partnering with and funding organizations that tackle immediate and systemic economic challenges, we aim to eliminate wealth disparities and create lasting change. Grants in the category will focus on four key areas:

- / **Housing Stability:** Stable housing is the anchor of economic mobility. When individuals and families have access to safe, affordable housing—whether renting or owning—they can build assets and work toward long-term economic mobility. ACF will invest in strategies that support housing stability and/or create asset-building opportunities through home ownership.
- / **Career Pathways & Resources:** For many Central Texans, limited job opportunities, lack of affordable childcare, senior care, and unreliable transportation make finding and keeping stable employment difficult. Earning a living wage is essential for building financial security and weathering economic ups and downs. ACF will invest in programs that support access, sustainability, and mobility among living-wage careers.
- / **Small Business & Entrepreneurship:** Owning a business can offer a strong path to financial security and upward mobility. Entrepreneurship is a critical way to build personal wealth and assets that can benefit future generations. ACF will support programs and investment vehicles that give undercapitalized entrepreneurs and small business owners the support they need to achieve their goals.
- / **Addressing Systemic Barriers:** Systemic inequities have led to ongoing wealth disparities, disproportionately affecting women and people of color. Closing these wealth gaps is vital to improving individual lives and boosting our regional economy. ACF will support initiatives that increase savings or reduce debt for communities that have experienced historic wealth inequality to build generational wealth.

Health & Humanities: The future of our region is inextricably linked to the health of our people and the growth of our creative community. Grants in this category will focus on:

- / **Health & Wellness:** Applications should be focused on the improvement of health outcomes by connecting people to quality health resources, culturally competent health education and reducing health disparities. Health is broadly defined to include mental and physical health and wellness.
- / **Arts & Culture:** Applications should catalyze work that champions the diversity of our community, expands access to arts and cultural experiences for residents, and/or increases opportunities for artistic expression.

Nurturing our Region: Preserving and protecting our rich ecosystem ensures generations of Central Texans can live and thrive. Grants in this category will focus on:

- / **Environmental Sustainability:** Applications should focus on environmental efforts that support a healthier, cleaner, and more resilient region.
- / **Green Spaces:** Applications should encourage the preservation and enjoyment of green spaces (e.g. parks, trails, preserves) in Central Texas.
- / **Animal Welfare:** Applications should promote the well-being of animals and/or defend against abuse or neglect.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) public charities in good standing with the IRS, religious organizations, and governmental entities that are serving the Central Texas region. Projects with an established IRS 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are also eligible to apply.

We welcome proposals from organizations from across the spectrum including those providing direct services, advocacy, community organizing, partnerships, and other approaches as appropriate.

- / **Location:** The proposed work must serve the Central Texas region, defined to include the following counties: Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, or Williamson.
- / **Compliance:** If you have a current grant through any ACF program, you must be in compliance with that grant to apply. Contact us if you have questions about this.
- / **Number of Applications:** Each applicant may submit only one application to only one category.
- / **Partnership Applications:** We encourage collaboration. For collaborations between two or more nonprofits, the partners should select one nonprofit to serve as the lead applicant. Any awarded funds are to be used for the sole purpose of the partnership's work, and the lead applicant will be responsible for managing the funds on behalf of the partners. The lead applicant organization—and any partner organizations—may also submit a separate individual application for its own organization.

In general, the Foundation does NOT grant funds for:

- / Endowment funds
- / Scholarships
- / Religious organizations for religious purposes
- / Fundraising activities or events
- / Umbrella funding organizations that intend to distribute funds at their own discretion
- / Political lobbying or legislative activities
- / Individuals

Funding Amounts

Through the Forever Austin Fund grant cycle, we anticipate awarding 50 - 75 grants between \$5,000 - \$50,000 each. Award amounts will be determined by application scores, donor priorities, and individual endowment budgets. Grants may be approved for full or partial funding of the requested amount, which cannot exceed 30% of the organization's budget.

Additional information per impact area:

- / **Economic Mobility:** 20-30 grants, up to a total of \$1,250,000
- / **Health and Humanities:** 15-20 grants up to \$550,000
- / **Nurturing our Region:** 10-15 grants up to \$200,000

All awards will be considered general operating support, with the intention of building organizational capacity and sustainability to execute on an organization's mission.

Reviewers

Grant proposals will be reviewed by a diverse pool of community reviewers. Your application will be read and scored by a combination of the following categories of reviewers, in partnership with ACF staff:

- / Community members recruited for their personal and professional expertise in our funding categories
- / Philanthropists connected through ACF's network of donor advised funds
- / ACF board and committee members

Frequently Asked Questions

/ My organization has received a grant from the Hispanic Impact Fund and/or Women's Fund, am I still eligible to apply?

- / Yes! Organizations who have received grants from ACF's Program Funds are eligible for this grants cycle if they are up to date with all required reporting.

/ How much should I ask for?

- / It depends. We recommend asking for what your proposal needs. Grants may be approved for full or partial funding of the requested amount and will be between \$5,000 - \$50,000. Requested amount cannot exceed 30% of the organization's budget.

/ Can I apply in more than one category? And what funding category should I choose to apply in?

- / Organizations can only submit one application. Select the category that most closely aligns with the work proposed in your submission.

/ What if I don't fit into any of these funding categories?

- / The categories represented in this request for proposals represent the interests of legacy donors and ACF's strategic plan. If your work does not fit into one of the categories listed, it is unlikely that the Forever Austin grant is a good opportunity for your organization.

/ What if my organization is fiscally sponsored, can I still apply?

- / Yes, projects with an established IRS 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are also eligible to apply.

/ My organization used to apply for Community Grants. Can we still do that?

- / The Community Grant program has ended. There will be two grant cycles a year: Forever Austin and our signature programs, Hispanic Impact Fund + Women's Fund.

/ How will I know if my application is declined? Can I receive any helpful feedback?

- / Declination emails will go out in mid-July. At that time, we will make 1x1 sessions available to discuss your scores and any specific feedback if available.

/ Who do I reach out to if I have additional questions?

- / Please contact our VP of Community Impact, Meagan Anderson Longley, at mlongley@austincf.org.