

# EVANSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## General Operating Community-led Grantmaking

*At the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF), we work to support a just and resilient network that strengthens our community. Our grant opportunities reflect this commitment. Our grant processes:*

*Are grounded by our organizational mission and strategic plan*

*Align with our ongoing commitment to advancing racial equity*

*Prioritize supportive partnerships*

*We invite applicants to visit our website to learn more about the Evanston Community Foundations [mission](#) and [strategic plan](#).*

### About this Funding Opportunity

*This grant opportunity provides up to \$25,000 in unrestricted, flexible general operating funding to address systemic inequities in the Evanston community.*

*For this grant, we prioritize applications from both nonprofit organizations and grassroots community groups that:*

- *Address a systemic inequity in the Evanston community*
- *Are led by, for, and with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and prioritize community voice and choice*
- *Show a strong commitment to racial equity in mission, vision, values, and work*
- *Significantly serve and prioritize resources for the Evanston community*

## Eligibility

*This checklist will help you evaluate if you are eligible for this grant opportunity. All interested applicants will complete an eligibility quiz prior to completing the full application. Please review the following information carefully before applying.*

## Who can apply

*Applicants must fit in either of the following categories:*

### **Nonprofit Organizations:**

*501c3 organizations, 501c6 organizations, and community organizations fiscally sponsored by a 501c3 nonprofit organization.*

### **Grassroots Community Groups:**

*Any group of community members working together to address a community need. These groups have no 501c3, 501c6 or fiscal sponsorship.*

*Your nonprofit organization or grassroots community group must also:*

- Have an Evanston address and serve the Evanston community through their work and mission*
  - If you need support assessing if your organization or group meets this requirement, please reach out to Bilingual Program Manager - Grantmaking, Jenny Valdés Del Valle ([valdesdelvalle@evanstonforever.org](mailto:valdesdelvalle@evanstonforever.org)).*
- Must be in existence and operating for at least 1-year*
- For all applicants applying as a Nonprofit Organization, the organization and/or fiscal sponsor must be in active status and maintain compliance with all 501c3 or 501c6 IRS Tax Code requirements throughout the application process.*

## Funding Guidelines

*Your nonprofit organization or grassroots community group can request up to \$25,000. This grant term runs 12-months. Awarded applicants will be asked to complete a final report upon completion of the 12-month grant term.*

*What this grant opportunity will not fund:*

- *Organizations or groups that have received a General Operating grant from ECF on the Fall 2025 Grant Cycle*
- *Endowments*
- *Fundraising or sponsorship of one-time events*
- *Scholarships*
- *Requests that only benefit a person and is not part of a larger group effort that benefits the Evanston community*
- *Religious or faith-based activities or proselytizing*
- *Businesses or for-profit entities*

## How to Apply

You must submit all application materials through ECF's online grant system by **Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2026 at 11:59pm (CST)**. Your nonprofit organization or grassroots community group can submit application materials at any time while the grant period is open. Please view the calendar below for all important application dates and deadlines:

### Important Dates

Application Open, including questions and materials, in the ECF <a href="#">online grants management system</a>	Monday, January 5th, 2026
Application Due	Monday, February 2nd, 2026, at 11:59pm
Grant Awards Announced	Week of May 18th , 2026

We have several ways to support your nonprofit or group in this application process. You may find all registration links to these sessions here: [Register for Grant Workshops !](#)

### Virtual Community Informational Sessions

We are holding 2 informational sessions to give a brief overview of the grant and the application process:

Session #1 January 12th, English	2026 12PM – <a href="#">Informational</a>
	1PM CST <a href="#">Session</a>
Session #2 January 13th, Español/	2026 12PM - <a href="#">Spanish</a>
	1PM CST <a href="#">Sesión</a>
	<a href="#">Informativa</a>

### Grant Writing Best Practices and Budget Preparation Webinar

With Liz Jansen of [Women Unite!](#)

(English with live **simultaneous Spanish interpretation** – Zoom)

Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> , 2026 10 AM – 12PM (CST)

Register at the following link: [Grants 101 and Budget Preparation](#)

### 1:1 Consultation with ECF Program Officers

Virtual One-on-one Consultations with ECF Program Officers

(English and Spanish – Zoom)

Schedule at the following link: [https://calendly.com/ecf\\_programs/community-led-grants-consultation](https://calendly.com/ecf_programs/community-led-grants-consultation)

## General Assistance

If you would need a computer to use or assistance at any point throughout the application process, please reach out to Bilingual Program Manager - Grantmaking, Jenny Valdés Del Valle ([valdesdelvalle@evanstonforever.org](mailto:valdesdelvalle@evanstonforever.org)).

## How Applicants Are Selected for Funding

At ECF, our grant funding decisions are led by the community.

We have dedicated grantmaking committees made up of people of diverse identities and lived experiences who all live, work, play, and learn in Evanston. These community members are deeply engaged in social justice, civic engagement, and lifelong learning. These committees review the applications and recommend grants to be funded by ECF.

The application reflects 4 areas that your organization or group will be evaluated on:

Vision and Plan	Racial Equity and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practices
Evanston and Community Impact	Systems Change

## Final Notes

We understand that preparing and submitting an application is a big investment of your time and resources. Please note that we are not able to fund all requests through this grant opportunity and cannot guarantee funding to any applicant. While this grant opportunity is intended to provide general operating grants, under unique circumstances ECF may restrict grants to maintain compliance with internal policies and commitment to stewarding funds for charitable purposes. Should this situation arise for your organization or group at any time during the application process, an ECF staff member will reach out to you with more information.

Thank you for your interest in the ECF grant opportunity.