

nonprofit growth & sustainability grants

One of Evanston Community Foundation's goals is to support a thriving nonprofit sector in Evanston. There are several types of grants that fall under this category including **General Operating** and **Capacity Building Grants**.

Capacity Building Grants

Project-specific grants that help grow your organization

We fund **specific capacity-building projects** that support an organization's long-term development and growth. Example projects could include racial equity assessment and training, program evaluation improvement, and software upgrades that enhance your work.

This grant is open to nonprofits with IRS 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 tax status that serve the Evanston community.

Our next cycle opens March 7, 2022.

Capacity Building Grants

ECF funds **specific capacity-building projects** that support an organization's long-term development and growth.

which organizations are eligible

This checklist will help you evaluate if you are eligible for a capacity-building grant. If this grant is not a good fit, we suggest you check out our [General Operating Grants](#) or [E-Town Innovation Opportunities](#). Please review carefully and apply for the right grant for your organization.

For capacity-building grants, your organization must:

- Have IRS 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 tax status
- Demonstrate a strong commitment and presence in Evanston now and in the future
- Demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Be able to show how this project will contribute to your organization's growth and sustainability

As well, projects should ideally fit in one of these categories:

- [Board Governance](#)
- Technology (such as improved software, data systems, websites Etc.)
- Strategic Planning
- Racial Equity
- Program Evaluation and Assessment
- Fundraising
- Communications and Marketing
- Merging with or Acquisition of Another Non-Profit

Please note: We do not fund endowments, fundraising events/sponsorship of events, or individuals. *Should you have intersecting categories, program staff is [available](#) to talk things through.

funding parameters

Your organization can apply for:

- One-year grants up to \$25,000 that do not make up more than 15% of your organization's operating budget
- Up to one Growth and Sustainability Grant (either capacity building OR general operating support grant) during a 12-month period – you may apply for other grants, such as E-Town Innovation grants or other ECF grant cycles

application materials

You can find all applications — and their respective questions and materials — through our [GLM](#) online grants system. You will need to submit:

- Current fiscal year operating budget including revenue sources (if you have it)
- Prior fiscal year operating budget including revenue sources (if you have it)
- Prior fiscal year budget-to-actuals
- Page 1 ONLY of two most recent 990's
- A brief budget narrative to address any significant variances in the annual operating budget or actuals (if needed only)
- Board roster with demographics

Please note: For all narrative questions, tell us briefly and directly about your work and the difference it makes for the Evanston community. Do not worry about phrasing things just right.

narrative grant questions – capacity building

Keep in mind that grants are reviewed by community members who may or may not be familiar with your organization. Therefore, be sure to communicate clearly and concisely about your work and the difference it makes for the Evanston community. Do not worry about phrasing things just right.

Below are the questions you will need to answer in the grant portal. They relate to four key areas:

Mission

- What is your organization's mission and scope of work in Evanston? How does your work impact Evanston residents? What does your work aim to accomplish?
- What resources, experience, and/or expertise does your organization bring to Evanston? What other groups or organizations address this need/challenge? How does your organization complement these other efforts in Evanston?

Project

- Tell us about this project and how it will advance your work. Why is this project important for your organization?
- How will this project be implemented? What is the timetable?
- What are the specific goals of this project? What will indicate a successful outcome? How will you measure the degree to which your organization has been strengthened?
- With this increase in capacity, how will your organization be positioned to better serve Evanston?
- Will this project advance diversity, equity, or inclusion? If YES, how will this project advance diversity, equity, or inclusion within your organization?
- If this project is focused on collaboration or a potential merger, tell us about the other organizations involved. (**Note:** letters from those organizations confirming their engagement must be attached to this application.)

Leadership

- Describe your staff leadership structure. If you have a leadership succession plan, please describe it.
- Does your organization have a strategic plan? How is it being implemented? What is your organization's vision for impact and growth over the next three years?
- Describe your board's engagement in strategic planning, fundraising, and organizational oversight.

Equity

- What efforts have you made to advance equity through your work and/or in your organization over the last two years?
- We are committed to advancing racial equity. Tell us about the makeup of your board, staff leadership, and overall staff.
- What percentage of people in staff leadership identify as Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC)?
- How does your organization's leadership reflect the demographics of the community you serve to ensure the diverse perspectives needed at decision-making levels? You may also provide a rationale or action plan with steps toward equity.
- Please tell us how the voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are an integral part of your overall decision-making process and program development.
- Do you collect demographic information of constituents? (Yes, No, In Progress)
- If you do collect demographic information of your constituents, please describe how you use it. If not, what are the barriers?

how to apply

You must submit all application materials through ECF's [online grant system \(GLM\)](#). You can submit application materials at any time while the grant period is open.

The grants committee will make funding decisions about one month after proposals are submitted.

View the [Calendar](#) for application dates.

If you need access to a computer or assistance submitting online call 847-492-0990 or [email ECF staff](#).