

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.

General Operating Grants

Unrestricted funding for orgs with strong track records

We provide **unrestricted, flexible general operating funding** to current or previous ECF grantees with a demonstrated commitment to racial equity in mission, vision, and practice.

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

Our next cycle opens March 16, 2023.

General Operating Grants

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which organizations are eligible

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

For general operating grants, your organization must:

- ☐ Have IRS 501(c)3 tax status or fiscal sponsor
- ☐ Have an Evanston address AND serve the Evanston community
- ☐ Have been in existence for at least three years (or be the result of merging organizations with at least a three-year history each)

- ☐ Have received and successfully completed at least two ECF grants in the last four years
- ☐ Demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- ☐ Have at least one paid administrative staff who has been on the payroll for at least one year
- ☐ Have a current strategic plan and/or [strategic framework](#) as well as a method for measuring progress and community impact
- ☐ Demonstrate effective [board governance](#)

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 grants cycles

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 questions – general operating

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 three key areas:

Mission

- What is your organization's mission and scope of work in Evanston?
- 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?
- How will this organizational support grant strengthen your organization's overall work? Why is this support important now?

- What are the outcomes you use to measure organizational impact? How do you measure them?

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.
- 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?

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
- Diversity/Equal Opportunity/Racial Equity Policy

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 two months 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](#).